

**Labelling the origin of food products:
Towards sustainable territorial development?**

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Labelling the origin of food products: Towards sustainable territorial development?

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To my mother.

In loving memory of my grandmother (†)

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People in Africa says “if you want to walk fast, go alone; if you want to walk far, walk together”. It is a beautiful proverb, because it highlights how the best of humankind rise from cooperation and mutual support. This book is an example the truth of this proverb, not for its quality, but because the amount of people that worked together to make it possible. In this book, the reader can find a little reflection of the daily life and wisdom of many people who shared their perception, experiences, time and dreams with me. To them, to the people from the mountains, the islands and the university; I am and will be forever grateful. Nevertheless, I would like to make explicit my appreciation to some of them.

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Table of contents

Chapter 1	<i>Introduction</i>	- 15 -
Chapter 2	<i>Theoretical Framework and Methodology</i>	- 25 -
	a) Theoretical and conceptual approach to the problem	- 26 -
	b) Implemented methodology	- 37 -
	c) From theory to practice: an innocent anthropologist in the 21 st century	- 42 -
Chapter 3	<i>Policies, Market Regulations, and Quality Labels: A New Scenario for a New Rurality.</i>	- 47 -
	a) Origin Food Labels as local responses to global changes	- 48 -
	b) Global and local changes in agricultural practice within the EU	- 49 -
	c) The opening up of markets and the end of freedom	- 51 -
	d) New consumption patterns: when something smells rotten in Denmark	- 53 -
	e) Redefining the Common Agriculture Policies: The Never-ending Story	- 55 -
	f) The legal framework for Origin Food Labels in Europe	- 57 -
Chapter 4	<i>Quality Goes Further than Labels: Resistance and Adaptation in Sierra de Cádiz</i>	- 61 -
	a) Introduction	- 62 -
	b) Sierra de Cádiz: an unclear territorial reference	- 63 -
	c) Farmers, cheesemakers and development agencies: local actors struggling against each other.	- 69 -
	Local Action Group Sierra de Cádiz (LAG)	- 77 -
	d) The Traditional Production System and its banning	- 80 -
	The History of Industrial Cheese	- 88 -
	e) Local responses: resistance and adaptation in the mountains	- 92 -

Chapter 5	<i>Re-embedding the Local Economy in Texel: A Smart Use of Origin Food Labels</i>	- 107 -
	a) Introduction:	- 108 -
	b) The island of Texel and the Wadden Sea Region	- 108 -
	c) The Waddengroup Foundation	- 117 -
	d) <i>Echt Texels Lamsvlees</i> : more than just good meat	- 130 -
	e) Synchronic description of the system: how the grass becomes cash	- 144 -
Chapter 6	<i>Discussion and Conclusion</i>	- 151 -
	a) Introduction	- 152 -
	b) The Common Elements	- 153 -
	c) The Key Points that Made Each Case Different	- 159 -
	d) Lessons for the future use of quality labels as tools for sustainable territorial development	- 162 -
	e) A final note on social processes as highly complex realities	- 172 -
	<i>References</i>	- 174 -
	<i>Summary</i>	- 183 -
	<i>Samenvatting</i>	- 186 -
	<i>About the author</i>	- 189 -
	<i>Education certificate</i>	- 190 -
	<i>Funding</i>	- 191 -

List of figures

Figure 1:	Typology and hierarchy of Quality Food Labels in Europe	29
Figure 2:	The unfolding of common pool resources into a nested market	36
Figure 3:	Sierra de Cádiz in Spain	38
Figure 4:	Texel in the Netherlands	38
Figure 5:	Local and global dynamics on agriculture	49
Figure 6:	LAGs in Andalusia	64
Figure 7:	Internal division of the mancomunidad	66
Figure 8:	General view of the farm “Aguas Nuevas” (Benaocaz)	69
Figure 9:	Payoya Goat	71
Figure 10:	Oveja Merina de Grazalema	72
Figure 11:	Cheese Factory “El Bosqueño” (El Bosque)	76
Table 1:	System of processing and supply chains longitude	77
Table 2:	EU Initiatives implemented and number of projects financed in Sierra de Cádiz	78
Figure 12:	Blankets drying after been washed in Grazalema.	82
Figure 13:	Chozo located at Los Navazos (Villaluenga del Rosario)	83
Figure 14:	Traditional instruments exhibit at the Cheese Museum	84
Figure 15:	The traditional <i>zarzo</i> is still used nowadays.	84
Figure 16:	Feeding and climate scheme for Grazalema sheep	89
Figure 17:	Cheese transitions from domestic economy to artisan and industrial systems	93
Figure 18:	Instruments and machines used in the industrial system	94
Figure 19:	Instruments of the artisan system	96
Figure 20:	Posters from the 3 rd and 4 th Editions	100
Figure 21:	The current transition and the avoided future	100
Figure 22:	Local Newspapers announced the creation of a PDO	102
Figure 23:	Headlines <i>Diario de Cádiz</i> , two weeks before regional electoral day	103
Figure 24:	Payoyo’s shop and mural (Villaluenga)	105
Figure 25:	Map of Texel	110
Figure 26:	Landscapes in Texel (Dunes, Polders, Beach and Forrest)	110

Figure 27: <i>Schapenboeten</i> and <i>tuinwallen</i>	113
Figure 28: The Wadden Sea Region	114
Figure 29: Logo of the two trademarks and the Wadden Goud	118
Figure 30: Map of Affiliated Organizations and logo	128
Figure 31: Co-evolution of the Texel Sheep	131
Figure 32: Butchering and free tasting of ETL during local events.	135
Table 3: Prognosis for the development of the project	140
Figure 33: Plate of <i>Ecth Texels Lamsvlees</i>	141
Figure 34: The sheep as icon of Texel	143
Figure 35: The ETL contractual and processing and distribution systems	145
Figure 36: Göenga supermarket in Den Hoorn and Web shop	146
Figure 37: The selection of the lamb	147
Figure 38: The processing of the lamb	149
Table 4: Differences and similarities between each case	159

Chapter 1

Introduction

*If you do not change direction,
You may end up where you are heading.*

—Lao Tze

The advice that Lao Tze left to humankind 25 centuries ago is simple and wise: as a community, we should consider the place where any discourse or practice is driving us, and then decide if we want to end up there or not. Since the beginning of the Enlightenment, Europe has taken a certain path, which can be termed Modernity. The starting point of this path is marked, from a philosophical point of view, by René Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*. These three words redefined man by making him the centre of reality—a reality that he is destined to control and dominate.

Anthony Giddens understands Modernity as follows (1998:94):

[It is] a shorthand term for modern society, or industrial civilization. Portrayed in more detail, it is associated with (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society—more precisely, a complex of institutions—which, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future, rather than the past.

Europe has been the main promoter and defender of Modernity as the direction that the rest of humankind should take. By means of different Empires, this continent has ruled most of the world until the present age. These Empires are upheld not only by the use of brute force, but also by the diffusion of certain metanarratives through which Europe obtains legitimacy for its actions and prescribes the path to the promised land for the rest of humanity (Escobar, 1991). A number of different metanarratives find their origin and foundation

in Modernity (for instance, Enlightenment, Industrialisation, Marxism, and Capitalism) (Lyotard, 1979). Even if there are many differences and oppositions between these metanarratives, all of them approach history and humanity through a similar teleological discourse and describe a perfect future that humanity must reach. This future can only be attained by following the hidden rules that nature or God prescribed at the beginning of times.

From a theoretical point of view, any metanarrative is reflected in what Thomas Kuhn defined as a scientific paradigm: “a universally recognized scientific achievement that, for a time, provides model problems and solutions for a community of practitioners” (1996: 10). Any given paradigm encompasses the following six aspects: 1) what is to be observed and scrutinized; 2) the kind of questions that are supposed to be asked and probed for answers in relation to this subject; 3) how these questions are to be structured; 4) how the results of scientific investigations should be interpreted; 5) how an experiment is to be conducted; 6) what equipment is available to conduct the experiment. In the case of agriculture, Modernity is reflected and embodied in the productivist paradigm, which has guided agriculture for a long time. However, in the last decades two new paradigms have appeared: the post-productivist and the sustainable rural development paradigms (Wilson, 2001; Evans, *et al.* 2002; Marsden 2003)¹.

These paradigms unfold and support specific socio-technical regimes that seek to shape policies, territorial trajectories, and farming practices. Rip and Kemp describe socio-technical regimes as “the grammar or rule set comprised in the coherent complex of scientific knowledge, engineering practices, production process technologies, product characteristics, skills and procedures, ways of handling relevant artefacts and persons, ways of defining problems—all of them embedded in institutions and infrastructures” (1998). Later, Geels and Kemp enriched this definition by adding the rules of the selection environment (for example, market, government, and interest groups); this addition is justified because the different actors that comprise the selection environment influence the shape and contents of transition processes (Wiskerke, 2003). These socio-technical regimes have the following four functions: 1) to impose a set of supranational, national and, sometimes also, regional regulations; 2) to prescribe

¹ In this dissertation's second chapter there is a deeper discussion about paradigm shifts and agricultural tendencies and practices.

farming practices; 3) to imply a specific trajectory for ongoing research and development; 4) to link together different levels—from the farm to the region, and so on. They link different levels, actors, and dimensions (socio-technical and material) of agriculture. The more coherent these interlinks are, the more efficient the regime is (van der Ploeg *et al.* 2004).

After years of dominance, the metanarratives of modernity, the productivist paradigm, and the socio-technical regimes associated to them are coming to an end². Different social actors, representing different levels and dimensions of society, are questioning whether Modernity is indeed the right path to take. These challenges take the form of heretical practices and thoughts, which are mostly ignored at first (and sometimes even ridiculed or illegalised); however, they have the potential to slowly and steadily change our society.

In this doctoral dissertation I analyse two examples of this type of initiatives. First, a group of sheepherders that refused to follow the logic of industrialisation and, by using a rightful resistance strategy (O'Brien, 1996), solved their problems and reinvented their sheepherding practices. Second, a foundation that enables and promotes a process of deindustrialisation and re-embedding of agricultural practices as a way to evade the cost-price squeeze generated by the industrialisation and globalisation of agriculture. In both cases, labelling the origin of products played a key role, and resulted in what I will call throughout this dissertation Origin Food Labels (OFLs)³. OFLs are devices that institutionalise and communicate the existence of certain specific qualities of a given product to the markets and the consumers. However, OFLs can also be used for different objectives. In the sheepherders' case, an OFL was the last step in industrialising the production system of sheep cheese in Sierra de Cádiz, Spain (López and Aguilar, 2013). In the foundation's case, OFLs were a tool employed to sustain and institutionalise a new socio-technical niche (van der Ploeg, 2003), which allowed for the creation of a nested market for local lamb meat (Polman *et al.* 2010).

2 This does not mean that it has stopped being the main narrative, but rather that it is starting to be questioned, not just by individual citizens, but by society in general.

3 In this dissertation I speak about Origin Food Labels (OFLs) and Quality Food Labels (QFLs), in order to avoid misunderstandings, I would like to make clear the QFLs are general devices created to highlight any special quality of a given product, e.g. organic, fair, local, non-gmo, etc. OFLs are one of the many types of QFLs, and they are used to specify and highlight the origin of the product, which can be a farm, town, region, country, etc. (See Figure 1).

I use these two cases to approach one of the main issues in current social sciences: the understanding of how local actors and institutions respond to contradictory global contexts through their daily practices and interactions. This dissertation understands the creation of new OFLs as part of these practices, identifying them as outcomes of collective actions. Two cases are analysed: the attempt to achieve a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) for cured sheep cheese in Sierra de Cádiz (Spain), and the construction and function of the regional label for lamb meat in Texel (The Netherlands).

More specifically, my research objectives were the following:

- 1) To study how local actors create OFLs as a response to the globalized agro-food systems.
- 2) To analyse the contribution of these labels to the sustainable development of the territory.
- 3) To research how local institutional context affects and is influenced by these processes.

In order to achieve these objectives, I translated them into the following 6 research questions:

- 1) How do local actors construct new products to compete in the globalised agro-food system? Are new markets created?
- 2) How does the creation of the label affect the internal relationships of the supply chain? How are the relations and processes of circulation being actively reorganised in order to improve the livelihoods of those who are involved? What kinds of coordination are enhanced?
- 3) What kinds of changes do local actors have to implement in their practices to join the initiative? How do these new institutional agreements affect the co-production and co-evolution of their territories? Does sustainability increase?
- 4) How do these initiatives engage with other actors and networks in the territory? Does synergy or coherence increase? How do these initiatives influence or affect the broader structural context?
- 5) How do local institutional context and cultural patterns affect local actors in the design and implementation of the labels? What constraints can be identified in each case?

- 6) Who are the critical actors and how can the number of farmers involved in this kind of initiatives increase? What can be the social, political, institutional and economic arrangements, programs, or interventions that might stimulate further dissemination?

This dissertation's general aim is to contribute to a better understanding of labelling strategies, understanding them as a part of the European New Rurality. Its specific aim is to analyse the labelling strategies that link products and territories (in the sense of *terroir*).

On the theoretical level, this dissertation helps to explore the new relationship between agriculture and society in Europe. First, it illustrates how existing institutional frameworks impact upon the development of labelling strategies. Second, it shows how agriculture is able to adapt to the new functions required by European post-industrial society.

The transitions analysed in this book are part of a “quality turn” that is taking place in Europe. This opens possibilities for a new way of being rural, or for the emergence of a new rurality. This new rurality is rooted in the reintroduction of the multifunctionality of agriculture in social discourses and practices—a sort of repeasantisation. The productivist paradigm denies this part of agriculture in its approach to rural economy, but the rise of a sustainable rural development paradigm is providing society with adequate concepts and theories for understanding and supporting these transitions.

This book contains 6 chapters, including the introduction.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework and methodology that were employed, and is divided in 3 parts. First, I define my work, on the one hand, as the outcome of the critical and interpretative traditions of social sciences, and, on the other, as an example of the actor-oriented approach. I then justify the choice of this approach by making reference to the nature of the objectives of my research, which involves the understanding of dynamic relationships between social structure and agency in a process of social transformation. In the second part of the chapter, I explain and define the concepts and theories that I use to

analyse and interpret the dynamics underlying the two case studies; I describe the techniques and methods used in my fieldwork; and I include a description and legitimation of both observational units. Finally, in the third part of the chapter, I make a personal reflection about the problems and issues that arise when different cultural contexts come in contact with each other.

Chapter 3 focuses on the new European scenario that affects and is affected by this kind of initiatives. The chapter has three parts. The first part explains what Quality Food Labels (QFLs) are, and defines them as the outcome of the new globalised agro-food system. In the second part, I explain the three main contextual changes that created a suitable European scenario for this type of initiatives: 1) the opening up of markets; 2) the unfolding of new consumption patterns; 3) the redirection of common agricultural policies. In the third part, so as to contextualise both case studies, I explain the current European legal framework for this kind of labels.

Chapter 4 examines the first case: the attempt to achieve a PDO for the cured sheep cheese produced in Sierra de Cádiz. This chapter has five parts. In the first part, the case is introduced. Next, in the second part, the local territorial references are described. The third part of the chapter describes the key actors involved in the case, their relationships with each other, and their connection with the PDO project. The fourth part explains the former system of production, and defines it as an element of the shepherders' domestic economy. The fifth and final part is a description of the two contrasting and competing local responses to the changes in the European regulations that illegalised the traditional system of cheese production: resistance and adaptation. I explain how these responses created two different local systems of production, one artisanal and one industrial; and how the attempt to create this PDO was the last step in the institutionalisation of the industrial system as part of the local political agenda.

Chapter 5 examines the second case: the creation of a regional label for the Texel lamb meat, a local initiative that deindustrialised and re-embedded this product. This chapter has four main parts. First, I describe the case's territorial context. Second, I introduce the history and structure of the Waddengroup Foundation, the key actor of the socio-technical niche in which this initiative developed (van

Chapter 1

der Ploeg, 2003). Third, I study the history of the initiative itself, *Echt Texels Lamsvlees* (Real Texel Lamb Meat), describing the sequence of steps that made it possible. Fourth, following the concepts and theories described in chapter 2, I interpret the outcome of the initiative.

Chapter 6 reviews and discusses this dissertation's key contributions. The chapter has four parts. First, I summarise and describe the four elements that both processes share. Second, I discuss the eight key areas where both cases are essentially different. Third, guided by my research questions, I summarise the lessons that can be learnt from both cases, I suggest possible ways to apply these lessons when using OFLs as tools for sustainable territorial development, and I explore the theoretical and practical implications of doing so. Fourth, I include a brief note on the complexity of social processes.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This dissertation is the result of a research that followed two different disciplines: Rural Sociology and Social Anthropology. I employed elements from the critical and the interpretative paradigms in social sciences. Additionally, I followed an actor-oriented approach (Long, 1989, 2001; Long and Long, 1992).

As an anthropologist, I analyse the behaviours and discourses that I found during my participatory observation of daily life in both observational units (i.e. both cases of study). Participatory observation helps me to understand how and why people do what they do. As a sociologist, I analyse the following two problems: 1) the way in which these processes affect the quality of life of the relevant actors; 2) the changes in the interactions between these actors and between them and their territory.

I approach the issue from a comparative perspective in order to accomplish two objectives: 1) to define the specificity of each local reality; 2) to understand the inherent characteristics of the use of OFLs in each of the two cases.

Finally, I chose to conduct my research by means of an actor-oriented approach. This is useful in understanding the dynamic between, on the one hand, social actors and structures, and, on the other, between the local and the global levels.

a) Theoretical and conceptual approach to the problem

Practices, processes, paradigms, and labels in rural development

According to Marsden (2003), there are at present three different paradigms that try to shape European Union (EU) agricultural and rural development practices: the agro-industrial, the post-productivist, and the sustainable rural development paradigms. These three paradigms are not just a set of concepts: they are the lenses through which actors and networks perceive and act, and also involve what some scholars define as socio-technical regimes (Rip and Kemp, 1998). These three paradigms affect grass-root activities, and can drive farmers to three different but interconnected processes: industrialisation, deactivation, or repeasantisation (van der Ploeg, 2008). These three processes (industrialisation, deactivation and repeasantisation) are not clear and unambiguous; they are affected by the actions and discourses of State and other institutions, social movements, and grass-root activities (van der Ploeg *et al.* 2012).

Before the Agenda 2000 and the mid-term CAP reform in 2003, this policy was mostly supportive of the agro-industrial paradigm and its dominant socio-technical regime, which considers that rural areas are agricultural infrastructure for industrial farming. This paradigm perceives nature as a mere obstacle and thinks that agricultural enterprises should follow a double logic (scale and specialisation) and that they should be supported mostly by new scientific developments in biology (van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008). This paradigm is the manifestation of Modernity in the field of agriculture (van der Ploeg, 2003).

Some scholars trace the post-productivist paradigm back to the 1970's (Halfacree in Cloke and Little, 1997); however, it was in the 1980's when it gained strength as a reaction against the environmental consequences of implementing the agro-industrial paradigm (Schucksmith, 1993; Whitby, 1994; Ilbery and Bowler, 1998). The post-productivist paradigm marginalises agriculture and demands that rural areas be understood as places of consumption that should be preserved. It argues in favour of diversifying land use so as to create new areas for aesthetic and leisure functions (Marsden, 2003). This alternative approach to the agro-industrial paradigm was initially welcome; nevertheless, it has been criticised due to its dualist approach to rural development (Wilson, 2001; Evans *et al.* 2002) and its tendency to eliminate agricultural production in rural Europe (van der Ploeg and Renting, 2004; Marsden and Smith, 2005; van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008).

The third paradigm, termed by Marsden (2003), the sustainable rural development paradigm, seeks to overcome the limitations of the post-productivist paradigm by relocating agriculture in the centre of the process (van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008) and by re-embedding agricultural production within society and nature (Wiskerke and van der Ploeg, 2004). This paradigm understands rural development as a territorially-based process that redefines nature by re-emphasising the role of agriculture as a major agent in sustaining rural economies and cultures (Marsden, 2003; Camarero and González, 2005; Aguilar, 2007; Aguilar *et al.* 2009). The multifunctional farm is one of its icons. This type of farm follows three main dynamics or strategies: broadening, deepening, and re-grounding (van der Ploeg *et al.* 2002; O'Connor, 2006; van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008). These three strategies are a compilation of possible roads for the reintroduction

of multifunctionality into agricultural practices⁴ (Renting *et al.* 2009). Deepening involves adding specific characteristics and values to end products (van der Ploeg *et al.* 2012), and includes practices such as high quality production and regional specialities. The creation of an OFL can be understood as the institutionalisation of deepening, for OFLs control and certify the link between the product and its territory (Espeitx, 1996; Meulen, 2007; Bowen, 2010). This link is based on the notion of *terroir*, a French word that makes reference to the unique contribution of local territory and knowhow to the final product (Barham, 2003; Bérard and Marchenay, 2007; Bowen and Zapata, 2009).

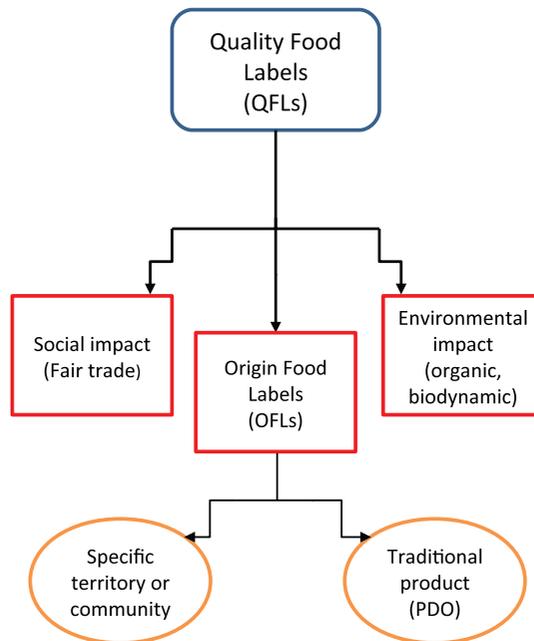
The labels analysed here correspond to two different and contrasting types: traditional product labels and regional labels. The first type includes those labels that certify the origin and tradition of a product, whilst the second type refers to products that come from a territorially defined community. Following Max Weber's Theory of Rationalization (1930), it can be said that traditional product labels are iron cages, because they are formal rationalities controlled and defined by the EU and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The creation of a traditional product label—such as a PDO—has to follow a strict process, which starts at the territory and ends in the EU; on the other hand, the creation of a regional label only requires to fulfil the definition included in the Code of Practices and to be registered in the license system (Barjolle *et al.* 1997).

The selection of each type of label relates to the local mix of cultural patterns and institutional frameworks. The concept of institutional framework is understood here as the system of formal laws, regulations, procedures, informal conventions, customs, and norms that shape socioeconomic activity and behaviour. In turn, cultural patterns are understood here as manifestations of local culture. By local culture I mean the web of significance that man himself has spun, in relation to which things are done in a certain manner and the world is interpreted in a specific way (Ray, 1998). Cultural patterns condition the way in which a given community interacts with and understands different institutional frameworks.

4 I use the word “reintroduce” because the elements that characterise multifunctional agriculture were the normal ones before the process of industrialisation. Once again, these three strategies are instruments to reintroduce a peasant-type production logic that may enhance the role of agriculture in the construction of sustainable agro-ecosystems (see Sevilla-Guzmán and González de Molina, 1990).

Institutional and Neo-Institutional Economics study how institutional frameworks shape economic behaviour. According to Nabli and Nugent (1989:1335), social institutions share the following three characteristics: 1) they constrain and prescribe behaviour; 2) they can govern (using coercion if necessary) the relations among individuals and groups; 3) they are predictable and have some degree of stability. It is important to emphasize—as Ménard does (1990)—that any institutional framework includes an element of power; furthermore, these sets of rules “are not prior to action, nor are they elaborated outside the action, but emerge within the process of actor co-ordination” (Wilkinson 1997: 318). Thus, institutional frameworks are dynamic, circumstantial rules that shape economic interactions and performance among actors; they can be consciously created to increase trust and to reduce transaction costs.

Figure 1: Typology and hierarchy of Quality Food Labels in Europe⁵



⁵ This figure, and any other figure and picture included in this book, has been designed by the author. The source of any figure is mentioned only if the intellectual property belongs to someone else.

Networking activities: a path to increased synergy and territorial coherence

In order to analyse rural development, one has to take into account the following four levels (Knickel and Renting, 2000): 1) the farm; 2) the farm household; 3) the region; 4) the global. Each of these levels contains identifiable activities and processes related to rural development. The practices that take place within each level affect, support, or constrain the other levels. For example, the combination of agricultural activities in a given household can create a new product which, in turn, can engage with other local entrepreneurs and, ultimately, create new economic activity in the region. In other words, the interaction of different farm households can create new levels of aggregation that may redirect the regional process of rural development.

In this sense, the creation of vertical and horizontal networks is an important part of rural development (Murdoch, 2000). Vertical networks link rural space to the agro-food sector; horizontal networks link rural space to more general and non-agricultural economic activities (Ibid: 407). The nature and quality of these networks condition the creation of positive outcomes for the region and the actors involved. Brunori and Rossi (2000) explain that local actors can create synergy and territorial coherence if they develop both types of networks in a given territory.

Different scholars have argued that synergy and coherence are important elements in the achievement of successful process of rural development (Cloke and Goodwin, 1992; Brunori and Rossi, 2000; Wiskerke and van der Ploeg, 2004; van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008). Synergy can be defined as “linkages between two or more entities, whose joint effort produce effects that are qualitatively and quantitatively greater than those produced by the efforts of the same entities acting independently” (Wiskerke and van der Ploeg, 2004: 321). According to Brunori and Rossi (2000: 417), there are two different kinds of synergy: static and dynamic. The difference between the two lies in the consequences of repeated actions: static synergy always has the same results, but dynamic synergy tends towards the improvement of positive impact with each repetition. Static synergy corresponds to the agro-industrial model; conversely, sustainable rural development always seeks for dynamic synergies (van der Ploeg *et al.* 2000). Dynamic synergies need to be supported by certain specific networks, and coherence is a prerequisite to the consolidation of these networks (Wiskerke and van der Ploeg, 2004). If there is no coherence between the elements involved in

the context, competing trajectories will arise within the community, reducing the chances of success. In the process of creating new OFLs different actors encounter each other; also, new institutional frameworks are developed. This process can unfold horizontal and vertical networks, and the presence of both of them may increase in the territory.

The problem of local responses

I use two concepts to define the nature of local responses to global changes: resistance and adaptation (da Silva, 1994). Adaptation is a strategy that involves accepting uncritically a new institutional framework that changes part of our daily life. The change can be intentional—like in the modernisation project—or it can be caused by the voluntary interaction between the group and other actors. Since culture is of an organic nature, a change in one of its parts may also affect how the group understands and sees other elements of reality. The concept of resistance used in this dissertation comes from the perspective of everyday politics (Kerkvliet, 2009), which manifest themselves, for instance, in support, compliance, modification, evasion, and resistance (ibid: 231). This type of actions are characterised by a low level of organisation and a low profile (mostly private and individual behaviour), and they usually are not defined as political by the people who undertake them. Resistance in everyday politics entails subtle, indirect, and non-confrontational behaviour. An example of it, in the field of rural development practices, would be a farmer representative who, as a way of delegitimising the outcome of the meeting, does not attend a territorial assembly. Although these practices may not be seen as powerful, a combination of three of them (resistance, modifications, and evasions) can drive the authority to adjust its policy or, even, to change it altogether (ibid: 238). In some cases, this resistance follows the rhetoric of the institutional framework in which it is embedded, and uses it to change a part of the reality or to force its recognition. This is what O'Brien defines as rightful resistance (1996). It is a form of popular contention that has the following three characteristics: 1) it operates near the boundary of an authorised channel; 2) it employs the rhetoric and commitments of the powerful to curb political or economic power; 3) it hinges on locating and exploiting divisions among the powerful (1996:33). This form of resistance can be effectively employed to overcome problems created by misconduct or corruption located at the municipal level, something fairly common in Andalusia, as I explain in chapter 4.

Cotler's work (Matos *et al.* 1968) is another crucial contribution for understanding the internal dynamics that condition local responses to global pressure. This Peruvian social scientist studies the economy's social organisation and its impact upon structural problems in rural areas. He explains how the rural economy's social organisation in Peru can be represented by what he calls a "triangle without base", and how this type of social organisation constrains the economic performance of rural communities. The triangle without base reveals the vertical nature of the relationship between the cacique and the subordinates. This relationship is supported by the atomisation of the subordinated group, and by the role of mediator that the cacique plays between them and the world. The cacique's domination is possible because, first, there is no economic alternative for the subordinates, and second, because—as a consequence of a situation of competition promoted by the cacique by means of a system of rewards and penalties—the subordinates lack effective internal organisation (Matos *et al.* 1969: 315). Cotler (1968) explains that the solution for this situation lies in the construction of a triangle with a base. The following two strategies that can lead to this alternative: 1) a pedagogical intervention in the local communities that would help them reach agreements and create the base; 2) a change in the institutional framework so as to alter the foundations of the cacique's power (Ibid: 316-7).

Defining the rural and sustainable rural development

Rural development is a highly controversial and contested concept; thus, I defend the apparently simple idea of rural development as the development of the rural (van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008). The problem goes back to the old question of "what is the rural?" There are many different ways to approach this question, but not all of them provide a definition that is useful in relation to this dissertation's objectives. They often reduce the question of the rural to dichotomies (such as folk-urban) (Redfield, 1947), to numbers (OECD, 2008, 2009), or to discourses (Halfacree, 1993, 1995; Jones, 1995; Woods, 1997), and are therefore inadequate for understanding a problem that requires the analysis of interactions, interrelations, transitions, and tendencies. Hence, I use a dynamic approach, and define the rural as "the place where the on-going encounter, interaction, and mutual transformation of human beings and living nature is located" (van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008).

This definition of rural underlines two important elements: society and living nature. In order to adequately conceptualise sustainability, these two elements (and their interrelations with one another) are crucial. Following the framework proposed by van der Ploeg (1997, 2003), society and living nature interact in particular ways. The contribution of OFLs to these particular ways of interaction is the central question that this doctoral dissertation tries to answer. To this end, there are two concepts that must be kept in mind: co-production and co-evolution (Ibid).

Co-production is the ongoing interaction and mutual change between human and living nature (Sevilla-Guzmán and González de Molina, 1990). It is the process where “living nature is used, reproduced, and transformed into a rich variety of often highly contrasting expressions” (Marsden and van der Ploeg, 2008). Existing practices of rural economy (like farming, forestry, agro-tourism, hunting, cheese making, etc.) are expressions of co-production. It is expected that social and living nature co-evolve in a “specific, and often mutually reinforcing, way” (Ibid). However, some practices may change this co-evolution, and make living nature subordinate to society, in such a way that the cycle of co-production gets broken. This has been the case of the agro-industrial model in the last decades. The implementation of this model has changed the co-production and co-evolution of nature and society, disconnecting agriculture from living nature (van der Ploeg, 2003).

In contrast, sustainable rural development embraces those practices and dynamics that preserve and enhance co-production and co-evolution of society and living nature in a given place (van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008). According to van der Ploeg and other scholars, farmers are the main actors of rural development, for the following three reasons: 1) they have land and resources and can recombine and reconfigure them; 2) they are the first ones to be aware of the unsustainable nature of the modernization project; 3) they obtain positive rewards when they change their practices (for instance, the satisfaction they receive from their work increases) (2000, 531). It must be kept in mind that there are several levels to analyse when speaking about rural development: farm, farm household, region, and global (Knickel and Renting, 2000: 514). The way these levels engage and interact with one another is vital in the understanding of the nature of rural development.

This dissertation links sustainability with OFLs: it studies how local actors change their practices and interactions through the creation of new institutional agreements. In accordance to the aforementioned framework of co-production and co-evolution, special attention is paid to the ways in which the interrelations between human and living nature change. According to van der Ploeg, “a successful co-production feeds back into the needed reproduction (and further development) of the resource base [...] and the survival, standard of living and improved prospect of the families involved” (2008: 26).

Origin food labels within the new agro-food system

This doctoral dissertation focuses on the local in order to understand the global. Local dynamics can be transformed by becoming part of wider global processes, whereas global dynamics can be understood by focusing on local conditions, strategies, and actors (Long, 1996:47). This suggests that the increase in OFLs—such as PDOs (Tregear *et al.* 2007)—is strongly related to the need for new agreements within the agro-food system. A new social discourse can be identified; it has a set of values—such as environmental concerns, food safety, and health care—that breaks down previous reductionisms. These new values are integrated with the image of local products (Espeitx, 1996), and materialise in different concepts such as traditional, natural, organic, etc. (Bérard and Marchenay, 2004).

In this set of circumstances, the increase in the number of existing food labels can also be understood as part of a broader transition from an economy of mass-production and mass-consumption to a new value-economy (Bueno and Aguilar, 2003). This new economy—which is developing in post-industrial societies—is characterized by small sized businesses, flexible specialisation, continuous innovation, and adaptability to new tendencies and tastes. Old models of mass production, like Fordism and Taylorism, started to show deficiencies in the 1970s as a result of their rigidities⁶. These models were incapable of adapting to new markets and to ever-changing customer demands. This failure to adapt signals the lack of viability of the industrial farming model: it is economically unsustainable

6 As Ritzer demonstrates in his neo-Weberian study of the fast-food industry, this tendency is not universal; Fordism and mass-production systems are far from disappearing (1996). However, this does not deny the existence of a new value economy. In fact, the coexistence of different and contrasting modes of economic organisation is becoming quite usual in a globalising world.

in Europe⁷, first, due to the growing squeeze on agriculture (van der Ploeg *et al.* 2000), but also, because it is unable to fulfil new patterns of consumption.

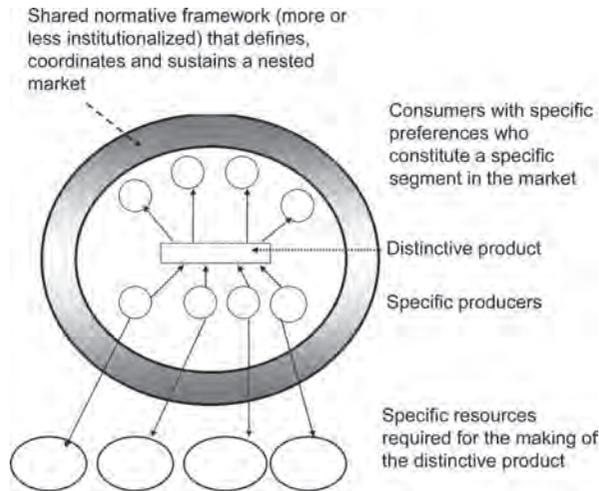
In a situation like this—deeply influenced by the loss of reference caused by globalisation—it is not difficult to see why the demand of local food has increased. At the present time, some European consumers want to buy food that comes from specific ecosystems, is produced with local knowhow, and is embedded in history. These products suit certain specific consumer needs, such as territorial anchoring and rooting. Consuming them evokes nostalgic images, feelings, and sensations of spaces linked to values in opposition to the urban world; this is consonant with the “experiential marketing” guidelines proposed by Schmitt (1999). Hence, OFLs are devices that enhance trust, because they guarantee the uniqueness of a product, consequently easing the consumer’s decision process (Boccaletti, 1999).

Labels, food networks, and the creation of markets

I understand quality food labels as new institutional agreements—new rules of the game played between the different actors involved in producing, processing, and consuming the labelled products. Thus, the process of setting these new rules is an exercise in rethinking and redesigning the reality where the product is embedded. This reality includes humankind, living nature, and their co-evolution. As noted before, the creation of a label is one of the ways to institutionalise new agricultural practices, products, or agreements. Therefore, they can be used to institutionalise alternative food networks (Renting, *et al.* 2003). One of the advantages of labelling these networks is that if the institutionalisation works properly, in coalition with certain conventions, codes, and mediators, the network can connect directly with consumers from other regions or even countries.

7 It is important to underline that agro-industrial production is economically unsustainable in Europe, but not in the rest of the world. A good example of this situation is the rise of agro-food empires around the planet (see van der Ploeg, 2008).

Figure 2: The unfolding of common pool resources into a nested market



Source: van der Ploeg *et al.* 2012: 166

Another interesting use of OFLs as instruments of institutionalisation is their capacity to support and promote nested markets (Costanigro *et al.* 2009; Oostindie *et al.* 2010; Polman *et al.* 2010; van der Ploeg *et al.* 2012), and to enhance the sustainable management of common pool resources (Ostrom, 1990). The idea of nested markets is rooted, on the one hand, in the substantivist approach to economics developed by authors such as Karl Polanyi, and on the other, in Shanin's definition of markets as both places and relations (van der Ploeg *et al.* 2012). Unlike main markets, nested markets are embedded in certain normative frameworks and forms of governance, and have clear but permeable boundaries characterised by three main attributes: rootedness, connectedness, and specificity (Ibid). Furthermore, nested markets can be grounded in common pool resources, which are a type of resource employed by a specific group of users who convert them into products in such a way that the extinction of the resource is avoided. The combination of nested markets and common pool resources in a single system can have the three following effects: 1) an increase in the capacity to produce distinctive qualities; 2) an increase in the external recognition of that quality; 3) an increase in the existing trust between producers, processors, and consumers (ibid).

b) Implemented methodology

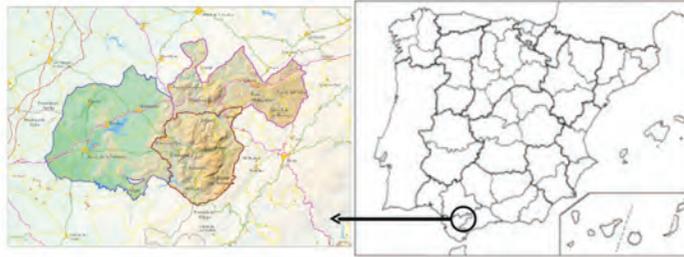
My research combines traditions drawn from Social Anthropology and Rural Sociology, and therefore employs an interdisciplinary methodology. I use a comparative case study strategy, enriched by certain elements taken from the critical and interpretative perspectives in social science; I then utilise this enriched strategy as a guide for implementing the actor-oriented approach. I collected qualitative and quantitative data during two fieldwork periods of nine months each.

An important part of this research's methodology was the implementation of a comparative strategy. Thus, taking into account the theoretical framework, the research objective, and the research questions, I selected two rural areas as appropriate observational units: Texel in the Netherlands and Sierra de Cádiz in Spain. Sierra de Cádiz is located in the north-east of Cádiz Province (Figure 3); Texel lies on the south-western shores of the Wadden Sea (Figure 4). These observational units were selected by paying close attention to certain overlapping and contrasting characteristics:

- Same type of rural region.
- Shared importance of labelling strategies.
- Contrasting institutional contexts.
- Contrasting OFLs.

Texel and Sierra de Cádiz hold similar positions within their national and regional contexts. Also, they are located within territories defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as intermediate rural areas (2008, 2009). However, the OECD's definition is too reductionist, and in an effort to take into account the history and context of both areas, I define them, rather, as areas in transition towards new rural areas:

Figure 3: Sierra de Cádiz in Spain



Source: LAG Sierra de Cádiz

These are areas where agriculture is developing along the lines of multifunctionality, and is increasingly intertwined with the regional economy and society, thereby contributing to regional qualities (as biodiversity, landscape, the supply of services, quality of life, energy production, etc.). In these areas multifunctionality is often articulated at the level of the enterprise, and the multi-product enterprise is a distinctive feature of these regions (van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008: 5).

Figure 4: Texel in the Netherlands



Source: VVV Texel

Furthermore, labelling strategies are well known in both areas and local actors have used them previously as instruments of development. In Sierra de Cádiz they are the usual instrument used by the Local Action Group⁸ (LAG). This organisation is responsible for creating the PDO *Aceite de Oliva Virgen Extra de la Sierra de Cádiz* (Extra Virgin Olive Oil from Sierra de Cádiz) for the olive oil produced in that territory—a process that concluded in 2002. In the case of Texel, the Waddengroup Foundation is one of the most active actors in local food labelling. It was founded in 1996, and since then, it has used labels and trademarks as the main instrument to enhance sustainable economic development.

On the other hand, each observational unit differs strongly from the other in certain key domains. In Andalusia, rural development practices are the outcomes of strongly institutionalised processes (Esparcia, *et al.* 2000; Aguilar *et al.* 2009), whilst in the Netherlands they are the results of a strong process of negotiation, where civil society plays an important role and organises itself around private initiatives (Renting and van der Ploeg, 2001; Stuiver *et al.* 2003). Therefore, each area's local institutional context exhibits a high contrast compared with the other. In the same way, Traditional Product Labels and Regional Labels are contrasting types of OFLs.

The first one is a product-oriented label and is the outcome of a strong process of rationalization⁹ (Weber, 1930), whilst the second one is community-oriented and is considerably flexible.

After choosing the observational units, I implemented the next three analytical steps on each of them:

- 1) Analysis of policies and legal frameworks.
- 2) Identification of local actors and networks mapping.
- 3) Interviews and participant observation.

8 Local Action Groups are associations created at the beginning of the 1990s in order to implement the LEADER Initiatives.

9 Rationalisation is the institutionalisation of an “efficient” way of interaction within a process. According to Weber, rationalisation has four positive outcomes: 1) efficiency; 2) accountability; 3) predictability; 4) manpower reduction. However, it also may entail negative consequences, such as dehumanisation, inefficiency, unpredictability due to human agency, and internal boycotts as a response to the introduction of new technologies (Ritzer, 1996).

The analysis of policies and legal frameworks consisted in compiling all the available information about the policies and laws that affect the practices of both cases, so as to better understand their individual contexts. I reviewed the available literature and previous research projects¹⁰; then, I proceeded to categorise them according to their venue (municipal, regional, national and European) and issues (health, hygiene, nature management, food production...).

In one of his first attempts to define the actor-oriented approach, Long (1984) explained that the mere existence of policies and planned intervention did not mean that they would be translated directly to the local level: they were always mediated by the relevant actors and by the latter's culture. This issue was remedied by enriching the actor-oriented approach with ethnographic practice (Gallina and Castro, 2006). Therefore, immediately after analysing and comprehending the policies and legislation that condition local actors, I began my ethnographic field research. Hammersley (cited in Ray, 1999:12) summed up the main elements of ethnography as follows:

- 1) It is the study of people's behaviour in everyday contexts.
- 2) Participant observation and relatively informal conversations are usually the main source of data.
- 3) The process of data collection is "unstructured" but systematic.
- 4) The focus is usually a single setting or group of relatively small scale.
- 5) The analysis of the data involves interpreting the meanings and functions of human actions.

Ray stresses that ethnography should be based upon and driven by naturalism, understanding, and discovering (Ibid). Additionally, he proposes the use of a "critical empathic dialogic" approach to ethnographic practice (Ibid: 14-15). I used this approach in my research for two reasons: 1) it is consonant with the interpretative paradigm in social science; 2) it enriches this paradigm by adding to it a critical element, thus balancing its relativistic point of view.

¹⁰ Here, I would like to recognise the remarkable quality and accuracy of Dirk Roep's report, titled *The Waddengroup Foundation: The Added Value of Quality and Region* (2000), which helped me to understand the nature and function of this actor even before my fieldwork.

In my ethnographic approach to both observational units, different techniques were combined. One of them was the identification and mapping of local actors. In order to achieve this, I employed, in turn, a “snow-ball technique”, which began by questioning privileged informants. The mapping process focused on a predefined area and sought to find similar products or initiatives to better contextualise it. This step’s goal was to form an idea about, first, the origins and the development of the networks created by each initiative, and, second, about the actors involved in the processes. It consisted of a double classification: on the one hand, the initiative itself; on the other, the actors within the initiative. Each initiative was categorised according to its relationship with either the Texel case or the Andalusian case. The actors were grouped according to the function they played within the initiatives (producers, managers, retailers, etc.).

By means of physical mapping and categorising I raised certain new questions concerning the participation of local actors in each labelling process; this helped me to focus my participant observation on key interfaces. The resulting data was also helpful in the organisation and prioritisation of the semi-structured interviews and group discussions. I interviewed actors who were both directly and indirectly involved in the labelling process. The interviews were focused on their opinions and experiences concerning the labels, on the process and history of the label and the territory, and on any change that they had to implement because of the label. I conducted the interviews after having previously interacted many times with the actors in question, so in a certain sense I already had most of the information before the actual interview. Still, it was a useful undertaking, for it aided me to complement and triangulate the data already compiled in my fieldwork diary.

In the case of Sierra de Cádiz, I conducted 15 formal deep interviews with farmers and cheesemakers, and 17 with supporting actors and representatives of the administration. The unevenness in the number of interviews is a reflection of Andalusia’s rural reality, where public administration tends to intervene in local initiatives and where private initiatives depend strongly on public funding (Esparcia, *et al.* 2000)¹¹. These two groups gave me a good idea of the complexity of the process and of how each of its parts interacted with and related to the others.

¹¹ Esparcia and his colleagues also explained how local political elites use LEADER Initiatives to introduce and legitimise their own agenda. Their hypothesis was that this practice would disappear with the passing of time. However, I found that in Sierra de Cádiz time just institutionalised this practice, as I will describe in Chapter 4

The nature of the Texel case is different; I therefore defined three distinct groups: Waddengroup members, actors in the sheep meat's production and supply chains, and external supporting agencies. I interviewed 10 Waddengroup members, 9 producers who belonged to the production and supply chains, and 5 supporting agencies. In this way, and once again from the point of view of the product, I was left with two different groups: on the one hand, members of the initiative (actors of the production and supply chain and Waddengroup members), and on the other, external local and regional actors (members of similar initiatives, agencies and representatives of the administration).

Participant observation of their daily lives and encounters at the interface was another important part of this stage. I was present at formal meetings (like assemblies) and public events (like farm markets or fairs). However, the most important part of this technique was participating in daily life routines, at the farms or at the villages. Group discussion took place through formal and informal invitations; these discussions raised issues that were difficult to bring to the interviews, and they helped me to triangulate data.

c) From theory to practice: an innocent anthropologist in the 21st century

The methodology that I implemented during my research was described earlier in this chapter in a very schematic way. Nevertheless, I find it necessary to further elaborate on some of the key experiences that helped me to solve the issues that inevitably arise during actual fieldwork.

Knowing where you are: Andalusia is not the Netherlands, and vice versa

The use of a comparative framework can be very productive: the selection of two or more observational units is a good strategy in order to highlight the key aspects of any social practice or process. However, it has some inherent difficulties, and some basic elements should be taken into consideration. While designing the methodology, I thought that similar data could be collected in both areas—which turned out to be a somewhat naïve prevision. The Andalusian and Dutch countrysides are very different from each other;

hence, I had to redefine my strategy constantly in order to achieve my main research objectives.

In Andalusia, it is difficult to obtain quantitative data related to the agro-food sector; moreover, when the object of study is constituted by local initiatives in rural areas, quantitative data is sometimes simply inexistent. Local producers do not like to disclose their own production methods. Thus, I had to privilege informal strategies (conversations held in bars, while making cheese or milking animals, etc.) and collect mostly qualitative data. To avoid ethical dilemmas, I always informed everyone about the aim of the research.

The situation in the Netherlands was the opposite: the access to quantitative data was easy, but I lacked the adequate space for daily interactions, which affected my capacity of interpretation. I had to be satisfied with external reports and previous research about the territory's history, and also with the information that local friends gave me about the island and its people. Selecting the right key-informants was of the utmost importance for understanding the local culture.

Creating trust: finding the pub and losing the beard

When approaching social realities, first impressions can open and shut many doors, and the outcome of our interactions partly depends on how we look like and behave. Indeed, certain small details can compromise the creation of trust within observational units—details that we can often change.

In the case of Sierra de Cádiz, it was very important to take part in informal routines and to meet people without making a previous appointment. It is customary and considered polite in this part of Andalusia to pay visits during breaks from work. I learnt that everybody is willing to accept help and that strong trust is created by working hand by hand with local actors. Several activities (festivals, conferences, parties, etc.) took place in the villages during my fieldwork, and volunteering for them changed the perception that local people had about me. At the same time, these activities were perfect for participant observation. It is impossible to be fully considered as one of the locals (and, in any case, that is not the anthropologist's objective); nevertheless, once I joined local actors in their rituals and daily life, it was easier to understand the cultural patterns that support and give sense to their individual and collective actions.

On this point Texel also proved to be remarkably different from Sierra de Cádiz. Before beginning my fieldwork, I held a number of productive meetings with some Waddengroup representatives in order to explain them my research plans. During these meetings we spoke about the nature and objectives of my research, and I asked them for advice in relation to it. Surprisingly, their advice was mostly related to my physical appearance. They told me that I should always sport a clean-shaved face, lest my tanned skin and beard led local farmers to confuse me with a Muslim, which could be somewhat problematic. Additionally—and in contrast with the other case—timetables and schedules were of capital importance: unpunctuality is severely frowned upon in the Netherlands.

Giving back more than you got: advocacy and proactive research

Once the research was underway, I found myself sharing in the actors' humanity and empathising with them. Rural economy in Andalusia is characterised by vertical power relations and imperial dynamics between producers and processors, and the research highlighted these dynamics. I always spoke my mind if anyone made questions about the local situation; however, I never told anyone what to do. This practice became crucial for building trust, and it opened debates among the local population around issues that used to be considered taboo, such as the price of milk or the methods of payment.

Since I felt it was impossible to hold back from this type of discussions, I constantly participated in both formal and informal debates. What is more, I was invited by local associations and municipalities to take part in conferences and meetings held during and after fieldwork. The local population saw my external position as an invitation to speak their minds freely: I was not involved in the production system, and thus I had nothing to lose by explaining them the unfair distribution of profits within the industrial system of cheese production. I considered my involvement to be a way of raising awareness about the existence of common problems and possible solutions.

As expected, Texel presented certain similarities, but also some contrasts. The internal dynamic along the supply chain was quite positive and fair; nevertheless, the actors were not sufficiently aware of existing initiatives among local and regional governments and organisations. Some Waddengroup members joined me during interviews with politicians and development agents; the fact that they

were being studied by a PhD candidate at Wageningen University increased their reputation. At the same time, they were very interested about my insights and perspectives about the project and its future, which I always shared with them.

The importance of being aware of who you are and with who you are

Commonly enough, researchers are human beings; as such, they have their own cultures, bodies, beliefs, and worldviews, which often are different from the communities they study. When any researcher comes into a new community, these differences may constrain his or her work. Thus, while conducting ethnographic research it is essential to never lose sight of who you are and with whom you are.

At the beginning of my research, my experience and knowledge of each reality—Sierra de Cádiz and Texel—was profoundly unequal. I was born only one hour and a half away from Sierra de Cádiz, in Seville, and consequently the culture and language represented no problem for me. Moreover, I had previously conducted fieldwork in the area (for a different project). The situation in Texel was extraordinarily different. I did not have any previous experience—not even as a tourist—in the area, and although I had taken a course to learn the local language, a brain aneurysm effectively erased my achievements in that particular field. One of the main challenges was overcoming this double barrier, and I followed an old strategy of social anthropology: to read copiously beforehand about the place where I was going to be and to hire a local interpreter upon arrival.

The Wadden Sea and the island of Texel are significantly famous in the Netherlands, so it was not difficult to find literature about their history and customs. I read books, formal articles, and reports, and complemented them with Internet sources where both natives and visitors shared stories and anecdotes. This strategy was enriched by continuously questioning and interacting with my privileged informant and my interpreter. I joined them on daily routines and activities, which were also helpful for introducing me to local inhabitants. The island's small size and my continuous participation in both formal and informal events changed the vision that local inhabitants had about me. Gradually, the locals started to see me as part of the local landscape, and after a while, I ceased being a tourist or a visitor: I became an anthropologist.

Chapter 3

**Policies, Market Regulations,
and Quality Labels: A New
Scenario for a New Rurality.**

a) Origin Food Labels as local responses to global changes

Origin Food Labels (OFLs) have achieved great importance within the agro-food sector; consequently, they are key tools in rural economies. Their rise and institutionalisation is the outcome of a complex transition known as the “quality turn”, which designates a new way of being rural or a new rurality in Europe. This transition is related to the existence of a new economy of signs in Europe (Lash and Urry, 1998)¹². In this new economy, objects are emptied of material value, which is then replaced with cognitive or aesthetic significance. In order to adapt to this state of affairs, food production has changed its internal logic from mass production to quality production. This transition affects each stage of the economy (production, transformation, distribution, and consumption) in a different way, and it alters the relationships among the existing actors within any food chain, thus unfolding new and alternative food networks (Renting *et al.* 2003).

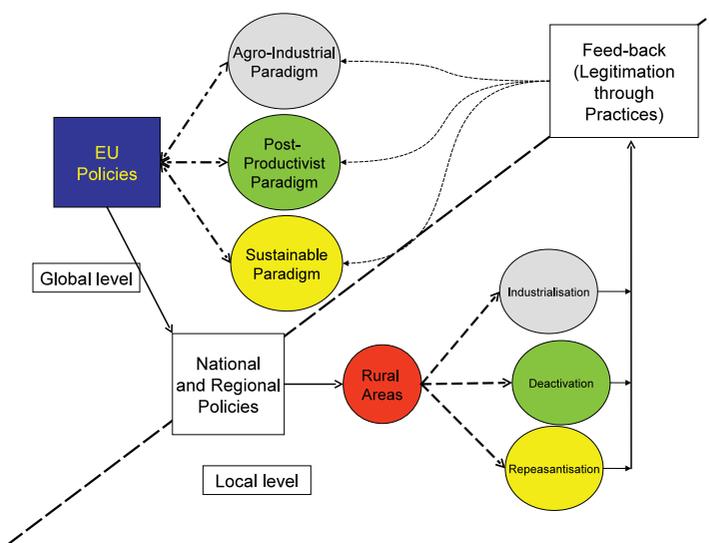
The actual existence of this “quality turn” has been the subject of scholarly debate for more than 15 years (van der Ploeg *et al.* 2000; Goodman, 2002, 2003, 2004; Lockie, 2002; Renting *et al.* 2003; Winter, 2003; Sonnino and Marsden, 2006; van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008). This debate included numerous case studies that proved that this turn truly exists in Europe (Knickel and Renting, 2000; van der Ploeg *et al.* 2002). The sceptical party, however, points to the following three issues in the picture drawn by the proponents of the quality turn: 1) conceptual deficiencies (Sayer, 1997; 2001); 2) analytic approach (Goodman and DuPuis, 2002; Lockie, 2002); 3) methodology used (Goodman, 2004). This criticism was answered by van der Ploeg and Renting in an article that discusses the nature of social transitions (2004); however, the debate still remains alive. Indeed, this doctoral dissertation is an indirect attempt, first, to prove that this turn is a reality in Europe, and second, to increase our understanding of it; this double goal is approached through studying two local transitional processes in Europe.

12 The existence of a new *economy of sign* in Europe and other western regions is the outcome of a de-organised capitalism that overcame national borders, but co-exists with other economic forms in many parts of the globalised world.

This dissertation approaches OFLs as social materialisations of an underlying transition, in which rural communities employ these labels as a response to the pressures of globalisation. OFLs are an economic strategy that redefines and institutionalises new practices, and—as it has already been noted—that affect the social and ecological elements of co-production. When a group of actors sits together to create or implement a label scheme, a process of self-review is inaugurated. First, the actors have to rethink their own local activities; then, they have to decide between “the real”, “the better”, and “the traditional” way to do things, and they also must reach a consensus on the matter; finally, this consensus becomes institutionalised in a Code of Practices. This process is not easy, and many initiatives disappear before ever achieving the “certified quality” status; in fact, this was the case of the PDO for sheep cheese Sierra de Grazalema, one of the two observational units analysed in this dissertation.

b) Global and local changes in agricultural practice within the EU

Figure 5: Local and global dynamics on agriculture



Aruraleconomy comprises those activities where living nature is used, reproduced, and transformed by human beings into a rich variety of often highly contrasting

expressions (van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008); one of these expressions is agriculture. Agriculture is the outcome of a certain type of interaction between living nature and human beings that can be termed co-production. If we analyse this interaction diachronically, it is possible to observe an ongoing agricultural co-evolution in any given territory. Activities undertaken by humans can ensure, preserve, and enhance this interaction, but they can also destroy one or both of the elements involved. A case-by-case analysis will determine a positive or a negative impact on local co-evolution.

In the case of agriculture, certain factors affect co-production and co-evolution: policies, consumption patterns, and market regulations. There are three main types of human responses (related to the three paradigms mentioned before) to the complex interactions between these factors and agriculture (Marsden, 2003): 1) industrialisation (agro-industrialist or productivist paradigm); 2) deactivation (post-productivist paradigm); 3) repeasantisation (alternative or sustainable development paradigm).

Farmers that follow the path of industrialisation tend to increase their scale of production and to intensify their activity by means of biotechnology and/or specialisation. Conversely, deactivation tends to redefine agricultural land use and to turn rural areas into places of consumption. Farmers that opted for the path of deactivation have usually found themselves before a dead-end: they could either become ever more indebted, or they could face bankruptcy as a result of the cost/price squeeze. In any case, their agricultural activities stop, and their farms can be sold or abandoned. The third possible response is alternative or sustainable rural development, where agricultural practices may be redefined by reintroducing multifunctionality. Farmers that follow this direction become involved in a process of repeasantisation, and try (among other things) to re-embed agriculture within local nature and culture (see van der Ploeg, 2008).

In point of fact, the two local transitions towards quality-oriented production described in this doctoral dissertation are part of a more general reorientation of agricultural practices in Europe in favour of multifunctionality¹³. In order to

13 More examples of similar local initiatives can be found in the book coordinated by Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, Ann Long, and Jo Banks in 2002, titled *Living Countrysides, Rural Development Processes in Europe: The State of Art*.

understand these transitions, it is necessary to review some changes in three elements related to agricultural practices: market regulations, consumers, and policies.

c) The opening up of markets and the end of freedom

In 1986, Spain joined the European Economic Community (EEC), which linked Andalusian¹⁴ farmers to a new market that not only demanded cheaper agricultural products but demanded them earlier in the year¹⁵. Therefore, it was reasonable for these farmers to embark upon a new era of productivism. Andalusian agriculture—which was characterised by low levels of mechanisation, lack of infrastructure, and concentration of land in the hands of traditionally passive land-owners (Ramos and Rodriguez, 1994)—began to industrialize. On the other hand, the Netherlands had begun the same process in the 1950s, when the modernization project took over the Dutch countryside (van der Ploeg, 2003).

Low production costs in Andalusia—compared to other parts of Europe—and its gentler climate prompted many producers to move there without much previous thought. The Regional Government's initial plan was to implement an agrarian reform to increase access to land for landless workers; however, by the beginning of the 1990s this plan had all but disappeared, and to modernize agriculture became the ultimate goal of rural development policy (Ramos and Romero, 1994). Farmers and cooperatives were more than happy to send tons of their production to distant markets: despite the lack of an adequate infrastructure and even when transportation costs were remarkably high, it remained good business. This situation drove many producers—and whole territories—into the agro-industrial model, as the following excerpt illustrates:

14 Due to Spain's internal diversity, and to the differential fact of Andalusia, in this dissertation I will use this region as the correlative comparative unit of The Netherlands.

15 There is an advantage for Andalusian farmers: the softer winter and warmer seasons allow them to start the harvest earlier than in the northern countries. Thus, their products arrive to the market without any competition at all. This situation provoked continuous attacks to food trucks by French farmers, who used to overturn convoys until their harvest was ready.

Back then, there was a lot of support for us to mechanise our production... which wasn't easy, because we weren't used to working like that. But we were able to fulfil all the orders we got, and everything was going well.

—Olive Oil Cooperative manager. 52 years old.

The creation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)—an outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations (1986-1995)—changed again the scenario for both Andalusian and Dutch farmers: it represented the beginning of the final implementation of a new global food regime (Friedmann, 1993). However, as Moran *et al.* argue, the way the food regime is experienced by different farmers varies according to their mode of integration into world food systems: particular farmers can be linked to industry and to political organisations in ways that can help define and shape agro-commodity chains (1996). The new agreements achieved at the Uruguay Round lasted until the Doha Program of 2001, where agriculture and services were at the centre of the negotiations among the 150 member States. Although the Doha Round did not succeed in creating a global multilateral agreement, it did define a framework for reaching bilateral agreements on import and export tariff reductions. The responsible for these negotiations in the EU is the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, and the possibility of any existing region within the EU to introduce its own agenda is very small. The open up of agricultural markets, the negotiations of the Commission Trade, and the CAP transformed the EU into the world's main agricultural importer¹⁶, at more than 98,295 million euros¹⁷.

Therefore, in a short period of time, Dutch and Andalusian farmers found themselves in a position of disadvantage in relation to countries where labour

16 Although it is not the objective of this work, I would like to underline the importance of this transition. Behind these numbers, as van der Ploeg describes on his book *The New Peasantry: Struggles for Autonomy and Sustainability in an Era of Empire and Globalisation* (2008), there are imperial dynamics that remove peasant communities from their land in order to export primary commodities to western countries. Thus, the globalisation of the agro-food sector is not a neutral process, but a struggle between corporations and communities for the use of fertile land and water. At the same time, social movements such as *Vía Campesina* or *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra* fight under the flag of *food sovereignty*, a concept coined by *Vía Campesina* in 1996 to defend the right of people to choosing their own food systems. For more information see Desmarais, 2007.

17 In just 10 years, according to the European Commission, the net value of agricultural imports has multiplied almost fourfold. For more information:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/tradepol/trade/index_en.htm

or currency was cheaper. The productivist model ceased to work for those who joined the club of Modernity, and farmers began to feel the need for a new strategy; as a shepherdder said when I interviewed him:

We have to bet on quality. What we have here is unique. We can't produce cheaper lamb than New Zealand: but we can produce better lamb.

—Shepherdder, 51 years old.

d) New consumption patterns: when something smells rotten in Denmark

The role of consumers is also essential in the transition of farmers towards a quality-oriented production. As industrial societies come to an end in the West, consumption patterns and perceptions of the agro-food system (and of rurality in general) are undergoing changes. Post-industrial societies recognise that globalisation and McDonalised are the causes of a general feeling of having lost certain traditional references (Ritzer, 1996). More concretely, one of the clearest consequences of globalisation in Europe is the tendency towards the standardization of consumption patterns and of food, which is supported by the agro-industrial model and by the mechanization of the agro-food sector. This dynamic is supported and promoted by powerful agro-food empires that sever agriculture from social and natural patterns of production and consumption (van der Ploeg, 2008), and its outcomes are often dangerous for consumers, producers, and the environment.

Nevertheless, consumers have been gaining awareness of the agro-industrial model's negative consequences and dubious ethical procedures. The appearance of diseases directly related to this manner of agricultural production—such as mad cow disease or bird flu—increases the perception of risk among consumers (Guidonet, 2010). Fuelled by this, debates start to take place within society, and citizens begin to question the agro-industrial mode of production and distribution. Furthermore, the continuous development of information technologies makes it easier for consumers to obtain data about the food that is sold to them—and harder for corporations to hide uncomfortable facts. However, this growing awareness among European citizens has not translated into large-scale political reactions

against the agro-industrial system, and most people continue to consume the food that it produces. This apparent contradiction is a manifestation of what Lipovetsky calls “painless ethics”, which is a basic characteristic of post-modern behaviour (1994).

Another element of this change is the development of ethical practices by consumers. The environmental and social problems created by the agro-industrial model force citizens to pay more attention to their food. In some cases, consumers even break down the dichotomy between producer and consumer, producing part of their own household food basket. Agro-industrial food is perceived as “soulless”, and products that relate to local climates and use a non-standardised presentation are perceived as more “natural” (Nygard and Storstad, 1998). This issue appeared in most of the interviews conducted during research, for example:

This cheese is good, but not because we are smarter than other producers. This cheese is good because our sheep eat what nature gives them. When you buy cheese in the supermarket, you know the brand and so on, but you don't know what you are really buying.

—Cheesemaker, 52 years old.

A small but important minority of consumers has come to terms with the fact that “natural” products sell at higher prices than industrial products. These consumers actively look for products that come from specific ecosystems and are produced according to traditional and local knowhow. Consumers accept the price difference because they perceive themselves as buying not only the physical product but also the cultural referents it incorporates (Espeitx, 1996; Lozano and Aguilar, 2012). Thus, it can be said that a new consumption pattern has appeared, which has been termed experiential consumption (Schmitt, 1999). People that engage in this type of consumption want more than just an appetizing flavour or a sound nutritional value in their food: they buy certain products based on the memories and feelings that the act of eating evokes in their emotional memories, which are further strengthened by an idyllic perception of the rural in opposition to the urban (Hervieu, 1997).

e) Redefining the Common Agriculture Policies: The Never-ending Story

A final element to take into account in order to understand the transition of farmers towards a quality-oriented production is the redefinition of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)¹⁸. Created in the 1960s, the CAP has undergone a series of crisis and reforms, and its trajectory can be divided into the following six periods: 1) The Early Years; 2) The Crisis Years; 3) The 1992 Reform; 4) Agenda 2000; 5) The CAP 2003 Reform; 6) The CAP 2008 Health-Check. The first two periods were characterised by a strong market intervention: farmers received economic support, and consequently their production increased. This tendency continued until the beginning of the 1990s, when a slow but unstoppable process of reorientation started.

This process of reorientation was carried out through a set of reforms; I consider the following four of them to be the most important: 1) the MacSharry Reform; 2) the Agenda 2000; 3) the 2003 reform; 4) the CAP Health-Check in 2008.

In 1991, Commissioner MacSharry tried to change the CAP's productivist orientation. The undesirable consequences of over-production were one of the issues that led to this reform. The EU was producing goods at such an excessive rate that it created a subsidy for exporting them, which resulted in other countries being saturated with cheap European food. Their agro-food sector was unable to compete with European exporters, and many farmers had to leave their farms. The MacSharry reform introduced the LEADER Initiatives¹⁹, which are a highly symbolic change in the CAP and represent a move towards the economic diversification of rural areas.

18 Since it is not this dissertation's goal to review the CAP, I do not elaborate upon the trajectory of the CAP and the existing literature.

19 LEADER is the acronym of *Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale*. There have been three versions of this initiative so far: LEADER I (1992-1994), LEADER II (1995-1999), and LEADER + (2000-2006). The importance of these initiatives, defined as a platform for experimentation, can be inferred from the amount of literature on the topic.

The Leader Initiatives became an instrument that local actors and agencies used for experimentation; thanks to them, the institutional map of rural areas in the EU was forever altered²⁰.

With Agenda 2000 the CAP underwent yet another important transformation: territory was redefined as a resource, and the links between territory, culture, and identity were favoured (Ray, 1998; Esparcia, 2000; Lozano, 2008; Aguilar et al., 2009). The idea behind this reform was to strengthen the new model implemented by the LEADER Initiatives. Some authors argue that this reform aims at fostering a competitive but environmentally friendly rural economy (Moyano and Paniagua, 1998).

Another important step was taken in 2003, with the Midterm Review (Massot, 2003). This review separated subsidies from production, associating them, rather, with the total area of land that farmers manage or own. This is known as the Single Payment Scheme. Five years later, in 2008, the EU agriculture ministers reached a political agreement on the CAP “Health Check”, the aim of which was to modernise, simplify, and streamline the CAP and to remove restrictions on farmers, thus improving their ability to respond to market signals and to face new challenges such as climate change, water-management, and bio-energy.

The last proposed reform to the CAP was still under discussion while I was conducting my research. The legal proposal of the new CAP was presented by the Commissioner on October 12th, 2013. This proposal has three main objectives: 1) viable food production; 2) sustainable management of natural resources; 3) balanced territorial development.

According to some authors, these changes in the CAP would allow the rural economy to enter a process of re-structuration; potentially, it could finally transition to a scope economy based on a quality-oriented production and embedded in local

20 Many scholars saw in this new program the seed of the future model of European rural development. This was the case of Kovách, who in 2000 wrote the following: “I, however, consider it to be, potentially, the essence of EU rural development policy. This interpretation is based on the premise that LEADER might become the dominant principle and practice of European rural development policy (and thereby, but conditionally, fundamental to the European response to globalisation). LEADER should be seen as an advanced model of rural policy, for it is within its ideology and practice that we can trace the dynamics of CAP reform and the raw material of a new rural policy regime” (2000:181).

nature and culture (Piore and Sabel, 1984; Saccomandi and van der Ploeg, 1998; van der Ploeg *et al.* 2000; van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008; Lozano and Aguilar, 2012). In this new economy, agriculture's essential multifunctionality would be recognised, thus promoting a European scenario where living nature and rural communities would interact with each other in a healthier manner. Potentially, this policy could help Europe's rural areas to offer a new range of quality products and services for the new citizens of the 21st century (Banks and Marsden, 2001; Aguilar, 2007).

f) The legal framework for Origin Food Labels in Europe

Quality Food Labels in Europe are enormously wide-ranging, and their quantity and quality increase continuously. I will thus describe only the legal framework of Origin Food Labels, which are those labels whose nature is to link together the following three categories (which have been nicknamed “the three Ps”): 1) Place; 2) Product; 3) People.

The Mediterranean countries of Europe have a longer OFLs tradition, and hence have more experience with the regulations involved. In the case of Spain, the *Estatuto del vino* was approved in 1932, and it regulated the proper way to refer to the origin of grapes and to their transformation into wine. Portugal, France, Spain, and Italy were—and still are—the main innovators in this field. 75% of the products protected by the Regulation (EC) 628/2008 come from southern Europe (Sonnino and Marsden, 2006)²¹.

The first European regulation for protecting local and traditional products was approved in 1992 (Regulation 2081/1992). This regulation followed the model of existing regulations, such as the Spanish and French. However, the United States found this regulation to be a disruption of world trade, and they initiated a legal process against the EU before the WTO²². In 2005 the EU had lost the process, and the WTO ruled that the existing regulations had to be redefined. Consequently, the EU approved the following two new regulations:

21 Some authors defend that the entrance of southern countries changed the CAP orientation about products with direct payment, (Ventura *et al.* 2006).

22 For a deeper analysis of the historical regulation of these initiatives I recommend the reading of the article written by Cecilia Falconí: *Una Perspectiva de las Denominaciones Geográficas en el Siglo XXI: OMC y CAN* (2009)

Chapter 3

- 1) Council Regulation (EC) No 509/2006 of 20 March 2006 on agricultural products and foodstuff as traditional specialities guaranteed.
- 2) Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designation of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

Later, in 2010, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development elaborated and approved the Quality Package 2010²³. This package of regulations consists of a comprehensive policy on certification schemes, value-adding terms for agricultural product quality, and product standards. The package includes:

- 1) A new Agricultural Product Quality Schemes Regulation.
- 2) A new general base-line Marketing Standard.
- 3) New guidelines of best practices on voluntary certification schemes.

This package came into force on 2012, and it represents the institutionalisation of quality as an economic strategy for agriculture. Nowadays, Quality is one of the 16 areas of the CAP, and this policy recognises 441 quality schemes within the 27 members. The Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and the Geographical Indication (GI) are just two of these schemes. This diversity underlines the need of local self-regulation for quality food production. However, the EU still has the power to recognise each local quality scheme.

These regulations work as a common institutional framework for OFLs within the EU, and they are the outcome of an historical and particular process of local and global interactions. They are the foundations on which local actors can support and unfold their own projects; in turn, these projects can reshape existing regulation or even create new and alternative institutional frameworks. Although a PDO label is the highest level of protection for any product, sometimes the lack of flexibility it entails and the transaction costs make it seem

²³ This package was the outcome of a long discussion within the Commission, for further information see: ec.europa.eu/quality/index_en.htm

uninteresting. Moreover, from a theoretical point of view, we can see a massive project of rationalisation that created a complex and inflexible iron cage for products and producers. This is one of the reasons that drove the Waddengroup out of this system. In the case of Sierra de Cádiz, the control and promotion of the initiative by the local public authorities made them see the PDO as the natural answer for the promotion of local cheese. What we can see here is an expression of the importance of the quality and type of participation of local actors at the interface. The Waddengroup's decision to "go entrepreneurial" is partly rooted in their own previous experiences, but also in the lack of direct support from the Dutch government for this kind of initiatives. In the Andalusian case, the leading role played the public administration reduced private initiative and thus the possibilities for any non-governmentally controlled model of certification.

Chapter 4

Quality Goes Further than Labels: Resistance and Adaptation in Sierra de Cádiz

*Muchos prometen la luna, hasta llegar al poder.
Muchos prometen la luna, y cuando arriba se ven,
No escuchan quejas ningunas y te tratan con el pie.²⁴*

*Al pueblo de Andalucía dale alas y volará,
Que es un ave doloría que busca la libertad
Que le han negao toa su vía.²⁵*

- El Cabrero

a) Introduction

The above strophes correspond to *fandangos*—a style of flamenco—written by José Domínguez *El Cabrero* (the goat herder), a singer from Aznalcóllar, who is famous for his songs about the problems and struggles of rural inhabitants of Andalusia. They evidence two of the key problems that caused the attempt to achieve a PDO for the cured sheep cheese in Sierra de Cádiz to fail: 1) the distance between power and people (even at the local level); 2) the traditional constrain that the elites apply to the entrepreneurs in order to avoid changes.

This chapter focuses on the initiative that sought to achieve a PDO for the cured sheep cheese made in Sierra de Grazalema, Spain. Its production is characterised by the use of local milk from the native breed of sheep, *Oveja Merina de Grazalema* (henceforth referred to as “Grazalema sheep”). The chapter is divided in 5 parts. First, I describe the territorial references for local actors in Sierra de Cádiz. Second, I categorise and describe the actors involved in the creation of the PDO and in the production of the cheese. I explain the internal differences among them, and their relationship with the project. Third, I describe the previous domestic system of producing cheese, and how this process of co-production was banned by the Council Directive 92/46/EEC of 16 June 1992. Fourth, I focus on the

24 Many people promise you the moon, until they reach power. Many promise the moon, and when they are on the top, they do not listen to your problems and kick you around.

25 The people of Andalusia only needs wings to fly, for it's a bird in pain looking for the freedom that they've denied it during all its life.

local response to this new institutional context, characterised by the strategies of resistance and adaptation, whose outcome was a division of the system of production into an artisanal sector and an industrial sector. Fifth, I describe the process by which the industrial sector was institutionalised with the support of local authorities; a process that ended in the creation of a PDO.

b) Sierra de Cádiz: an unclear territorial reference

The creation of an OFL requires the existence of a clear territorial reference; however, as I explain in this chapter, this condition is not met in Sierra de Cádiz. Spain includes 8116 municipalities—the smallest territorial units according to law. Between the State and the municipality there are regions and provinces. Public authority is distributed among these four levels of government, and there are four administrative organisations that assume authority: 1) State; 2) Autonomous Community; 3) Provincial Government; 4) Council. Each of these levels has an internal division of duties according to separate issues, and although there is a certain degree of self-government, the Constitution defines the State as the main authority. When any territory is institutionalised in Spain, municipal borders define its limits. Thus, a municipality and its population can belong to many territories.

In 1992 the Maastricht Treaty introduced the principle of subsidiarity in the EU. This principle designated the regional level as the most appropriate level for implementing rural development policy. Since the existing scheme did not have an administrative level that coincided with the requirements of the LEADER Initiative, Andalusia's institutional map was strongly affected. It was necessary to transform the rural institutional map in order to implement and manage these processes of guided planning. After eighteen years, this transformative process has produced a new rural institutional map in Spain, where 232 LAGs try to redefine economic and social activities within their new territories. In Andalusia there are 52 LAGs, and they are the main governance actors in their 52 corresponding rural areas.

Figure 6: LAGs in Andalusia



Source: Regional Minister for Agriculture, Fishery and Environment

These rural areas are informally known as *comarcas* (counties), even if the county has never existed formally as an administrative subdivision. It is essential to notice that, as a consequence, the Andalusian map underwent a process of territorialisation that unfolded a new framework for social relationships. At first sight, it seems clear that this new territorial organisation has as its main aim to consolidate a new system of development. The fact that it focuses on the territorial economy rather than on the economic sector is an argument in favour of this conclusion. Nevertheless, it has been highlighted that rural development initiatives in Spain have a double function: they have improved quality of life in rural areas, but at the same time they have become very efficient tools in the hands of political-administrative institutions which use them to legitimise their own agendas and interventions (Esparcia, 2000; Esparcia *et al.* 2000). This double function can be observed in Sierra de Cádiz. Local actors have the following three main territorial references at the local level:

- 1) *Mancomunidad de Municipios de la Sierra de Cádiz* (Sierra de Cádiz Commonwealth of Municipalities, henceforth referred to as “the mancomunidad”).
- 2) *Comarca Agraria de la Sierra de Cádiz* (Sierra de Cádiz Traditional Administrative Region, henceforth referred to as “the comarca”).

- 3) *Parque Natural de la Sierra de Grazalema* (Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park, henceforth referred to as “Natural Park Sierra de Grazalema” or simply “the natural park”).

The mancomunidad

The mancomunidad is constituted by 19 municipalities; it has a total area of 1,998 km² and a total population of 116,792 inhabitants. Although the word “sierra” means “mountains”, the whole area of the county is not geographically mountainous. There are three internal territorial units: 1) the southern mountains; 2) the *campiña* or open country; 3) and the northern mountains (Figure 7). These subdivisions answer to geographical and cultural patterns, and the interaction between them throughout history has been continuous and economically complementary²⁶. This interaction is rooted in the existence of three different ecological and economic niches.

The mancomunidad came into existence as an institutionalised territorial unit less than 20 years ago, as the outcome of a social movement led by local mayors during the 1980s. The mayors sought to create a platform to solve specific problems in the area that could not be properly managed by regional or municipal authorities. Specifically, their objective was to create a new administrative level that would be able to solve water management problems and waste collection deficiencies; it would centralise services that small villages could not perform by themselves and that other levels of the administration did not pay attention to. This process involved 19 municipalities²⁷, the organisation was created, and the social movement was dissolved. At the present time, this organisation’s headquarters are located in Villamartín, a town in the *campiña*.

26 This territory’s economic complementarity is more than just theoretical: older people still talk about the exchanges of products between the *campiña* and the mountain, and the movement of herds once involved the county’s three current subdivisions. However, the engagement with the global markets through cooperatives and supermarkets has seriously diminished these exchanges. The *ventas*, which functioned as the centres of this system, are at the present time the last vestiges of these former practices.

27 Alcalá del Valle, Algar, Algodonales, Arcos de la Frontera, Benaocaz, Bornos, El Bosque, El Gastor, Espera, Grazalema, Olvera, Prado del Rey, Puerto Serrano, Setenil de las Bodegas, Torre Alh quime, Ubrique, Villaluenga del Rosario, Villamart n y Zahara de la Sierra

Figure 7: Internal division of the mancomunidad



Source: LAG Sierra de Cádiz

A few years later, this process of territorialisation was reinforced with the EU LEADER Initiatives. In 1991, a group of technicians working for the former *Instituto de Fomento Andaluz* (Andalusian Institute for Development), who were responsible for developing projects within the natural park, decided to create an association and apply for LEADER Initiative funds. Included were 19 municipalities with a total population of 93,505 inhabitants and a total area of 1,129 km². Most of the towns were also part of the already existing mancomunidad, but four of them were replaced (Bornos, Espera, Villamartín and Arcos de la Frontera) by more suitable ones (Paterna, Benalup, Medina, and Alcalá de los Gazules). In 1996, the Local Action Group (LAG) redefined that map, taking into account LEADER II, in order that both organisations could share a common map of reference to increase synergy and coherence within the territory²⁸.

²⁸ The municipalities that were removed from this map joined the LAG *Los Alcornocales*, a rural development area located in the south of the province, which includes the *Parque Natural Los Alcornocales*. This re-territorialisation was essential for reinforcing the power network (centred on the Mancomunidad and the LAG) controlled by local politicians whose. Later on, in 2009, this network became physically concentrated in Villamartín.

The Comarca

The comarca was created as a local division of the former Consejería de Agricultura y Pesca (Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery). It is formed by 14 municipalities of the southern and northern mountains²⁹, and it has a total extension of 1,055 km². This is the main territorial reference for local farmers, who can solve most of their bureaucratic processes in its offices. The comarca also has technicians who answer daily farm questions, and it is also an instrument for the government to control local producers. This territory has become a successful reference for two reasons: 1) it engages with pre-existing labour territorial identities (cattle raisers, cheesemakers, oil processors, etc.); 2) its 14 municipalities share a similar socio-ecological niche, the mountains. Actors within this framework share a similar framework of agricultural practices. Thus, the existence of an administrative border between them and other farmers is a retro-alimentary dynamic. Farmers within this territory tend to interact with each other because they do not need extra papers to do so; in this way, they continuously increase their network within this territory, and the border becomes more visible.

Different kinds of territorialisation processes produced different responses from local population. The comarca divides the Andalusian territory according to land uses. It is an instrument for the regional government to control and support rural economies, and it is surprisingly uncontested by local population. The comarca has two offices, one for the northern mountains and one for the southern mountains. These offices engage with the local population's cognitive map and with existing agro-ecological niches. Indeed, this territorial reference became more "natural" for local actors than the mancomunidad. This tendency is reinforced by the local perception of the territory, which mixes the proximity of the organisation with the territory itself. When locals talk about the mancomunidad, they think of the physical office located in Villamartín³⁰; this makes it harder for them to identify with this organisation, especially for those living in the mountains.

29 Alcalá del Valle, Algodonales, Benaocaz, El Bosque, El Gastor, Grazalema, Olvera, Prado del Rey, Puerto Serrano, Setenil de las Bodegas, Torre Alháuquime, Ubrique, Villaluenga del Rosario, and Zahara de la Sierra

30 Villamartín is a town located in the western side of the county, which also houses other institutions such as the county hospital, the *mancomunidad*, and the LAG. The population of the southern and northern mountains see them as far away actors. To get an idea of the distance, it takes more than an hour to get there from Grazalema or Benaocaz by car. The lack of regular public transport reinforces this perception, which undermines the idea of the *mancomunidad* as a reference.

Natural Park Sierra de Grazalema

The natural park is constituted by 13 municipalities³¹, and it is one of the few bi-provincial parks in Andalusia. It was created in 1984 by the Regional Government in order to manage and protect the territory surrounding the *Pinsapar*, a unique forest of Abeis Pinsapo. This rare tree can be found in only two areas of the planet: Sierra de Cádiz and The Rift, Morocco. In 1971 UNESCO officially recognised this particularity and declared the *Pinsapar Biosphere Reserve*, with a total surface of 3,308 hectares. In this way, the creation of the natural park by the Regional Government increased the protected area to the current 534 km².

These regulations affected local daily life, and therefore the territory was highly contested by the local population. It is important to notice that 20% of the Andalusian territory is under this kind of protection. Thus, there is an extended narrative about the problems that these types of protective schemes pose for local economies throughout the region. However, the natural park is a tourist attraction, and, as I will explain later, tourism has been crucial for the survival of the rural economy in this area.

Due to its protectionist approach, this institutional framework has a strong influence on the local rural economy. Co-production is highly conditioned by it. The main complaint voiced by the local population is that, often enough, these regulations are designed and written from far away offices, by politicians that lack basic knowledge about local agriculture or natural dynamics. A clear example of this happened during the last decade, when a new regulation from the Regional Government enforced organic practices for agriculture within Natural Protected Areas without having previously met with a representative from the farmers' associations.

The *Comisión Gestora del Parque* (Management Commission of the Natural Park) is the local instrument for the governance of this territory. It was created to facilitate local participation, but the actors involved have found that their own agency is rather limited. The decisions that really matter are taken by politicians from the Regional Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery, and Environment. In fact, local farmers perceive this organisation as a legitimating tool, rather than as a

31 El Bosque, Prado del Rey, Zahara de la Sierra, Olvera, Algodonales, El Gastor, Grazalema, Villaluenga del Rosario, Benaocaz, Ubrique Ronda, Montejaque, Benaoján, Jímera de Líbar y Cortes de la Frontera

participatory platform. Nevertheless, a new manager has taken the lead of the natural park, and, thanks to his increasing support for local farmers and the local economy, his administration is changing the way in which the institution is perceived. According to our interviews, he sees the lack of local participation as a problem, and the Management Team is working to improve this issue.

Figure 8: General view of the farm “Aguas Nuevas” (Benaocaz)



c) Farmers, cheesemakers and development agencies: local actors struggling against each other.

Livestock Farmers

Sierra de Cádiz has an important sector of livestock farmers; the main animals in local farms are goats and sheep. This fact is the outcome of a strong tradition. According to one of the archaeologists that I met in Zahara, this territory has been used for livestock farming since the 13th century, when the kingdoms of Seville and Granada shared a border. Goats and sheep were favoured because of their mobility and autonomy. Furthermore, the existence in the region of many *cañadas* and *vías pecuarias*³² that serve these native breeds are arguments in favour of the existence of a successful co-evolution.

32 Currently, these paths are under the State's special protection. They have to be accessible for farmers and their animals. It is an old system for the movement of herds between seasons from north to south or from lowlands to highlands. Alfonso X created them in the 11th century.

We (the team of archaeologists) have been working on this area for a long time and have mainly found sheep and goats bones. Our interpretation is that it is comparatively easier and faster to move these animals through the mountains than cows or pigs [...]. We are talking about an area that for almost two centuries was the border between Castilla and Granada.

—Archaeologist, 40 years old.

The native goat breed is called *Cabra Payoya* (Payoya goat) (Figure 9); the native sheep breed *Oveja Merina de Grazalema* (Figure 10). They are part of this area's ecological capital, and represent the outcome of a long process of co-evolution. Due to a careful selection undertaken by farmers, and also because of the interaction with the territory, the Payoya is a dairy goat with long legs and body. Local farmers value this slenderness, for it aids the goat to navigate the region's mountainous geography. In addition, their milk is rich in fat and proteins, which produces high-quality cheese.

The same process of selection and of interaction with its surroundings resulted in the Grazalema sheep being a strong breed, taller than average and with thick wool that helps it survive in the rainy environment³³. Grazalema sheep milk is also extraordinarily apt for the production of cheese, and its wool was used to produce the *Mantas de Grazalema*, famous capes able to stay dry even under strong rain (Aguilar, 2003, in Bueno and Aguilar, 2003). Both breeds are endangered; at the present time, they are mainly located in Sierra de Cádiz (the southern mountains being their core location)³⁴ and Serranía de Ronda, a nearby territory. Also, these breeds are highly adapted to the local ecosystem, and only a very small number of farmers keep them in other locations³⁵.

33 Grazalema is the 4th town with the most rainfall per year in Spain. The wet season comprises the summer and the winter; summers are usually dry.

34 *Payoya* or *Payoyo* is the name of the inhabitants of *Villaluenga del Rosario*; this is the town that people make reference to when they talk about the origin of this breed. In the case of the sheep, the origin is also implicit in the name, and *Grazalema* is still one of the towns with more sheep of this breed.

35 I visited a farm in the *campiña* area, and I could see the difference in terms of health. The sheep in this farm were far more skinny and weak than those only a few miles away. Indeed, according to the veterinarian, diseases affect these sheep more than those that live in the mountains.

Figure 9: Payoya Goat



Source: ACAPA

Agriculture in Sierra de Cádiz mostly reflects a peasant-like logic of production and is characterised by the combination of different activities within the farm household. Indeed, most of the herders own several kinds of animals and engage in secondary activities, such as horticulture. Local herders understand farming as both an individual and a social activity. Each herder manages his own group of animals, but usually they cooperate with each other during certain tasks, such as moving the herds up or down the mountains³⁶.

During fieldwork, I studied those herders involved in the cheese supply chain; they are organised in the following two associations:

- *Asociación de Criadores de Raza Caprina Payoya (ACAPA).*
- *Asociación de Criadores de Raza Ovina Merina de Grazalema (AMEGRA).*

³⁶ I participated on several occasions in this kind of task. No money is paid in exchange; it is an example of mutual support. According to my experience, this support is compensated in two different ways: 1) instant reward (usually common lunch or dinner); 2) future reciprocity (maybe next week or next year). I found that this task is a very important moment of interaction. Farmers can see how others manage the animals; also, they exchange advice with each other. The repetition of this kind of task creates informal groups that form the social structure of other events. It is also a key element for the generation of trust. It measures the amount of social capital of each farmer (following Bourdieu's definition) and illustrates the existence of social capital (following Putman's).

Chapter 4

Both associations were created during the mid-1990s by the Real Decreto 1682/1997, which regulates the procedures to raise and financially support native breeds. Most of the farmers who own specimens of the two breeds belong to the associations; nevertheless, this is not required in order to obtain the national subsidies for the promotion of the breeds.

Figure 10: Oveja Merina de Grazalema



Source: AMEGRA

AMEGRA and ACAPA provide farmers with access to different programs, such as milk control, genetic registration, or veterinarian advice. Other programs are directed at avoiding certain genetic problems that may arise due to excessive inbreeding. At the present time, AMEGRA has 34 farmers, who own 4,834 Grazalema sheep, and ACAPA has 31 farmers, who own 8,163 Payoya goats. In average, each herd consists of 150 sheep or 250 goats. The reduced size of the herds is due to the fact that a low amount of animals can be managed by a single farmer without any external help, and that it can be sustained by the land itself during most of the year, without having to resort to external food³⁷.

³⁷ According to my interviews, some years ago it was common to avoid buying cereals during the whole year. However, this changed for the following two reasons: 1) milk began to be sold; 2) the traditional rotation of land was interrupted by the creation of the natural park and the appropriation of land by the State during the 1970s.

Since their creation, both associations' membership has increased. They have become the social representatives of local farmers in the area, and played a part in the process of creating the PDO. These associations are social structures that farmers can use to achieve their objectives—they resemble niches. Their presidents are always respected farmers who come from families with a long and solid presence in the region. A wide variety of projects have sprung from both associations³⁸.

Tradition prevents farmers from changing systems of production; however, I found that two following different farming styles exist in the region (van der Ploeg, 1992): 1) peasant-like; 2) entrepreneurial (van der Ploeg, 2008). Daily activities and methods of farm organisation gave me enough observational material to draw the distinction, which became clearer during the course of open discussions among the farmers. During the *I Jornadas técnicas sobre el cabrito y el cordero ecológico*, celebrated in Benaocaz in February 2011, some farmers went for a drink after the official dinner and talked about the proper manner of conducting their affairs.

A discussion about the milk, its price, and to whom it should be sold, was of special interest. Most of the farmers' discourse can be termed localist: the option of producing for the local market—even when it is not so lucrative—was defended. In their view, to sell elsewhere would be an instance of *pan para hoy y hambre para mañana*³⁹. The rest of the farmers thought of the future as being less important than the present, and defended the punctuality of the “French money”, which refers to *Fromandal*, a subsidiary company of *Eurial International*.

This French multinational arrived to Grazalema at the end of the 1980s looking for goat milk, and it opened the first cheese factory in the area. This factory was located in Grazalema and produced the goat cheese *Sierra de Grazalema*. In 2009

38 These associations are defined by the law as a technical support for farmers breeding Payoya goats and Grazalema sheep, but in several instances they go farther than that. For example, *Eco-rebaño* was a project developed by members of AMEGRA that tried to create an organic slaughterhouse in Benaocaz. The project was blocked by the intervention of politicians. They promised to give the farmers financial support. The farmers would have to wait until they had a new program for the area. However, the project died while it waited for that promise to be fulfilled. This incident divided farmers according to political parties. Currently, farmers are trying to recover this project.

39 This local saying means “Bread today, hunger tomorrow”. It highlights how local culture is influenced by the peasant perception of time: what is done has to be good tomorrow. If a given actions reinforces the household's autonomy, then it is considered positive; if it produces a greater dependence, then it will be avoided, even when it may seem good for the present.

the French corporation decided to close this part of their Spanish branch due to the high cost of manpower. Nevertheless, the goat milk is still collected and micro-filtered in Lebrija, Seville, from where it is sent to France for processing. The fact that this company still owns the brand name *Sierra de Grazalema*, was one of the many obstacles in order to create the PDO; however, it mostly uses the milk to make a famous type of goat ruled-cheese named *Soignon*.

That same night, one of the entrepreneurial farmers tried to buy a sheep from one of the peasant farmers, but the latter refused the deal. He later told me that he had no problem with lending him the sheep—“the animals can go for a walk,” he said, “but they have to sleep at home”. When I asked him to elaborate on this answer, he explained that it would be fine to sell yearling lamb, since that would not affect the group; however, you only sell adult specimens if you really need to. His explanation is illustrative of the two different farming styles: peasant-like farmers see the herd as a unit and understand that the older specimens play a specific role within it, but entrepreneurial farmers only perceive the monetary value of individual animals.

Cheesemakers

For centuries, cheese-making has been part of the herders' daily life in Sierra de Cádiz; local knowhow, the territory's diverse characteristics, and the uniqueness of the native breeds have combined to create a result that cannot be found anywhere else. This economic activity was embedded in both nature and culture. To make cheese was something more than just a local strategy for managing the stock of milk: the process was a part of the household's daily life, and included people from every gender and age. As I will explain later, the traditional way of making cheese produced and reproduced gender relationships, because women were the ones who made and sold the cheese, whilst men took care of the animals and the farm. The fact that this traditional system has changed is not trivial: the transition has forced women to look for work outside the household, and the knowhow and tradition that used to pass from mother to daughter is disappearing.

The industrialisation of this economic activity introduced a new infrastructure along with a new set of actors: the cheese factory and the industrial cheesemakers. Currently, the industry is in the hands of entrepreneurs that hire workers to

produce standardised cheese. If people used to learn the craft of cheese-making from their parents, they now have to take formal courses elsewhere; this results in uprooting cheese-making from the territory and local culture, and reduces the territorial link with local milk.

The appearance of industrial cheesemakers was directly related to new EU food safety regulations that came into force at the beginning of the 1990s. It is important to notice the transition, first, from a domestic to an artisanal system of production, and finally, from an artisanal system to an industrial one. Also, it is important to understand the ways in which the institutional framework and the local actors influenced this transition. The LAG and the local politicians no longer considered the artisanal system of production as a valid alternative; it was accused of being inefficient and backward. On the other hand, the industrial system (based on an entrepreneurial logic and supported by the external socio-technical regime that promotes the industrialisation of agriculture) started to receive strong financial and institutional support.

These transitions are considerably complex, and will be analysed afterwards. At the present moment, it is only important to emphasise that this change in the legal framework transformed the local system of production, which was based on a domestic economy, had a peasant-like logic of operation, and was characterised by reduced inputs and outputs. Even if this system still survives, it has to compete with an industrial system of production—disconnected from nature, from the territory, and from local knowhow, with higher externalities and costs. Moreover, the supply chain was extended, and this introduced an unbalanced profit distribution, with a concentration in the cheesemakers' hands.

Currently, there are 15 cheesemakers in the region, mostly located in the southern mountains. What they have in common is the use (to a certain extent) of local sheep and goat milk, the recipe to make the cheese, and the presentation of the final product as local and traditional. However, the ways in which they approach the market, and their respective modes of processing and marketing the cheese, differ from one another. The fact is that each of them sells a unique product, because they individually select certain farmers and milk providers, a specific rennet, and an original presentation.

Figure 11: Cheese Factory “El Bosqueño” (El Bosque)



The cheesemakers' processing system ranges—as noted above—from the artisanal to the industrial. Both of these categories are heuristic, but I measure them according to the following six variables: 1) manual or mechanical processing; 2) internal or external provision of milk; 3) use of natural or chemical rennet; 4) scale of production; 5) use of traditional tools; 6) length (physical and symbolic) of their supply chain.

In Table 1 there is an interpretation of the collected data. The number of stars assigned to each cheese maker depends on the level of artisanship or of industrialism of the processing systems and on the length of the supply chains. “Five” represents the highest degree of artisanship together with the shortest supply chain. This heuristic characterisation helped me to understand contrasting local strategies. The cases defined as artisanal followed a logic of resistance based on preserving the existing local knowhow; the cases defined as industrial adapted the existing resources to external technologies and logics of production.

Table 1 shows the internal diversity among cheesemakers. This diversity is remarkable given the small number of producers; it is linked to the contrasting processes of professionalization and industrialisation of the former domestic system of production.

Table 1: System of processing and supply chains longitude

Cheesemaker	Processing system	Supply Chain Longitude
Pajarete	★★★	★★★
Payoyo	★★★	★★★
La Velada	★★★	★★★★
Sierra de Ubrique	★★★	★★★★
Castillo de Zahara	★★★	★★★★
El Bosqueño	★★★	★★★
Quesos Oliva	★★★★★	★★★★★
La Cabra Verde	★★★★	★★★★
Quesos Mangana	★★★★	★★★★★
Fromandal, S.A.	★	★

In summary, the consequences of each of these variables are the following. The enlargement of the supply chain, first, aggravates environmental impact due to the increase of food-miles; second, reduces local profits because the milk is imported; third, decreases local farmers' agency due to the introduction of external inputs from unknown suppliers. In addition, the changes in the mode of processing, first, increase dependency due to the introduction of external technology; second, decompose gender relationships due to the mechanisation of female work; third, increase energy input and external output.

Local Action Group Sierra de Cádiz (LAG)

In order to understand local dynamics and agricultural transitions in Andalusia—and in Europe—it is crucial to analyse the LEADER Initiatives (Barke and Newton, 1997; Ray, 1998; Esparcia, *et al.* 2000; Kovach, 2000; Ray, 2000; van der Ploeg, *et al.* 2000; van der Ploeg, *et al.* 2002; Derkzen, 2008; Aguilar, *et al.* 2009). The guidelines for rural development in Sierra de Cádiz are defined in Brussels and implemented by the LAG ACEDERSICA, whose objective is supporting rural entrepreneurs to unfold new projects and products in the territory. This LAG was one of the first in Andalusia. The current composition of the Rural Development Area is the outcome of a redefinition that took place in 1995 in the context of LEADER II. Technicians and managers have a long experience implementing programs and initiatives; they have become a key element for understanding

this territory’s internal dynamic. Since 1991, the LAG has been responsible for implementing many initiatives and programs, the LEADER Initiatives being the main instrument for territorial transformation.

Table 2: EU Initiatives implemented and number of projects financed in Sierra de Cádiz

European Initiatives	LEADER I	LEADER II	LEADER +
Number of projects	112	175	101
Total amount (€)	10.730.000	11.853.000	15.855.976

Source: LAG Sierra de Cádiz

With the goal of articulating the local economy and the globalised markets in a more profitable way, the LAG has sought to increase the visibility of local products and services (Aguilar, *et al.* 2009; Sacco dos Anjos, *et al.* 2011)—especially of olive oil, cheese, and rural tourism, which constitute the local economy’s core. The main outcome of this strategy is to transform the name “Sierra de Cádiz” into a label that consumers can link to notions of quality, nature, and tradition. A central part of these efforts has been the introduction of quality systems. The LAG used funds from the LEADER Initiatives to promote high quality products and services. For this end, it has implemented quality systems such as *Q of Quality* for tourism services, *Marca Parque Natural de Andalucía* for products and services related to the natural park, and PDOs for olive oil and cheese.

The LAG’s internal structure has changed with each edition of the LEADER Initiative. Currently, it is formed by a group of representatives from the territory—a Territorial Council—and by the management team and the technicians. The implementation of European Initiatives follows the usual process. First, technicians have to analyse the territory’s situation; then, based on their findings, they draft a local strategy for the predefined territory. Once the manager and the president agree with the document, it is presented to the Assembly. If they approve the document, they send a copy of it to the regional government, who publishes the final version online. This document is a strong tool for local actors, but my fieldwork revealed that even when the information is published, it is not precisely public. Since its creation, the LAG has been involved in a network of power relations. Within this network, the document works well;

outside of it, adequate management is lacking (Esparcia, 2000; Kovách, 2000; Thuesen, 2010).

This network of power relations reflects a common cultural pattern in Andalusia known as *caciquismo*, which is stronger in Sierra de Cádiz than elsewhere. The concentration of power by a physical person in a given area is what characterises *caciquismo*. This concentration is achieved when the cacique effectively becomes the main node of several different formal and informal networks. In Sierra de Cádiz, this position is held by the major of Villaluenga del Rosario, who is also the president of the LAG, of the mancomunidad, and of the *Patronato de Turismo del Parque Natural de la Sierra de Grazalema*. In this way, he has control over most of the area's financial resources, a situation which is profoundly problematic and that has prevented the creation of a sustainable development strategy.

Since LEADER II, the president of the mancomunidad has also been the president of the LAG. There is no legal foundation for this, but the arrangement is defended as a positive strategy to increase institutional support for local initiatives. In reality, it hinders the success of those local initiatives that are external to the aforementioned network of power relations. According to the interviews conducted with LAG technicians, certain unethical and illegal practices have become quite common within the LAG itself⁴⁰. The territory is analysed according to the hidden agenda of this network that then is reflected upon the LAG's rural development programs. Furthermore, the information concerning available LEADER resources is not widely publicised; some companies receive financial support systematically, whilst others find themselves continuously ignored⁴¹. Indeed, the evaluation of the projects is done in relation to the position that the solicitor holds within these power networks.

Other services and organisations—such as the county hospital—are located there as well, and Villamartín has thus become the county's symbolic capital. This

40 In order to understand how these power networks control the territory's resources, it is necessary to have some information about Andalusian politics. Since Spain's transition to democracy, the Socialist Party (PSOE) has won every election in Andalusia. Sierra de Cádiz has not been an exception: this party has always controlled both the *mancomunidad* and the LAG. It can be said that *caciquismo* transformed this new instrument of governance into another tool for the network.

41 This information was given to me "off the record"; however, an inspection of a list with the names of each edition's beneficiaries confirmed the accusation.

centralisation reinforces the symbolic separation between the farmers and the population of the mountains, on the one side, and the county's centre of power, on the other side.

All that being said, it must be acknowledged that in the implementation of its projects the LAG has followed an integral approach: it has paid attention to the different economic sectors in the territory, financed their modernisation and improvement, and promoted the constitution of sectorial and territorial associations in order to vertebrate the territory (Aguilar *et al.* 2009). The LAG's technicians know that in order to achieve success it is necessary to promote the area's existing resources, namely, its outstanding cultural landscapes, its traditional craftsmanship and local food products, and its strong cultural heritage that linked with the environment produces positive synergy (Brunori and Rossi, 2000; Miele and Pinducciu, 2001; Marsden, 2003; van der Ploeg and Marsden, 2008). They favour endogenous development and reject the discourse of modernisation, as the LAG manager said in one of the interviews:

Sierra de Cádiz has a future because it still has a resource stock: there are resources that we can keep on using. If they were exhausted, then we would have to worry about the future; this, however, is not the case.

—LAG Manager, 50 years old.

d) The Traditional Production System and its banning

Even when livestock farming has been practiced in a traditional manner for centuries in Sierra de Cádiz, local herders have always adapted to changing circumstances. Theirs is not a backward system, but a dynamic and flexible one. As one of the oldest herders declared during our interview:

This sheep has always been here, even before all these policies and politicians, and she will be here when they disappear.

—Herder, 75 years old.

The local agro-food system analysed in this dissertation is composed of the following four elements: 1) the local livestock breed; 2) the territory; 3) the herders; 4) the local knowhow. The last of these elements tends to become richer and more complex with time and is the outcome of the interaction between the first three. The main goods produced are meat, milk, and wool. Each product is supplied to different markets according to certain specific and institutionalised practices shared by the relevant actors.

The study of local transitions throughout history shows their complexity and multidimensional dynamic. In this case, the union of a highly diverse and rich territory, a multi-purpose breed, and the complex knowhow unfolded by the local herders created an agro-ecosystem with many different accessible states. Any change in one of these elements or variables promotes a change in the others. For example, if there the territory suffers an alteration, herders will readapt their practices and knowhow, and this in turn will create a new product that will search for new markets. These re-adaptation processes can have dramatic effects and can even destroy the system's internal balance—this was the case of wool production.

Grazalema and its mountains are famous for the aforementioned mantas de Grazalema. Traditionally, these waterproof blankets (the high-quality wool used to make them is, in addition, treated with oil) have been a favourite item of clothing among herders. During the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, a big industry grew in Grazalema around the production of these blankets. At some point, there were more than ten mills in the area; selling wool almost covered the year's household expenses (Pitt-Rivers, 1954).

Herders from the whole region used to bring their wool to Grazalema at the beginning of summer. This wool was first processed and washed with oil to make it waterproof. Then, it was tailored into capes, ponchos, and blankets. However, the introduction of synthetic fabrics after World War II seriously undermined the wool market, and most of the area's wool mills had to close down. Today, the price of the wool is so low that the herders have to burn it. The only company that still produces these blankets is called *Artesanías Textiles de Grazalema* (Aguilar in Bueno and Aguilar, 2003); however, most of the production has been externalised, and local wool is not used anymore.

Figure 12: Blankets drying after been washed in Grazalema.



Paradoxically, the blankets' success almost destroyed the whole system on which their production was based. Herders specialised so much in this product, that other products were neglected; it reached a point where the local livestock breeds almost disappeared at the beginning of the 1970's. As one of the herders explained:

There came a moment where only a few of us owned this type of sheep. But we knew that they are the best sheep for this land, so we fought to preserve them. Nowadays, the association (AMEGRA) helps us a lot in this sense.

—Herder, 63 years old.

Slowly, farmers started reorienting their activities and giving more importance to the quality of the milk for cheese production. This is a perfect example of co-production and co-evolution. The traditional cheese production system followed a simple but complex routine. The cheese used to be made at the *chozo* (hut), from January to June, by the woman of the household, while the man used to take care of the animals. The sheep were milked early in the morning and again in the evening. The milk was used always raw⁴², and the rennet was natural, made from the dried stomach of a lamb fed on milk only.

42 The use of raw milk did not have any negative health consequences because of the way it was traditionally handled. First, the curdling was done straight after the milking of the animals. Second, cheese used to be consumed always in a cured state; the level of acidity of cured cheese kills any pathogens.

Figure 13: Chozo located at Los Navazos (Villaluenga del Rosario)



Once the milk was curdled, it was introduced in a circle made of *empleitas*, which were located over the *entremijo* (Figure 14). The *empleitas* used to be made of esparto, and they would last for one year. The *entremijo* could last decades and it was made of noble wood, such as chestnut or olive. The inclination of the *entremijo* drives whey into the bucket located on one side. This whey was boiled to produce the *requesón*, a much appreciated ricotta-type cheese that is usually eaten with honey or quince jelly. The mass was pressed on both sides until it was thick enough. Then, one side was covered with sea salt, and the next day turned around to cover the other side. Finally, the cheese was stored over the *zarzo* (Figure 15), a plank made of canes that used to hang from the hut's roof.

The quantity of cheese varied depending on the weather and climate. Each household used to produce two or three cheese units in the morning and one or two in the evening. The cheeses were hanged from the *zarzo* as long as the woman considered it necessary, turning them periodically to enhance the curing. Later, the cheese could be preserved with olive oil, bran, or lard, depending on the complementary activities of each household. By following any of these procedures, the cheese could be preserved for months, even years. Thanks to this local knowhow, the sale could be done during the whole year, according to the state of the cheese and to the household needs. Each cheese could be sold to customers directly in their homes, through the local shops, or using the local

Chapter 4

ventas. In the case of local shops and *ventas*, the common strategy was to leave the cheese there until somebody bought it. Then, the herder would collect the money and bring another cheese; in this way, risk was reduced for both the producer and the retailer.

Figure 14: Traditional instruments exhibit at the Cheese Museum



Figure 15: The traditional *zarzo* is still used nowadays.



The First Change in the System: Regulations to Land Access

There are some changes that affected the system as a whole, and others that affected only the production of cheese. In this section I will describe an important change that affected the totality of the system—the access to land.

One of the main elements in the local economic system is the territory. The territory is alive: it changes by interacting with animals and human beings, and this co-evolution gradually makes it richer and more complex. The herders' strategy has involved using several ecological niches. This strategy is supported by local geography, which has many microclimates. This last fact is the outcome of an extreme orography: in an area of only 534 km², elevation ranges from 250 to 1,654 mamsl. In this context, the procedure that has to be followed in order to obtain a plot of land is a key question for the farmers⁴³. The land is both public and private, and the prices and procedures to obtain it differ from case to case. Shepherding is a family activity in the area—a profession that is passed on from parents to children. This continuity facilitated the acquisition of land; currently most farmers own small plots of it. However, it is customary for farmers to complement their privately owned land with leased land, either public or private. This strategy does not seek to increase the amount of animals; rather, the goal is to diversify household activities and to thus reduce economic risk. This strategy represents a peasant-like logic of action; most families in the area still retain such ways of acting and thinking. By increasing biodiversity and optimising nutrient cycles across the whole area, it enhances co-production and co-evolution in remarkably sustainable ways (van der Ploeg, 2008).

According to the Natural Park Sierra de Grazalema, 29% of the territory is public land, which means that a public authority owns it. The Regional Government owns 79.4% of this 29%, whilst the municipalities own 20.6% of it. Even when 29% does not seem excessive, it includes most of the suitable land for sheepherders. The origin of this land's public ownership dates from the 1970's, when the Spanish state undertook a series of expropriations in order to protect the *Pinsapar*.

⁴³ However, not anyone can obtain access. It is a political matter, and in the case of Andalusia, it is an historical problem. Since it is not the main topic of this dissertation, I will not go deeper into this question. However, the problem of access to land in Andalusia is rooted in the conquest of the Muslims by the Catholic Kings. The pattern of colonisation created a society divided between big landowners, and landless workers. In some cases, as in the *Ducado de Medina-Sidonia*, the extension of land was bigger than the current province of Seville and Cádiz together. This situation has not changed much in the last five centuries.

The regulations for accessing this land have changed in the last 40 years; until the 1990's, they affected local herders in a very negative way. Fortunately, the regulations have progressed to their current state, where land is leased for a period of five years. Two envelopes, one with a technical offer and another one with an administrative offer, are used to define the beneficiaries of leasing. This works comparatively well, but the manager of the natural park thinks that further improvement is still necessary:

From my point of view, the price of the plots should be fixed, and the real weight would be of the technical offer. The price should not be much, and indeed it is lower than the private sector, but the technical offer should make it even cheaper.

—Natural Park Sierra de Grazalema's manager, 40 years old.

Formerly, the tendering was held yearly, and the outcome was decided by the amount of money that each farmer introduced in a closed envelope; it was a blind tendering. Farmers were terrified at the possibility of losing the tendering, for it would mean losing the herd. It is necessary to understand that without access to land, it was impossible to preserve 100 sheep for a whole year; most of the herders did not own the necessary amount of land themselves. According to our interviews, in the 1980's some farmers paid up to 700,000 pesetas (around 4,200€) to guarantee their access to land. It was the household's biggest expense. This system was taking advantage of the lack of trust between herders, and at the same time, it was reinforcing it. Also, the confrontations between the local population and the natural park's administration were intensified. According to our interviews, the tendering system made farmers perceive the natural park as a new *señorito*⁴⁴.

Many farmers, during interviews, identified a lack of an appropriate strategy for facing this situation. Had they cooperated with each other, the plots' final price in the tendering would have been reduced to almost nothing. The extreme

44 *Señorito* is a concept that makes reference to the landowners that managed Andalusia during the 19th and 20th centuries. It means *young master*, because originally it referred to the children of this social class. They were hated by most of the *jornaleros*, the agrarian landless workers, and it is still used as an insult for anyone who demands a service but does not deserve it.

individualism that characterises them benefited a third party, namely, the Regional Administration. The situation almost came to a boil when one of the most popular herders in the area—with countless generations of herders behind him—lost the plot of land that his family had been using to a foreigner who put more money in the envelop. They had to sell the herd, and its whole genetic line disappeared, which is one of the worst things than can happen to a herder⁴⁵. The shock of the local farmers was so strong that the system was immediately delegitimised. This marked the beginning of reform.

Nevertheless, 20 more years had to pass before the regional administration's discourse and regulations changed. The administration's attitude evolved from conservationism to understanding human beings and the rural economy as elements of the ecosystem—elements that needed support.

In this park we have less population around or within it than in other parks, such as Bahía de Cádiz. If we take out Ronda, we have around 30,000 inhabitants; however, we have urban areas within the park [...]. We have to regulate or coordinate the territory's traditional economic activities; for example, stockbreeding. Do they clash with the natural park? I don't think so. [...] However, when I speak with the local population, herders or not, I feel that they hold the park responsible for issues that are not related with it at all. In this sense, I feel that the park is being demonised. It is hard for us to fight against that, and even harder if the regulations are inflexible. If the park restrains itself to exercising a police role, we will fail, because they will always perceive us as someone that brings them problems. We have to go further; either we accept that we have to be more than law enforcers, or the natural park will never be accepted. [...] Nowadays, with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, we received some money for human development, and we phoned the local livestock associations to see what would they like to do with us [...] With the herders there is a very special relationship, and

45 When the herd is lost, the construction of a new one is a difficult and slow process. The herder must find new sheep among those that may be too old or not good enough for other herders, because they are the only ones that may be for sale. He also must look for rams to fertilise the new sheep. When I asked about how long it took him to recover the quality of the lost herd, he told me that he was still working on it; this was 20 years after the original incident.

I hope that they will notice that they are not perceived as intruders in the mountains. It's true that there was a time when they were banished from the mountains by the government, but it is also true that nowadays we have a different perspective. [...] What is really important for them to know is that the administration wants the livestock to be in the park, and the herders to keep their herds in a dignified manner.

—Natural Park Sierra de Grazalema's manager, 40 years old

In summary, access to land changed in the 1970s due to, first, the expropriation of land by the Spanish state, and, second, to the creation of the tendering system. Subsequently, this system was reviewed, and the public administration's discourse concerning the contribution of herders to the environment changed. At the present time, most of the herders own some land, which they complement with public land. Tendering of public land also changed, and it now favours the farmers' cultural and social characteristics, and not so much their economic contributions.

However, one of the herders pointed out another big problem: "Now things are easier, but we lack the most important part, the people."

The Second Change in the System: The Management of the Herd

The management of the herd has suffered only small changes. The herds, as I said before, are formed by 150 to 200 sheep, and there is one male for every 10 to 25 females. The feeding of the animals follows the natural cycle, which needs to be compensated with feed at the end of summer because of the lack of rain⁴⁶.

46 One of the differences between artisanal and industrial systems of production is whether feed plays a complementary or a structural role. The use of compound feed is related to the use of non-indigenous breeds, such as *awassi* sheep from Israel. This breed did not prosper in Sierra de Cádiz due to adaptation problems. However, it is possible to see how the mix of the Grazalema sheep with foreign breeds still remains in the mind of those herders involved with the industrial mode of production. The herders that are part of the artisanal mode of production tend to improve the breed by selecting the best animals within the breed itself.

Figure 16: Feeding and climate scheme for Grazalema sheep

SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
Temperatures rise, Rain increase		Warm and lack of rain	Rain
Pasture and bushes		Crops and pasture	Pasture and bushes
		Hay and feed	
			

Source: own design based on Rucabado *et al.* 2009

The sheep are managed in the open fields; only in rare occasions is there any shelter for them. At the end of the summer the herder takes the males to the same land as the females; calving thus starts at the end of November or December. At that time the herder moves the herd near to him, so as to easily watch and help them during delivery. The lambs stay with the herd until they stop feeding from the mother and gain enough weight, which normally happens 2 or 3 months after birth. At this point, the herder has to make a difficult choice and, based on his observations and estimates, select which sheep to keep and which to sell. The herder leaves between 20 or 30 lambs in the herd for replacement, and they will be used for reproduction after their second winter⁴⁷.

However, the diachronic analysis of this system highlights two main changes: the creation of local farmers associations (AMEGRA and ACAPA), and the introduction of concentrated feed by the cooperatives. The associations of farmers support the improvement of the herd by providing access to programs for milk control and genetic selection. Veterinarians from both associations have almost daily contact

⁴⁷ For more information on traditional sheep management in this area see Mata Montero, *et al.* 2004, and Rucabado Palomar *et al.* 2010.

with one another, and they also assist farmers by providing phytosanitary advice and preventive treatments. The introduction of the concentrated feed is a new practice for the herders. It is explained by two main reasons: 1) to facilitate the milking of the sheep; 2) to increase the milking period and quantity of milk. In fact, concentrate feed is more commonly used by herders that do not make cheese anymore: since they have to make a living just from the milk, quantity becomes more important. The feeds are provided by local cooperatives, but they are either produced elsewhere, or with ingredients bought outside the area.

In summary, farm management has barely changed. The only two changes have been the introduction of new feeding practices and the support offered by the farmers' association—changes that, depending on the perspective taken, can be seen either as improvements or as deteriorations. While it is true that the farmers' lives have become easier, their increased dependency on external input reduces their autonomy and decreases their contribution to the reproduction of their own agro-ecosystem. A sheep fed with concentrated feed will refrain from eating certain plants; thus, their seeds will not be transported or fertilised. During my fieldwork, I learnt that the root of this change is the creation of the industrial system. Herders that make their living only from milk need to produce more of it; however, their cultural patterns prevent them from scaling up.

The History of Industrial Cheese

The scenario was changed by the Council Directive 92/46/EEC of 16 June 1992, which “lays down the health rules for the production and placing on the market of raw milk, heat-treated milk, and milk-based products”. This was the first of many regulations that affected these practices, often introducing requirements that local herders were not able to fulfil. It is necessary to understand that the *chozos* are isolated buildings; they do not have access to electricity or drinkable water, two required elements for processing milk according to the new regulation. When asked about these requirements, one of the herders responded the following, with a smile on his face:

Nature is very wise, and it gives you whatever you need. We have made cheese since who knows when, and I can tell you that you don't need any of that (technical and hygiene requirements). However, if you are going

to build a factory in order to process thousands of kilograms, you do need it. But this was not our case, and it still isn't.

—Herder and cheesemaker, 63 years old.

This regulation was designed to coordinate and organise the whole European dairy industry; small producers were affordable casualties. Indeed, most of these regulations tend to promote the agro-industrial system of production and make it almost impossible to preserve traditional methods like the one in Sierra de Cádiz. Initially, the local response was to ignore this regulation and to continue with established routines; local people thought that their traditional isolation would protect them from this new bogeyman that would close down their farms if they did not change. This, however, turned out to be a mistake, as one of the herders told us:

When we heard about the new regulation we didn't pay much attention. In those days, I was trying out some kind of middle way for solving potential problems. I had arranged with a friend to store my cheese in his shop and to sell it with the rest of the products. We even used an industrial fridge to store it in the shop. However, one day an inspector arrived to the shop and found the cheese. He asked about the origin of the cheese, because there wasn't any kind of infrastructure for its production. The inspector told him to throw it away; if he saw any more of this cheese in his next round, we would be in trouble.

—Herder and former cheesemaker, 53 years old.

There were similar cases to this one, and the herders realised that they were not isolated anymore. In 1995 there were many families making cheese in the southern mountains, selling it in the area's shops and *ventas*. Then, the new regulations forced a transition that resulted in two local and competing systems of production: the industrial and the artisanal.

e) Local responses: resistance and adaptation in the mountains

In 1992, new European regulations banned local herders from producing cheese in the traditional way; they therefore had to change their practices in order to survive. Through my research, I found two different and contrasting change strategies: professionalization and industrialisation. The first of them involved a process of resistance based on the use of territorial resources and local knowhow; it resulted in the creation of an artisanal system of production. The second involved a process of uncritical adaptation to the new regulations and a reinvention of the product; its outcome was the creation of an industrial production system. The existence of these two contrasting and competing systems is related to, first, the region's cultural patterns and, second, the territory's institutional context. The initial and natural response among the herders was to hide their products and continue selling them surreptitiously. They were defending something more than a mere economic activity: they were defending their way of life. This, however, did not succeed. Their strong individualism and a lack of cooperation prevented them from responding collectively; there only were a set of individual experiments with different success rates. At the same time, the institutional context and socio-technical regimes that influenced the LAG promoted industrialisation as the adequate path for the future. Currently, both strategies—professionalization and industrialisation—have divided farmers into two communities with strong opinions about the situation:

Selling the milk is easier, and so on; but then you don't have a future. Tomorrow, if they close the factories, or if they stop paying well for it, what do you do with the milk? As I say, it's our product (the cheese); we decide about it, and we do whatever we want. Of course, we have to work hard, but I rather work for myself. [...] I'm working in my house, and I don't have to be asking for a *peonada*⁴⁸ elsewhere—which is how these towns work—

48 *Peonada* in Andalusia is a term that refers to one day of labour. However, this cheesemaker is talking about an old debate concerning the *Plan de Fomento del Empleo Agrario*. This program was created in the 1980s by the national government to avoid more emigration and to increase social cohesion. The program consists in a system of subsidies and unemployment benefits specific for agrarian workers. Agrarian workers can benefit from a subsidy if they achieve a minimum of 65 days of work per year. Some critics point out that this program makes people lazy. The reality is that the program is a partial solution for a deeper problem, namely, the existence of landowners with massive extensions of mono-cultivated land, and masses of landless workers that can only find work during harvest. This program exists in 8 Autonomous Communities, and it is financed with funds from the CAP; in 2008, the government approved a total budget of 203m € for the current period.

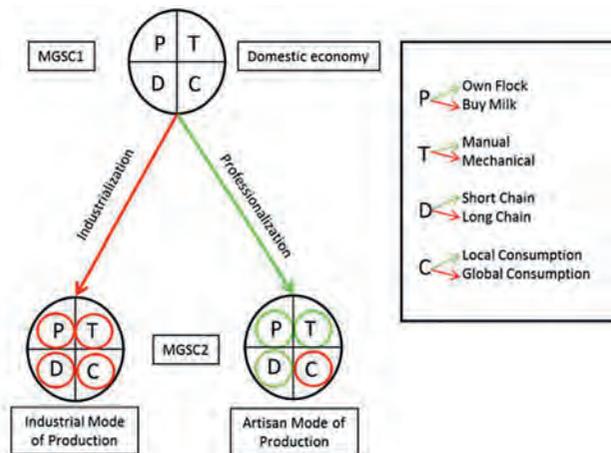
licking the politicians' asses to get it. And I do what I like to do. It has been our way of life for 33 years, why shouldn't it be the same for my son?

—Cheesemaker, 53 years old.

In order to categorise each of the production systems—the industrial and the artisanal—that these strategies brought into existence, I selected the following four variables: 1) the milk's origin; 2) the processing system; 3) the length of the production chain; 4) the place of consumption. However, both production systems are local responses to global pressures; their main instruments have been the territory and its resources (Figure 17).

The first strategy—industrialisation—immediately found institutional and financial support. In order to solve the problems created by the new regulations, existing technology developed within the Basque Country's cheese industry was implemented⁴⁹. However, the second strategy—professionalization—was mostly met with scepticism and negativity from the administration and local organisations; this was based on the unfolding of novelties in order to adapt practices and instruments to the new regulations (Wiskerke and van der Ploeg, 2004; van der Ploeg, *et al.* 2006).

Figure 17: Cheese transitions from domestic economy to artisan and industrial systems



49 This process was possible thanks to the technological adaptation to small scale cheese-making undertaken previously in the Basque Country (Mauleón, 2010). Indeed, most of the machines used by industrial cheesemakers still come from the Basque Country.

The aforementioned concept of sociotechnical regimes helps explain these divergent responses (Rip and Kemp, 1998; Wiskerke, 2003; Wiskerke and van der Ploeg, 2004): according to the similarities of their narratives, existing regimes restrain or support transitions. In the case of Sierra de Cádiz, local actors saw the industrial system as the path to unfold a better future for the territory.

Figure 18: Instruments and machines used in the industrial system



The strategy of industrialisation was followed by companies such as *Quesos Payoyo* and *Quesos El Bosqueño*. These companies have different origins. The first of them opened for business in the town of Villaluenga del Rosario in 1995. The second started as a cooperative in 1983 producing cottage cheese, but in 1993 they started to experiment with cured cheese, which became part of their usual offer in 2003. These companies followed a similar scheme; they took cheese master courses in order to obtain the necessary knowledge and brought the instruments and machines from the Basque Country. They do not own sheep and they use mostly local milk⁵⁰.

In contrast, *Quesos Oliva*, a family business owned by a woman named Charo Oliva and located in Villaluenga del Rosario, is a representative of professionalization. This factory's history is one of rightful resistance in a new context of globalisation

⁵⁰ During our interviews, and always off the record, industrial cheesemakers have recognised the existence of agreements with bigger companies to buy bulk milk if necessary.

(O'Brien, 1996). Charo Oliva used to make the cheese herself before the regulations, fulfilling her gender role in the domestic economy. She started to produce cheese in 1978, after marrying Jesús Olmos, a local herder. They were one of the families that used to make and sell cheese in Villaluenga del Rosario. However, with the arrival of the new regulations, the husband decided to sell the milk he produced to *Quesos Payoyo*, and Charo stopped her own production. A few years later, however, she decided that it was not the right strategy for the family to follow. The profits for selling cheese used to be 3 times more than for selling the milk to the factory, and she did not want to depend on the factory sales. Thus, against the opinion of her husband and of the whole town, she started working to get back her traditional way of life.

It was hard and painful, because I had to fight against everyone. I had to fight even against my husband and son. Do you want to know what I told them after months of struggling with health inspection, the administration, and these two? They said, “you are going to be the only one who eats the cheese, now that El Payoyo is making it and that they sell it all, now you want to make it again, it’s going to be the ruin of this house”, and so on. One day I got tired and said, “listen to me, we are not going to talk no more about it, I’m going to make the cheese because I say so. I will put in my time, money, and work, and we will see how it goes”. The funny thing is that now they say: “Look what we’ve done!”

—Charo Oliva, 53 years old

She read the new regulations and looked for a niche in the market to place her product. She moved the place for making the cheese to her house in town, and changed the material of the *empleitas*, but preserved the use of raw milk and natural rennet. She presented several projects to the administration, but they were considered “not viable”. The real problem was that no one had presented a similar project before, and the regulations were designed for big factories. However, in 2002, she managed to get her project approved by a civil servant from the Provincial Government. Before the opening, there was still some complains about the materials and design that she used, but since the project had been approved, there was nothing to do against it. This case is an example of everyday politics: Charo did not resist by attacking the system, but by learning from it. She

was smart enough to translate the bureaucratic and technical description of the new regulations into the resources that she had.

Figure 19: Instruments of the artisan system



As time passed, several instances of professionalization succeeded and materialised into a new set of rules, practices, and markets. At the present time, there are 15 cheesemakers in the area producing goat, sheep, or mixed-milk cheese. As Charo Oliva explained to me:

No one wanted to continue making cheese; everyone preferred to sell the milk. But now that they have seen that it is possible, that my project was viable, everyone goes for it. But they too will have to deal with the administration, and I only managed to do it after two years of struggle. [...] This was my own design. Have you ever seen a cheese factory like this one? I don't think so, because I didn't copy anyone, I invented it myself. I had been making cheese for 30 years, and I wasn't going to stop. If before we used the canes to air the cheese and now we have to use plastic grids, no problem; metallic, if we have to use tiled walls, we do it; if we have to have drinkable water, no problem.

—Cheesemaker, 53 years old.

Every new initiative in the region has followed either the artisanal or the industrial system. The materialisation of these new initiatives is highly diverse, but they have something in common: they know that their main weapon for competing is quality, and that quality is based on the combination of unique pastures, herders,

management, and local breed. Even more, they are conscious of their own role to preserve the whole system. As Carlos from *Quesos El Payoyo* explained:

When we opened the factory we were thinking about the county's sustainable development: if we did not invest in this factory, the Grazalema sheep would disappear, because we are the main buyers of its milk. Previous to the factory, the cheese was made by the herds, but the introduction of the European normative endangered this practice; to make cheese it was now necessary to adapt to specific and unaffordable hygienic conditions. Here there was a family tradition, but it was necessary to adapt to the new normative.

—Factory owner and cheese-master, 52 years old.

The Institutionalisation of the New Industrial System of Production

This system's institutionalisation followed these three strategies: 1) the participation in international contests; 2) the creation of an annual cheese fair; 3) creation of a PDO. The first two strategies have been successful, but the third one has not succeeded yet.

Sierra de Cádiz is remote area, but it is near to three provincial capitals, which means that there is an estimated population of two million customers that can drive to this territory in less than two hours. Even more, this territory has a unique flora and fauna, and the natural park and biosphere reserve lie within it. However, the lack regular public transport and the narrow roads are handicaps for articulating these attractions with the local economy. This scenario was in the mind of the new cheesemakers, but they needed a cheap and simple strategy to make their products visible to these potential consumers. In this sense, the participation in regional, national, and international contests was a perfect strategy to put their products on shopping lists. It is necessary to understand that this territory was already a key location for rural tourists looking for nature and relaxation. The market was already there; the cheesemakers only had to add their product to the "route" to make it almost perfect. They offered a unique product produced in the territory that thousands of tourists already appreciated so much; the only missing ingredient was increasing their reputation with the right strategy.

The first time that any local cheese participated in a contest was during the *Feria del Queso Artesano de Teba* (Teba's Artisan Cheese Fair), where the contest *Concurso Andaluz de*

“Premio Guadalteba⁵¹” (Andalusian Contest of Artisan Cheese “Guadalteba Prize”) is held. *Quesos Payoyo* won two third-prizes that year. Apart from the actual prizes, the free publicity that the brand got in local and regional media was stunning. Since then, local cheesemakers have participated and won many contests, including the World Cheese Award, and several gourmet contests. Each cheesemaker uses these prizes as instruments to prove their quality and gain new customers. They inform the media about them and put them up in their shops' walls.

13 years later, the amount of prizes is so high that cheesemakers do not keep track of them in their websites; they just inform the media about the new ones. *Quesos El Payoyo* has 70 prizes and *Quesos El Bosqueño* more than 50. Due to this strategy's rate of success and low cost, industrial cheesemakers have institutionalised it. The tendency is to participate each year in contests with progressively higher reputation. However, the same strategy was not followed by the artisanal cheesemakers. They have not do not sought to compete in any contest. When I asked about the reason, they explained that these events are not ready for judging a truly artisanal cheese. The cheesemakers also explained that they preferred a mouth-to-ear type of publicity: they have a close and personal relationship with their customers.

At this point, symbolic capital belonged only to each individual cheesemaker. It was still necessary to produce a similar amount of collective symbolic capital for the whole territory, and this was attempted by means of a PDO. As explained above, this part of Andalusia is characterised by an extreme individualism; thus, an external input was necessary to unfold the network that would support such a project. That input came from the *Comisión Gestora*, the participative platform of the natural park. In 2008, the natural park was celebrating its 30th anniversary as a biosphere reserve, and the UNESCO gave money to the natural park to promote socio-economic activities for the communities within the reserve's area of influence.

51 Guadalteba is a county located within the Province of Málaga. This contest was created by the LAG in 2001 to promote local cheese varieties.

The Major of Villaluenga del Rosario suggested the idea of a cheese fair for the local producers in his town. The plan was to invite local producers to an event where they could promote and sell their products for free. The assembly approved the idea, and they asked the Regional Ministry of Environment for support. The general assembly assigned the LAG the duty to inform and advertise, and together with the Municipality of Villaluenga and the mancomunidad, they organised the fair. The final title of the fair was *I Feria del Queso Artesanal* (1st Artisan Cheese Fair), and the *I Concurso de Queso Artesano Andaluz* (1st Contest of Andalusian Artisan Cheese). 18 cheesemakers from the whole region came to compete and participate in this fair, which was a complete success.

The following year, the natural park's budget was not enough to organise the fair again, and after some initial problems and disagreements about localisation and regulations, the fair was institutionalised as *Feria de Queso Artesano de la Sierra de Cádiz* (Artisanal Cheese Fair of Sierra de Cádiz). The number of participants and the reputation of this fair increased faster than expected: 45 cheesemakers tried to participate, but only 24 were allowed due to the lack of room. It was estimated that the participants sold over 39,000 kilograms of cheese, which means that the 18,000 visitors spent more than 500,000€ during that weekend. Several factors explain this success; for instance, the unwritten policy of free cheese-tasting that each stand follows, which, combined with open-tasting and cheese making courses, provides visitors with a unique experience. Most of the visitors come from the surrounding provinces, which means that later on they can return for a weekend trip and buy the cheese that they enjoyed the most.

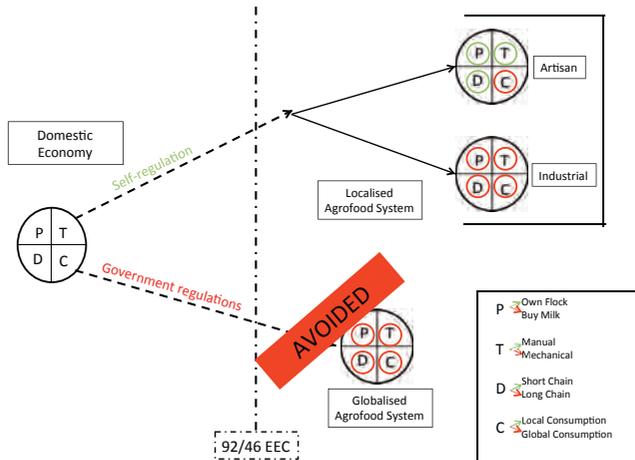
Currently, this fair is a *must go* in many families' calendars. Local organisations, such as the LAG or the mancomunidad are strongly committed to this event, and they try to improve it each year. The fair links Sierra de Cádiz and its cheese industry with gastronomic tourists, but also with other visitors that come to the mountains for other reasons. Every year, thousands of people visit the event and bring cheese back to their homes and families.

Figure 20: Posters from the 3rd and 4th Editions



Source: LAG Sierra de Cádiz

Figure 21: The current transition and the avoided future



In summary, cheese production in Sierra de Cádiz has changed during the last 40 years because the world and the local actors have also changed (López and Aguilar, 2012, 2013). The existence of a domestic economy which used to market its three products (wool, meat, and cheese) locally has become a more complex and articulated economic system, where each product and producer followed a

different path. The redesigning of this cheese followed two contrasting paths, one of resistance and another of adaptation. The different use that each actor made of local resources avoided the system's total globalisation.

An Institutional PDO? The Chronicle of a Death Foretold

Different authors perceive the creation of a PDO as something positive (Roest and Menghi, 2000; Tregear, *et al.* 2007; Becerra and Bravo, 2009); others, however, do not find it very interesting (Vakoufari, 2010; Bowen and Master, 2011; Kizos and Vakoufari, 2011). This part of the chapter does not focus on this discussion; it focuses instead on how a given community linked with a specific territory and two high quality products (goat and sheep cheese) failed at creating a PDO.

In 2001, local politicians learnt that there was an initiative to create a PDO for goat cheese in *Serranía de Ronda*, a neighbouring county located to the east of Sierra de Cádiz. This PDO would include some producers and transformers located within Sierra de Cádiz. The politicians were against this last part of the plan: Sierra de Cádiz deserves its own PDO, as they said during several interviews. The mancomunidad met with the Provincial Government, the OCA Sierra de Cádiz, and the LAG to create a commission to promote the first cheese labelled with PDO of the province and the region. This commission put the LAG in charge of the project; they would have to research about the requirements, meet the producers and transformers, design the Code of Practices, and fulfil the necessary documents to achieve the label's creation. In February of 2003, the commission met with the sectorial actors in the near city of Jerez, and announced the intention of applying for a PDO (Figure 22).

Ten years of meetings and discussions followed that first announcement, but the PDO has not been successfully created yet. When I approached each actor involved, most of them did not know the reason for it, and told me different stories concerning hidden agendas from local politicians. Indeed, from the very first moment, these PDOs have been in the hands of public actors; which means that neither the herders nor the cheesemakers assumed a strong position during these processes, conceding their agency to a third actor, the LAG.

Figure 22: Local Newspapers announced the creation of a PDO⁵²



Source: Diario de Cádiz, 2003

The Code of Practices and the rest of the documents were ready by 2006, but the process did not go further than that. In 2011, I interviewed the Director of Quality Denomination, section of Industry of the Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery. This section is the responsible of processing geographical indications. It was shocking to learn that they did not have any archives related to the PDO for sheep or goat cheese from Sierra de Cádiz. This means that in five years, the documents were not properly sent to the Regional Government. The LAG was the technical actor that took care of this process, but it seems that it was too busy with other projects. The dangers of institutionally promoted initiatives were pointed out by Cavazzani (2008), when she explained the role of mediation that this institutions can have and the importance of social cooperation within networks promoted by civil society. In the case of Sierra de Cádiz, the intervention of public actors may be necessary due to a lack of trust between transformers and producers; but the control of the process and responsibility was externalized to the LAG.

That's done by the CEDER (LAG); they are the guys that do the papers.
We don't know about that.

—AMEGRA Veterinarian, 33 years old.

52 *Diario de Cádiz*, February 20, 2003. The headline says “The ID for the best cheese of the county”.

This situation is not “natural”, because the key actors are not involved in the process. The LAG interviewed them to get the information for the Code of Practices; then, the documents were presented to both collectives and approved in an assembly. However, this underlines the lack of interest by both actors. The LAG followed its president’s orders—who, as mentioned above, is also the president of the mancomunidad, the mayor of Villaluenga del Rosario, and the president of the *Patronato de Turismo del Parque Natural Sierra de Grazalema*. It can thus be said that from the very first moment both PDOs were a mere political project. Well-known handicaps tend to arise as costs for maintaining the Regulatory Council, and the need to construct new infrastructures to differentiate each type of milk was not taken into account. Secondary issues, such as the design of the physical label itself, were taken care of even before the final document was ready. What highlights even more the political nature of both PDOs are the announcements that the political parties made on local and regional media in the context of upcoming elections.

Figure 23: Headlines *Diario de Cádiz*, two weeks before regional electoral day⁵³

El PSOE impulsa la denominación de origen para los quesos de Cádiz

Basan su intención en las características propias de aroma y sabor que los distinguen

REDACCIÓN / CÁDIZ | ACTUALIZADO 07.03.2011 - 13:24

Denominación de origen para los quesos de Cádiz

María Cózar, parlamentaria gaditana impulsora de la proposición, ha asegurado que con esta iniciativa tratan de “proteger la elaboración de un producto artesanal y de una elevada calidad”

EUROPA PRESS | ACTUALIZADO 06.03.2011 - 11:38

Furthermore, even if the cheesemakers and herders had been able to work together, the number of productive animals amounts to only 3,000. The average

53 The first headlines were published on March 7, 2011. They read as follows: “The Socialist Party promotes the PDO for the Cheese from Sierra de Cádiz.” The second one is from the 6th of March 2011, and it explains how the representative of the province from the Socialist Party defends the PDO as the instrument to preserve the artisanship and quality of this industry.

production of milk per year is around 140 litres per animal, which means that the total amount of milk per year is less than 420,000 litres. To produce 1 kilogram of cheese 5 litres of milk are needed. Therefore, this PDO would have had to support itself with only 85,000 kilograms of cheese per year.

The current price of this cured cheese is 17 €/kg; this figure would have had to be increased in order to afford the creation of the new productive infrastructure and to support the cost of the Regulatory Board. But nobody even calculated these numbers; from the beginning both PDOs were political projects to earn votes and legitimise the territorial reference of Sierra de Cádiz.

Even more, as Bowen and Master explain (2011), these labels can be instruments for controlling local practices, and in many cases they crystallise new realities by terming them traditional or genuine. The creation of a territorial quality label—as I explained before—is a process of interaction between existing actors from a given territory. These actors have to rethink and reorganise their practices, and thus a new product is produced at the end of the process; it may be linked with a specific tradition and territory, but it is still new. One of the artisanal cheesemakers explained this very well:

Payoyo is not a PDO, neither is *La Velada*. I think that a PDO should refer to the traditional way of doing things in the territory. [...] But the big ones always want to get the fish out of the water; they want everything for them, and the small ones can't do anything about it. I went to a couple of meetings (PDO meetings), but I stopped going. It isn't artisanal; what the hell do you mean "artisanal"?

—Cheesemaker, 53 years old.

Indeed, none of the artisanal cheesemakers followed the PDO initiative once it was explained to them. For the industrial cheesemakers, however, whose marketing strategy was based on the explicit link with a reinvented tradition, it was extremely easy. They dress up their shops and websites with materials and images that make reference to rural idylls, which is part of their strategy for appropriating the territory's symbolic capital:

When asked about this situation, many farmers said that they did not even know that they could receive support from the public administration. This is a good example of how rural policies are mediated on the local level (Long, 1984; Long and van der Ploeg, 1989; Aguilar *et al.* 2009): the lack of representation of the farmers in the LAG and the complexity of the policies prevented the participation of this group of actors. Thus, it can be said that rural development policies and health regulations have partly disconnected cheese production from the farms, and reduced herders to raw material producers. The PDO was the last step in the institutionalisation of this new industrial system. The internal division between milk producers and cheesemakers is a key part of this system. Ideally, the Regulatory Board would assure the quality of the milk for the cheesemakers, and the cheesemakers would in turn have to pay a fair price for the milk. This would have institutionalised the division of labour and assured the successful economic, cultural, and ecological colonisation of the territory.

However, as I already said, this agreement broke down midway due to a lack of interest from the local actors. The synergy between local tourism and agro-food products increased the demand of local cheese, and the cheesemakers decided to increase their production buying milk elsewhere. Thus, control over their activities was not welcomed; it was considered unnecessary. In Sierra de Cádiz, elements such as local knowledge, confidence in the producers, and a brand intimately linked to its territory are sufficient for successfully introducing this product in a differential market. Trust and knowledge of the product and the producers replaced the institutional process represented by the brand.

Figure 24: Payoyo's shop and mural (Villaluenga)



Chapter 5

Re-embedding the Local Economy in Texel: A Smart Use of Origin Food Labels

*Even the Spaniards knew that heresy
(i.e. the Calvinism of the Dutch) promoted trade.*

—Max Weber

a) Introduction:

In this chapter I describe a second case of the implementation of an OFL as a response to global pressure: the regional label named *Echt Texels Lamsvlees* (Real Texel Lamb Meat, henceforth referred to as ETL), an initiative located in Texel, the Netherlands. The nature and objective of this process is radically different from the one in Sierra de Cádiz. Local actors used this type of label to institutionalise a process of deindustrialisation and re-embedding of farming in the local ecology, culture, and society. This is a contrasting process of rightful resistance from local actors.

In order to explain and analyse this case, I first describe the observational unit: the Island of Texel and the Wadden Sea Region. Then, I explain the Waddengroup Foundation's origin, structure, and trajectory. Next, I summarise the process of creation of the label ETL, paying special attention to the actors involved and to the way the Code of Practices works. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the initiative's internal organisation and of the institutional framework that they developed.

b) The island of Texel and the Wadden Sea Region

This chapter makes reference to two different observational units, one local, the Island of Texel; one regional, the Wadden Sea. Although the Island of Texel belongs to the Wadden Sea, the relationship between both territories is not hierarchical. Both territories' strong territorial identity was a key element for the creation, unfolding, and success of the ETL project.

Texel, the island that stands by itself

Texel is an island and a municipality that belongs to the Province of North Holland, whilst the Wadden Sea is a geographic area used as territorial reference by several actors—the Waddengroup among them. This territory is an interesting example of multilevel governance: there are several instruments, organisations, and administrations that define the policies and strategies for this territory. There are five islands located in the Dutch part of the Wadden Sea; from west to east, Texel, Vlieland, Terschelling, Ameland, and Schiermonnikoog. The island of Schiermonnikoog is a 40km² municipality with less than 1,000 inhabitants⁵⁴. It is the least densely populated municipality in the Netherlands. The whole island is a National Park, Schiermonnikoog National Park, and it receives more than 300,000 visitors per year. Ameland is the third major island of the West Frisian Islands, and it consists mostly of sand dunes. The island has 60 km², four villages—Hollum, Ballum, Nes and Buren—and a total population of 3,466. Terschelling is the second largest island in the West Frisian Islands; the local population speaks Dutch and Frisian. It has only 88 km²; however, if we include the surrounding water, it is the largest municipality of the Netherlands with 674 km². There are 15 villages in the island, and 4,800 permanent inhabitants. This island's economy is strongly tourist-based; there are 20,000 beds for visitors. Vlieland is a single municipality with one major town, Oost-Vlieland. There used to be another village, West-Vlieland, but it was lost to the sea in 1736. Vlieland is the second-least densely populated municipality in the Netherlands, with 40 km² and 1,135 inhabitants.

The island is surrounded by the North Sea and the Wadden Sea. There is a ferry line that connects the main harbour with Den Helder. There is another harbour on the northeast of the island for fishermen and eco-touristic activities. There is a wide range of landscapes in the island, from dunes and beaches in the west coast, to forests and meadows in the centre and east. This variety of landscapes is foundation of the island's economy, which is highly diversified and embedded in nature. Indeed, Texel is known as “little Netherlands”, because it is possible to find there almost any landscape and economic activity existing in the country as whole.

54 A person must live more than nine months per year in the island to be considered an inhabitant.

Figure 25: Map of Texel



Source: VVV Texel

Figure 26: Landscapes in Texel (Dunes, Polders, Beach and Forrest)



The inhabitants of Texel have access to two different seas, the North Sea and the Wadden Sea. The first one is an open sea, which requires bigger ships and longer periods of fishery. The second one is an almost closed sea, which allows for small-scale, inshore fishing and for eco-touristic activities. The northern part of the island consists of a large number of small polders whose main activities are agriculture, combined, tourism, and cattle-rising. The sheep farms are mostly located in the central and southern parts of the island. It is necessary to underline that almost every farm in this island is a multifunctional farm, which usually engages with tourism, green-services, and social services, as one of the farmers explained during an interview:

There is a group of farmers that only farm. But they are big milk containers. But you see it a lot with small farmer companies and sheep holders that they have something else next to them; a lot of multifunctionality. That's also the strength of Texel. Everybody is orientated towards tourism. A lot of farmers have something like a bed and breakfast, camping with the farmer, or they give special tours to groups of people. There is always a part that includes tourists.

—Farmer, 47 years old.

The island has a strongly diversified economic profile, but almost every economic activity is linked with tourism, which is the main source of income. Indeed, Texel is the second most visited municipality within the province of North Holland, right after Amsterdam. There are 45,000 official beds⁵⁵ in the island. Actual figures about the total income that the island gets from tourism are not available; however, a look at the following numbers can throw some light on this sector's magnitude. The local VVV⁵⁶ manages over 9m € for bookings per year, and they told me that they manage less than 10% of the local tourist market. It could be said

55 The 45,000 beds only make reference to those beds that belong to professional hosting. The municipality allows any family to have their own bed and breakfast in their house if they don't have more than 7 beds. These beds are not included within the limit of 45,000 beds set by the municipality and the community in the 1970s.

56 VVV stands for *Vereniging voor Vreemdelingenverkeer*. The VVVs are organizations where local or regional tourist businesses and agencies work together to promote tourism. They funded privately and publicly, and the service range depends on each VVV. The first VVV started working in 1885 in Valkenburg aan de Geul, a city in the south-eastern Netherlands. VVV Texel was the second VVV founded in the Netherlands.

that the island receives around 90m € just from the 45,000 beds. However, these tourists also eat, drink, and visit attractions; thus, this sector's real contribution is even bigger. Visitors mostly come from the Netherlands (74%) and Germany (22%). Most of them underline the idea of nature as the main reason to visit the island. Indeed, the main local non-natural attraction of the island is *EcoMare*, a nature museum created in 1952 as a sanctuary for seals. It is located in the *Nationaal Park Duinen van Texel*, a 43 km² national park located near De Koog, in the west side of the Island.

Texel's highly diversified natural and cultural landscape is the main support of its highly diversified economy. At the same time, this landscape is the main reason for outsiders to visit the island. This landscape is not "natural": it is the outcome of a long process of co-evolution between human inhabitants and nature. It was created by a continuous and delicate process of experimentation and selection. However, in order to understand how and why this diversity was created, it is necessary to briefly review the island's history in order to identify local cultural patterns.

The island of Texel was granted city rights in 1415. There were two different islands until the 17th century, Texel and Eierland. Eierland was an independent island that belonged to Vlieland until the 13th century. The name of the island means "egg land", and the origin of the name was the colony of seagulls that lived there. Their eggs were very appreciated in Amsterdam, and the population of Texel used to collect them to sell them to the metropolis. During the 16th century, a sand bank grew between Texel and Eierland, which became the infrastructure for the dam built between 1629 and 1630. In this way, Eierland became part of Texel. However, two centuries later this process went even further. In 1835, Nicolas de Cock built a dyke to create a new polder, Eierlandse Polder. Today, we can find the remnants of this story in the village's name and in the hamlets located in this polder—Cocksdoorp (Cocks' town), Midden-Eierland, and Zuid-Eierland.

This story fits with the history of the Netherlands, a country literally built by its people, taking pieces of land from the sea century after century⁵⁷. This has

57 Water control in the Netherlands is a key issue: about 55% of the country lies below the sea level. The dykes are controlled by the *Waterschappen* (Water Boards), which are one of the oldest forms of government in the country; some of them were created in the 13th century. Currently, there are 25 Water Boards, they hold elections, levy taxes and function independently from other governmental bodies. They also belong to the governance system of the Wadden Sea Region, as I explain later.

been a pattern during the island's entire history—the conscious construction of landscape that would later be articulated with the local economy. Another example is the creation of the west forest (known as “Dennen”) between 1898 and 1921 with the support of the National Forest Service. There were two main reasons for the design and construction of this forest: the strong winds that come from the North Sea, and the lack of wood for farms and buildings. Although there is a line of dunes along the west coast, the wind is too strong during the winter, which hindered any activity outside the home. This decision transformed a wasteland into a new landscape that, first, offered timber and protection from the wind, and that, later, became a tourist attraction and energy source⁵⁸. Currently, this forest is the biggest woodland area in the Wadden Island, and a key place for tourists.

Figure 27: *Schapenboeten* and *tuinwallen*



Before this forest was planted, local farmers solved the lack of wood by means of a local novelty: the *tuinwallen* (walls of pasture). These walls helped protect the sheep from the wind, and also marked the limits of each farm. They almost disappeared from the local farms at the end of the last century, but local farmers are starting to recover them as part of their cultural landscape. Local architecture and landscapes reflect this reality. The traditional design of the *Schapenboeten* (sheep houses) is another clever solution against the strong winds. These little buildings have sloping sides to avoid confrontation with the wind. In this way, the frontal side of the building works as a refuge for animals during the storms.

⁵⁸ *Texel Energie*, a local energy company, has a plan to produce energy using the biomass generated by this forest.

The Wadden Sea Region: a unique region with evocative powers

Even when there is not any administrative or political division that coincides with the Wadden Sea Region, the region is part of the local and regional cognitive maps. This heuristic area includes the Wadden Sea, the islands that enclose it, and up to 25 km from the coast line to the inland. It goes from the province of North Holland to Denmark; including the provinces of Friesland and Groningen, and the coast of north-western Germany⁵⁹ (Figure 28). The UNESCO recognised the Wadden Sea as a Biosphere Reserve in 1986, and in 2009, it was declared a World Heritage Site⁶⁰. This territory's complexity—divided by three countries and several subdivisions—unfolded a complex system of governance, which is explained below⁶¹.

Figure 28: The Wadden Sea Region



Source: <http://mappery.com>

- 59 The German and Danish part of the Wadden Region will not be discussed in this chapter, because it is not relevant to this dissertation's objective. However, it is worth remarking that the Waddengroup is making contacts with other actors in those areas to unfold new cooperation networks. At the governmental level, the three countries have created the Wadden Sea Forum, where different interest groups active within the municipalities and provinces can meet and express concerns about the Wadden Region.
- 60 These titles refer only to the Wadden Sea, not to the island or the coastline. However, local actors do not separate the sea from the surroundings, thus, we adopt their perspective.
- 61 This description will be done from the perspective of the local actors involved in the ETL initiative. Therefore, the description will cover the common structures, but will focus on the Dutch ones.

The Dutch part of the Wadden Sea Region was under the authority of the central government until the 1990s. At that point, the system was redefined in order to introduce provincial and municipal governments, together with associations and local economic actors. The area's management suffered a process of decentralisation, which involved the redistribution of the executive and legislative competences among new territorial layers.

The region's governance follows certain logics of cooperation at the national and international level. At the national level, there are two main actors that support this territory's governance: the *Regie College Waddengebied* (Directing College of the Wadden) and the *Raad voor de Wadden* (Wadden Sea Council). At the international level, the three national governments have periodical meetings to define common objectives for the area. They created two actors with executive power: the Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council and the Wadden Sea Board.

The *Regie College* is an independent platform that advises the public and private actors of the region's Dutch part. It meets with representatives from the three provinces, the five islands, the 12 municipalities of the coastline, and the four Water Boards. This actor's duty is to coordinate policies and programs in the area; however, it lacks executive power. The *Raad voor de Wadden* was established in 2003 by the Wadden Sea Council Act; it replaced the former advisory board. This organisation is independent from any government or private company; it has one chair and four members. It is placed organisationally within the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, and its main duty is to advise the national government about issues and possible problems in the region, including policies regarding fishery, recreation, development, and administrative organisation. They meet ten times per year to discuss recommendations.

They also participate in the network of European Environmental and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils.

Each country's relevant ministers meet at the Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council. This institution establishes and supervises the cooperation for this territory. It works as a political actor, and seeks to promote harmony between the three governments to facilitate the development of policies. The second

international organisation is the Wadden Sea Board. This organisation prepares, adopts, and implements the strategy, oversees the operational and advisory bodies, and secures relations with the main stakeholders. Both institutions receive support from external advisors, task groups and conferences.

The Dutch actors and organisations have access to the same financial support as the rest of the country. However, there is a specific fund for this area, the *Waddenfond* (Wadden Fund). This fund was created in 2007 with the goal of deactivating the social movements that were against the extraction of gas from the area. It seeks to encourage the sustainable protection and development of the Wadden Sea. The Fund may support non-profit activities, and any project has to be co-funded. It has 800m € that have to be invested in projects until the year 2026. In January 2012, the Wadden Fund was transferred to the three provinces of this region (North Holland, Frisia and Groningen). This fund's goals are the following:

- 1) To enlarge and strengthen the natural and landscape values of the Wadden Sea area;
- 2) To reduce or eliminate external threats to the natural wealth of the Wadden Sea;
- 3) To promote sustainable economic development in the Wadden Sea area; for example, by encouraging sustainable tourism and the use of renewable energy;
- 4) To develop, maintain, and disseminate knowledge about the Wadden Sea area.

There is a feeling among local actors dedicated to rural development—such as the Waddengroup or the LAGs—that they will not receive much support from the national government in the future. Thus, this fund may eventually become the main financial support for rural development projects.

c) The Waddengroup Foundation

In these territories, most local and regional actors belong to interconnected networks that draw a regional web that canalises ideas and resources to the region. These networks, which tend to be horizontal and egalitarian, are a great aide in the organisation of the economy. The pattern is not new in Texel: local population are used to cooperating with each other to maintain their local economy and culture. History taught them to do things by themselves. In a certain sense, the Waddengroup is a reflection of this local and regional pattern.

The Waddengroup was created in Texel on April 29th, 1996. The main idea behind it was the promotion of sustainable economic development in the Wadden Sea region. I divide this actor's trajectory into two different parts:

- 1) Waddengroup as trademarks for local producers (1996-2006).
- 2) Waddengroup as an umbrella for regional products (Since 2006).

These two phases represent the Waddengroup's "natural" evolution. The members of the group offered advice and access to markets for local producers with underdeveloped and/or disconnected products during the first phase. They used two trademarks to market them: *Waddenproducten* and *Waddendelicatessen* (Figure 29)⁶². The transition from the first to the second phase involved the internal reorganisation and the creation of a new tool—the *Wadden Goud* label (Wadden Gold)⁶³. After this transition, the Waddengroup leased the trademarks and affiliated itself with the *Streek eigen Producten Nederland* (Regional Products of the Netherlands). In this way, the foundation was able to grow and free itself from the duties of marketing and trading each product that had their trademarks. Nevertheless, the aim of Waddengroup was—and still is—to facilitate access to new markets for regional and environmentally friendly initiatives. There are

62 What we see here is an example of *embedded commoditisation* of a product. The new product is not connected to an anonymous and global market, but to a pre-existing network of markets where products linked with specific territories and practices are welcomed and can achieve a premium price. This practice is one of the main elements that the Waddengroup uses to produce sustainable territorial development.

63 The WG is a private regional label that certifies regional products and services. The creation of this label allowed them to increase their contribution to the synergy and coherence of the territory.

several sets of requirements for a specific product, such as fish or mussels⁶⁴, but in general three requirements must be accomplished:

- 1) The product's origin must be the Wadden Region;
- 2) The product and the ingredients used must be certified as environmentally friendly or organic by a third and independent party;
- 3) The quality of the product must answer to the high quality standards defined by the Waddengroup.

Figure 29: Logo of the two trademarks and the Wadden Goud



Source: Waddengroup

The Creation of the Waddengroup Foundation

The creation of the Waddengroup is the outcome of an agreement between the following three organisations: 1) *Stichting Sint Donatus* (Saint Donatus Foundation); 2) *Stichting Wrâldfrucht* (World Fruit Foundation); 3) *Wholesaler Kroon*⁶⁵. Each organisation already had its own knowledge, experience, and connections. Sint Donatus was a biodynamic dairy farm founded by Marc van Rijsselberghe and his family in 1976 in Texel. This farm had always been a pioneer:

⁶⁴ The use of specific codes of practices for some products underlines the tailored nature of their approach and differs markedly with international food standards. The first allows and respects the heterogeneity and specific nature of each product, whilst the second seeks to standardise and homogenise in order to facilitate world trade. This situation is similar to the contrasting logics of the *contadini* and the *imprenditori agricoli* (van der Ploeg, 2008), because the Waddengroup does not seek just the margin, but the unfolding of a better region.

⁶⁵ I do not elaborate upon this organisation because it did not play a key role in the ETL project. It was the first wholesale chain that the Waddengroup used to market its products.

it was the first farm to introduce anthroposophical farming principles in Texel⁶⁶. Its main activity was dairy products, but it also had a program for young people with social problems. Stichting Wrâldfrucht was a younger initiative; it was founded in 1992 by Henk Pilat in Lauwersland. This organisation's goal was to stimulate the organic growing, processing, and marketing of unusual and typical fruit crops from Lauwersland and the Frisian Woods. *Wholesaler Kroon* was a wholesaler that sold organic and biodynamic products in its stores. Sint Donatus used this company to market its products in the Netherlands and Belgium.

These three actors, as I said before, brought their own experiences and connections to the Waddengroup, and thus helped the Waddengroup to avoid common mistakes of alternative food networks, such as inefficient or expensive distribution systems. Sint Donatus and *Wholesaler Kroon* had a long experience in the coordination and improvement of organic product distribution. They have created and assured an extensive network of buyers and sellers during the last 20 years. As Marc van Rijsselberghe explained during one of our interviews:

I have a network, built during 25 years, of producers and inventors all over Europe, and I was the node in the network. [...] When I was the owner of the trademarks (*Waddenproducten* and *Waddendelicatessen*) I was doing the trading. I could say: "I want to have olives from Spain, seaweed from Norway, potatoes from Texel." And I put them together, in one product.

In addition to this network, Marc had previous experience in the creation of associations for the marketing of local products. In 1985, Sint Donatus and other nine local producers created the *Vereniging van Echte Texelse Producten* (Association for Real Texel Products)⁶⁷, which sought to stimulate and promote local Texel products. This organisation created the trademark *Echt Texels Produkt* (Real Texel Products) some years later.

⁶⁶ Anthroposophy is a philosophy founded by Rudolf Steiner. It postulates the existence of an objective, intellectually comprehensible spiritual world accessible to direct experience through inner development. Biodynamic agriculture is the result of the application of these principles to agriculture. In the case of The Netherlands, Demeter is the organization that certifies biodynamic food products.

⁶⁷ This association, that still exists, was a sort of first experiment for what would later become the Waddengroup. They joined their efforts and resources in 2003 to create the label *Echt Texels Lamsvlees*, as I explain later.

However, Marc and the people from the farm had problems with this association because it refused to clarify what should be considered local, and how much of the ingredients or processes could be done outside the island. The situation did not end well and Sint Donatus left the project:

The thing is that if you don't have any experience with creating an association for local products, you have two problems. One is to identify good entrepreneurs who have good ideas to make products, and the other is to exclude entrepreneurs who are there only for the money, and not for the economic growth of the society.

— Sint Donatus member, 56 years old.

Even today, *Echt Texels Produkt* is still not recognized by the *Stichting Streekeigen Producten Nederland*⁶⁸. This situation is rooted in the complexity of the concept “local”. Recently, the current chair of this local association has defined stricter rules⁶⁹. However, to be recognised by the *Stichting Streekeigen Producten Nederland* is not so important for the *Echt Texels Produkt*, since the latter has its own markets and reputation in the island. Even more, the implementation of the requirements defined by the *Stichting Streekeigen Producten Nederland* would entail removing some of the current products. As the chairman explained in one of our interviews:

Well, we are not SSPN; our requirements are not as strict as theirs, but that is just to keep up the specific things of Texel. For example, Bakker Timmer has a new type of bread. Part of that bread is from wheat produced in Texel. In the requirements they (the SPN) say that 75 % of the product has to come from the region. But if they put 75 % of Texel wheat in that bread, it wouldn't be good bread. The management had the ability, together with the members, to say OK. We think that this product is still really typical Texel, so we give it the label. If we followed the rules

68 The Stichting Streekeigen Producten Nederland is a national foundation that certifies both, regional products, and regional products certifiers, in the Netherlands. It was founded in 1999 by the Waddengroup and another five organisations.

69 This change is partly the consequence of the creation of the Wadden Goud. The Waddengroup saw the island as a new market for their label, which increased the pressure about the “authenticity” of the ETPs. These new rules, due to the internal pressure of some of the old members, only apply to new members.

of the SSPN, this kind of products wouldn't get the label, and we don't want that. But a lot of our products could fit the scheme of SSSPN.

—Chairman of *Echt Texels Produkt*, 74 years old.

Sint Donatus learnt how to market its products during those years. It created the company Texel Nature and Environmental Friendly Products to sell its dairy products. This was the first time that it used a territorial link as part of their marketing strategy. In 1994 the sales went significantly down, and *Wholesaler Kroon* suggested that the products could be marketed under the name *Waddenzuivel* (Wadden Dairy). The change of the name and the later promotion increased the sales up to 75% (Roep, 2001). This experience threw light upon the potential of a new territorial reference, and, two years later, when Henk Pilat arrived to Texel looking for support to market his berries, this new territorial reference, the Wadden Sea, seemed perfect for a new project. Henk and Marc exchanged ideas and views about possible projects. Some months later, they created the Waddengroup, and after a couple of years, Marc sold the farm that was the core of Sint Donatus⁷⁰.

Henk Pilat founded *Stichting Wrâldfrucht* in 1992, after a preliminary feasibility study. The idea was to create environmentally friendly jobs in the Northeast Friesland. This objective is achieved by creating new marketing chains that bring new, old, and lesser known crops for cultivation, processing, and marketing on a commercial scale. In 1990, before Henk created this initiative, there was—apart from a single initiative to produce fruit wine—virtually no activity around berries in this region. Nowadays, in the foundation's area of intervention there are 11 farms, including four full-time and seven part-time; three processing plants, with six permanent workers; one trading company, with two workers; and approximately 20 companies that sell their production under the *Stichting Wrâldfrucht* license.

In order to find the economic support needed for the launching and survival of the initiative, Henk had to go through mountains of bureaucratic paperwork.

⁷⁰ Today, the farm still works as a biodynamic farm under the name of *Novalis*. Sint Donatus still continues with activities related to regional food products, but on the experimental level. For more information <http://www.zeekool.nl/>

This experience allowed him to meet people from the provincial government and other funding agencies that were looking for rural development projects:

We started with Henk and the *Stichting Wrâldfrucht*, then we supported *Waddendelicatessen*, now they are labelling more products with this new label (*Wadden Goud*). That's a good thing for the territory.

—Leader Coordinator, 62 years old.

In summary, it can be said that *Sint Donatus* contributed with labelling and marketing experience, *Stichting Wrâldfrucht* with general knowledge for dealing with bureaucracy plus a wider vision of the territorial reference, and *Wholesaler Kroon* with its network of shops and consumers. Thus, the Waddengroup was founded on these three pillars.

The Waddengroup's First Phase: Marketing and Trading

During this phase, which lasted until 2006, the foundation used the trademarks owned by Marc van Rijsselberghe to make the project grow. It is important to underline that *Sint Donatus's* experience in relation to the use of the Wadden area as a territorial reference did not go unnoticed; both trademarks adopted the same strategy. They made direct reference to the Wadden Sea region and to the unique natural values that it contains. Through select imagery, the consumer is transported to previous positive experiences of holidays in the area (Figure 29); it was an early aesthetic manifestation of experiential marketing (Schmitt, 1999), something unprecedented in the Netherlands.

These two brands were the keystones of the Waddengroup's internal economic structure, and they allowed the Waddengroup to survive and grow. The Waddengroup had—and still has—two different boards, a Supervisory Board, and an Executive Board. The Supervisory Board is responsible for keeping the Waddengroup's actions in line with the objectives and mission described in the foundational document. It also advises the Executive Board, and seeks for new ways to improve the foundation's performance. The members of this board do not get paid: they are volunteers, and they are chosen according to their knowledge, skills, and connections. They function as a type of elder council.

As a former Member of Parliament, when I simply phone a person, he opens the door more easily. I don't misuse my position; but I do use my position.

—Waddengroup member, 63 years old.

The Executive Board is the main actor in the foundation; it looks for and supports local producers in the process of commoditisation and later commercialisation. The board is also responsible for finding new funds to finance the Waddengroup's activities; its members are paid by the Territorial Development and Promotion Fund. The Supervisory Board can dissolve the Executive Board, but it has to do it as a whole: it cannot force only one of its members to resign. These mechanisms assure the continuity of the Waddengroup's foundational ideas, and provide enough resources to co-finance new projects.

The Waddengroup's financial system is another example of creativity—and a successful one. The two trademarks created by Marc were the cornerstone of the system. When any producer joined the initiative, he or she receives advice about how to improve the marketability and quality of the product in order to add value. Once the Executive Board decides that the product is ready, they label it with any of the two trademarks, and market the product within their networks. The foundation receives 2.5% from the profits of these two brands⁷¹, which goes to the internal fund. This fund has a double function: 1) it provides for the salary of the Executive Board and any freelancer that the foundation may need; 2) the savings generated can co-finance any new project. In this sense, the existence of this fund made the Waddengroup an attractive partner for the Leader projects. At the same time, they became the node of a substantial regional network of producers and retailers.

LEADER decided that we were one of the few groups that could cover the whole area, that had economic involvement in the region as a priority, and that was reliable. We were like a glove fit for the system.

—Waddengroup member, 56 years old.

71 2.5% is the usual amount, although individual agreements may change it.

The Waddengroup holds a position in between a lot of stakeholders. It is a very convenient position: just opening doors or making contacts between them. Sometimes it is a matter of looking for a compromise between the ecologist and economics. If you favour the producers too much, especially if they are linked to farmers' organisations, ecological considerations get a little neglected. The foundation is economically driven and also acts through sustainable criteria, which makes it interesting for many people.

— Frisian civil servant, 63 years old.

What makes this system even more interesting is that it is an active system, not a passive one. It does not merely preserve local products—as a PDO may do—but it also creates them. Executive Board members explore the territory and look for new possible products to include within their trademarks. This labour is similar to farming: you need to know where and when something can be harvested. Once they find a promising producer, the Executive Board jumps on scene:

There are two situations. One is that you go to somebody that is doing something good, and he tells you, “I have got some salty potatoes”. Then, I sit with him, and he will normally say that he wants to produce as much as possible, and to have the highest possible margin. Then, I start to talk with the producer and I say to him, “the highest price is interesting, but if you want to sell as much as possible, you can't get the highest price. So, we have to give you an honest price, a good story, and then we can go to the market”. Then we have to adjust the image of the product. If it is potatoes, you get 20 cents per kilo. If you want to sell them for 1€ per kilo, we have to create a good story. If you want to sell them for 6€ per kilo, you have to have an amazing story. In other occasions, you say, “OK, you want to make 2€ per kilo; you have to make potato chips, then”. Later, I look for someone that can make them for him. If I see that making potato chips is not special, then I say, “OK, we have to make chips with the herbs from the Wadden Sea”.

—Waddengroup member, 56 years old.

Through the above story, the source of the Waddengroup's strength becomes clear: it links producers and ideas to create new singular, meaningful products. Once the group identifies a special product, it creates the market for it:

To create a market is very simple. First you create the product, then you give it an image, then you advertise it on the news, and then the shops say "I want it". A good example was the case of the salty potatoes, we got 2 minutes and 30 seconds on the news, which means about 1m € worth of publicity, and we didn't have any product yet.

—Waddengroup member, 56 years old.

The use of mass media is a usual part of the Waddengroup's marketing strategy; they use local and regional media for cheap or even free publicity. This strategy was implemented for launching the lamb project, too, as I explain later. This is the process that they use to create the added value.

However, this system had the following three weak points: 1) the producers perceive the trademarks' leasing cost as a tax; 2) the trademarks are limited to one producer per product; 3) the design and marketing of the products take too much energy and time. The Waddengroup does not enforce a quantity agreement with the producers: the contract is about quality. The relationship is quite open, because once the product is improved, the producer may think that the support of Waddengroup is not necessary anymore, and therefore leave to avoid paying the hallmark. This situation creates a certain level of stress in the foundation, which cannot avoid the continuous drain of producers that feel prepared to market their own products by themselves. This means that the Executive Board always has to be looking for new producers.

It is difficult, because, sooner or later, everybody thinks about it as tax. If I once sat with you to help you, after four years you don't even remember that I helped you. So, there are always difficulties after one or two years, because they say "ok, what do we need them for?" But we are doing plenty

of work: creating the market, making them talk to each other, designing the regulations, etc.

—Waddengroup member, 56 years old.

This problem is impossible to avoid; the foundation sees it as a minor glitch in the system. However, the second weak point—that the trademarks are limited to one producer per product—was a strong restraint, which was, nevertheless, effectively solved. The trademark system did not allow growing as much as the foundation needed and wanted.

When there already was a winemaker in our system, and then another one called me, it was not possible to include him. Not in one trademark. Then, we decided that we had to create a new system, where different labels and trademarks could benefit from our work. That's *Wadden Goud*.

—Waddengroup member, 50 years old.

The third problem—the great amount of energy needed to design and market the products—was the last element that led to the foundation's new configuration and organisation. Maintaining the responsibility of marketing their products by themselves was a continuous drain of energy and time. The members of the Executive Board had to hold meetings and stay in contact with many different actors—shops, producers, transport agencies, etc.

The difficulties generated by these three weaknesses eventually drove the foundation to a *cul de sac* and created internal tensions that resulted in the decision to change the system. The members of both boards had several meetings and came up with the idea of a certification system for the new stage. While preserving the strengths of the former system, this new model almost totally solved the second and third problems.

The Second Phase: The Creation of the Wadden Goud

In the Netherlands, regional products are known as *streekproducten*. The *Streekeigen Producten Nederland* is the national association that certifies any product as

regional. Through a process called “affiliation” this independent organisation can license other actors to issue the same kinds of certification. That is how the Waddengroup became a certifier and created its own regional label, the *Wadden Goud*.

In this dissertation’s third chapter, it was explained that the notion of regional products in Europe has its origin in the Mediterranean countries. The *Wadden Goud* is a good example of this. EU regulations have protected products with territorial links since 1992 (Regulation 2081/1992), but the national government of The Netherlands did not promote any internal instruments or agencies for implementing the regulations.

We asked the government to exercise its authority on this issue. [...] At that time there were six regional product groups, and we discussed the fact that there were a lot of foreign products. So we said to the government, “if you really want to give good value to regional products, then you have to offer some protection”.

—Waddengroup member, 56 years old.

This foundation’s structure is very similar to that of the Waddengroup. It is an independent organisation, and it has two boards: the Executive Board and the Supervisory Board. The latter board is the highest body of authority. It consists of prominent individuals from the world of policy, business, agriculture and rural areas, science, and the environment. The members of the Supervisory Board must have a strong commitment to local and sustainable regional development. The Supervisory Board sets the policies and monitors the organisation’s independence. The Executive Board is responsible for the approval of new Codes of Practices, for the affiliation of certifiers, and for the concession of the label for individual products. Currently, five different organizations are affiliated. They are allowed to certify the following regional products and services: *Stichting Waddengroep*, *Stichting Streekproducten Groningen*, *Stichting Groene Hart*, *Stichting Wrâldfrucht*, *Stichting Biologisch Goed Van Eigen Erf*.

From its origin, the foundation follows a simple system for certifying any product as regional. These four main requisites have to be fulfilled: 1) the product

originates from a clearly defined region; 2) the raw materials (if possible) are from the region; 3) the manufacturing and processing of the products take place in the region; 4) production takes place in a sustainable way and meets statutory requirements of sustainability.

The foundation and the five affiliated organisations hold independent inspections of the certified products every year. The registration and certification of the product costs 250€, and there is a fixed annual fee of 150€. The *Streek eigen Producten Nederland* uses this income to support itself and to unfold projects for the promotion and consumption of regional products.

However, the system has a weakness: unlike a PDO scheme, the *Streek eigen Producten Nederland* is not recognised by any national or international authorities. Their recognition is just factual, and it is based on reputation and symbolic capital (Barjolle, *et al.* 1997). Nevertheless, the creation of the national association and its affiliation system increased the Waddengroup's possibilities to become an influential actor in the region; also, it added the Netherlands as a new aggregation level in the process of sustainable rural development.

Figure 30: Map of Affiliated Organizations and logo



Source: SPN

In summary, the Waddengroup—as an affiliated organisation—created its own certification system and label, the *Wadden Goud*. This marked a change in

Waddengroup's activity. First, they leased the two trademarks, and started to finance themselves through the certification of products and services. Second, they obtained control over and improved their own narrative and image with each new product or service. Third, they increased the number of producers and fields under the foundation's scope.

Even when *Waddendelicatessen* and *Waddenproducten* were interesting tools, the revenues they generated were not enough to increase the quantity of staff members or projects. In contrast, the new system freed the Waddengroup from duties of production and distribution, allowing it to focus on promoting the new brand and on designing new projects.

The second point—the control obtained by the Waddengroup over its own narrative and image—is also of crucial importance. While it is true that the previous trademarks already had a strong image and narrative, their complexity was limited to a list of food and cosmetic products. The previous strategy linked the products with experiences that consumers might have had in relation to the Wadden Sea—something difficult to control and improve. The new label goes a step further. It gives the Waddengroup total control over consumers' experiences in relation to the brand. In other words, everyone can use the image of the Wadden Sea, but no one else can use the image of the *Wadden Goud*. They control and create the consumer's experience by defining the Code of Practices, and then they encode it in a label and put it on the market:

When you go to a *Wadden Goud* restaurant or hotel, you necessarily feel special. It is not only the story behind the place, which is always important, but the whole experience. Consumers always will think about high quality when they see our label. [...] We are not selling a product, but an experience.

—Waddengroup freelancer, 57 years old.

But it is the third new element—the increased number of producers and fields under the foundation's scope—what truly makes the Waddengroup a key actor in the territory, because in this way it is able to embrace as many products or companies as it wants. At the beginning, this Regional Label certified agro-food

products only; nevertheless, it gradually opened its activities to services and to new fields, thanks to the approval of several new Codes of Practices.

If you want to certify a product, we (the Waddengroup) go to SPN and make our own regulations [...] Their (SPN) board discusses whether the idea is good or not, and we then implement it in our system.

—Waddengroup member, 56 years old.

This new phase opened a more complex way for interacting and cooperating with other organisations and local actors. The quantity of possible producers was increased. Access to new fields was obtained. For example, just the lamb project involves more than 90 producers, almost the same number as all the previous trademarks. What has changed are the instruments and strategies used by the Waddengroup; but its principles and mission have not been altered. The Waddengroup has evolved into a more complex reality.

From an analytical point of view, this process transformed the Waddengroup into an alternative food network that is able to foster the development of socio-technical niches in the Wadden area (van der Ploeg, 2003; Marsden and Smith, 2005). This transformation allows the Waddengroup to support local farmers and associations and to thus resist the dominance of the modernisation project. This can be clearly seen in the farmers that take part in the lamb meat supply chain in Texel.

d) *Echt Texels Lamsvlees*: more than just good meat

The island of Texel is a well-known tourist destination in the Netherlands. As the second destination in North Holland, every year it receives thousands of visitors. In this small island there are eight museums, 60 restaurants, 30 km of beach, a 5,600 ha natural reserve, a 170 km cycle lane with 57 reference points, a 35 km lamb cycle lane, one mountain bike route, 225 km of walking tracks, one parachute jumping centre, and more lamb and sheep than human inhabitants. Texel has 13,766 people, 13,500 sheep, and 11,000 lambs. 90% of these sheep are Texel sheep. This scenario—together with a strong local identity and an unsurpassable

image—is ideal for the design and implementation of a quality label that links lamb meat to the island. However, the process was not easy and required massive amounts of energy and meetings. In this part of the chapter, I describe the three phases that the ETL project went through from 2003 to 2008, and also the path that the initiative followed later.

Texel Sheep: An Example of a Successful Market-Oriented Co-evolution

The Texel breed, as most domestic animal breeds, is the outcome of an ongoing process of co-evolution that took hundreds of years. Uncountable generations of farmers, in many different parts of the world⁷², have been improving this breed through selection and breeding. This improvement focused specialising this breed on meat production, and currently is one of the best lean meat sheep in the world.

Texel sheep have been in the island almost since the 16th century. Today, the line of the breed is a result of the mix between *Pijstaarten* (a breed with good wool but only a moderate muscular mass) and *Leciester* and *Lincoln* during the second half of the 19th century. These two new breeds improved the quality of the meat and the wool. The name of the original breed, *Pijstaarten*, gradually disappeared, and it was finally changed to Texel in the early 20th century. During that century, the farmers focused on the improvement of the meat and bone ratio, and the sheep's structure and size slowly increased.

Figure 31: Co-evolution of the Texel Sheep



Source: *Texelse Schapenfokkers*

72 In the 1970s the first Texel sheep were exported to the United Kingdom. The United States imported the first of these sheep in 1985, and Australia and New Zealand did the same in the 1990s. Nowadays, it is possible to find specimens of Texel sheep in almost any continent.

At the present time, Texel sheep is medium-sized and lambs once a year. The ratio of lamb is 1.8 per birth. Texel sheep has a high slaughter quality; the fat deposition is excellent. The body of a Texel is thick and beam-shaped. The head and legs do not have any wool on them, but are covered with white hair. The quality of the wool is also good, although it does not represent the farmer's main profit⁷³. The ram weighs approximately 95 kg and stands at 70 cm at the withers, whilst the ewe weighs approximately 75 kg and stands at 68 cm at the withers.

This long process of selection and adaptation was mainly market-oriented; the local population did not use to consume lamb. The last stage of the process, which started in the 1970s, gave the breed its current shape. During that decade, the municipality and some farmers attempted to label the breed for market distinction. They created *Stichting Texels Schaap* (Texel Sheep Foundation). Aad van Heerwarde, a local slaughterer and butcher tried to market his production under this initiative:

This brand is in use since 1970. The municipalities and the farmers started a project to promote Texel lamb, but Göenga (local butcher and warehouse owner) counteracted and started with lamb meat himself. He never got his brand, though, because the municipalities and farmers favoured the Texel brand. But then there was so much counteraction from Göenga... The point was that some farmers and Göenga didn't like it. That's where the mutual battle began, and it's still going on. Back then, they tried to "destroy" me, and now they need me⁷⁴. All the lamb used to go straight to the mainland, to a big sheep market. They picked the sheep up in May, because the farmers had to pay the interest for their lands during that period. They were not slaughtered here, because we didn't eat lamb on this island. The slaughterhouse taught the people of this island to eat lamb.

Q: Is this something that started in 1970, then?

73 The situation of this sheep's wool is similar to the one described in Sierra de Cádiz. However, some improvements have been made by linking this wool to a local producer of futons and duvets, *Texel Wool Slaapcomfort*. The Waddengroup is also responsible of this project, as I will explain later.

74 Nowadays, Aad van Heerwarde owns the only business in the island with license to slaughter; which means that the Waddengroup and Göenga need him to slaughter the lambs of the project.

A: Yes... Now it is called Wadden Goud; before it was Stichting Texels Schaap. But it's different, because I don't belong to the Waddengroup. I don't need them, because I slaughter also for myself. At the end, it doesn't matter to me what happens with the Waddengroup: I'm independent.

—Slaughterer and butcher, 63 years old.

This conversation highlights two interesting elements: on the one hand, the roots of the project; on the other, the existence of internal tensions. Farmers and local institutions had tried to alter the way in which the lamb chain is organised in the island many times before. The project designed in the 1970s was neither the first one nor the last one. Indeed, the local farmers' association was attempting a new project at the beginning of the 2000s.

The situation was that the agricultural association had been complaining for ten years that no one was doing anything about lamb. I was on the board of this association [...] but other people were responsible for lamb. After ten years, they decided that it was useless, because the butcher (Göenga) didn't want to work with the slaughterhouse (Aad van Heerwarde), nor with the restaurants... and so on. Then, I made an amendment in the board that said that I would do it; but I don't want any complaints from the major, or the local government [...] I said, "I want to have the guarantee that I'm free to do what I want to do. I take fully responsibility, but I don't want complains". Then, the Waddengroup took control of the situation.

—Waddengroup member, 56 years old.

The existence of many previous initiatives meant that the farmers and local institutions were aware of the Texel lamb's potential; however, they lacked the skills and contacts needed to materialise the idea. But the Waddengroup's staff did have the knowledge, social skills, contacts, and experience to fill the gaps. One of the main social skills necessary to unfold this kind of initiatives is charisma. The person responsible of bringing the actors to the project needs to be able to convince any potential partner. This was—and still is—one of Marc's main strengths, as one of the farmers said during an interview:

Well, Marc is a good speaker. I used to think that the way in which Marc imagined things would always work.

—Farmer, 47 years old.

This social skill is fundamental for solving the type of internal tensions revealed during the conversation with Aad. Texel is a small island. There are 227 agricultural enterprises and 175 farms with different kinds of livestock cattle, mostly sheep; yet, there is a bottleneck in the processing part of the chain. A long time ago, there were four slaughterhouses in Texel, but new EU regulations in the 1970s and 80s reduced the number to just one: *Slachtbedrijf Texel*, Aad's slaughterhouse⁷⁵. The confrontation during the 1970s between Aad and Göenga hindered any project's eventual success.

Aad pointed out two of the new system's key elements. He said, "I don't belong to the Waddengroup [...] I'm independent", and also, "they were not slaughtered here, because we didn't eat lamb on this island". Later in this dissertation, I will elaborate on the implications of these two points; for the time being, it is enough to underline, first, the actors' sense of freedom and, second, the internal consumption of the product.

In relation to the actors' sense of independence, it must be noted that there are more than 90 actors in the ETL supply chain, and that everyone is free to connect or not with the chain at any time; buying and selling are totally voluntary. The ETL is an alternative food network (Renting, *et al.* 2003). Usually, local actors combine this kind of network with conventional ones (Sonnino and Marsden, 2006). Any actor that joins the ETL increases the number of markets that he has access to, and does not have to lose his prior connections.

The second element refers to the increase in local meat consumption. The project was not export-oriented: the objective was to embed the initiative in the island, and local population⁷⁶ was therefore perhaps one of the most important target

75 According to our interviews, the main handicap was the cost of redesigning and enlarging the facilities, together with the lack of access to credit.

76 Local population also includes non-permanent residents.

niche-markets⁷⁷. The ETL project strengthened the link between local identity and lamb, and re-signified it as the most substantial part of local cuisine. The creation of this local demand followed the Waddengroup's usual approach, described earlier in this chapter. The Waddengroup organised local events for the promotion of the lamb, and combined them with the use of local media (such as the local newspaper *Texel Dit Week*). This was a difficult task, for two reasons: 1) sheep-holding is considered a low-class profession in the Netherlands; 2) most of the local inhabitants had unpleasant memories about the lamb meat.

I don't like lamb. I remember when I was young, if a lamb died for any reason (and they used to die more often than I would've liked), we had to eat it. I prefer other foods.

—Store owner and liquor producer, 67 years old.

Figure 32: Butchering and free tasting of ETL during local events.



⁷⁷ The local market's potentiality was described in the three LEADER projects presented to the LAG *Kop van Noord-Holland en Texel*. For more information: <http://www.leaderkvn.nl/>

Currently, the Waddengroup and *Echt Texels Produkten* make sure that the initiative is present in any major island event, from the *Koog culinair* in September, to the *Schapendag* in July. The events usually include butchering, cooking, and tasting (Figure 32).

This marketing strategy has the advantage of being low-cost and direct, and at the same time, it provides access to both locals and tourists during family oriented activities. All of this strengthens the positive experiences associated with the labels.

In summary, Texel sheep is the outcome of a long process of market-oriented co-evolution. This process's last phase transformed this animal into one of the best lean-meat sheep in the world. There were several attempts in the island's recent history to promote and differentiate it. However, they were unsuccessful until the 2000s, when the Waddengroup joined efforts with local organisations and actors to materialise a better, territorially embedded, supply chain.

Echt Texels Lamsvlees: a project with three phases

The idea of creating added value by linking a specific product to the island was not new. However, Marc van Rijsselberghe faced at least the following two difficulties: 1) to convince sceptic Waddengroup members about the need and viability of the project; 2) to convince actors along the whole supply chain to overcome existing tensions between them. Fortunately, Marc and the Waddengroup had a long experience with creating alternative food networks and markets, and possessed all the freedom and independence required to achieve the necessary agreements.

Then, we (the Executive Board) discussed that it was 60% New Zealand lamb and 40% Texel lamb. I explained to Henk that if we wanted to do something about it, we had to promote consciousness that it was Texel lamb and that it was related to the landscape. We invented the system; we invited the farmers and decided on the regulations together with them. [...] It was a painful process, because it took three or four months to get them to sit together and discuss the regulations. Then, we went

to Göenga, and finally we had to find someone that could find the right lamb (Piet Douma) and someone to slaughter them (Aad van Heerwarde).

— Waddengroup member, 56 years old.

The Waddengroup and the rest of the partners had to think differently in order to succeed where many had failed before. On the one side, they needed financial support; on the other, they needed to invent a new system that could include everyone in the project. The financial support came from the LEADER+ Initiative. The LAG *Kop van Noord-Holland en Texel* and the Waddengroup had a strong and long relationship, having worked together for several years. This relationship is based on the following three basic factors: 1) the Waddengroup's funding system provides enough resources to co-finance any initiative; 2) most Waddengroup projects fulfil LEADER requirements; 3) both institutions share a territorial approach to their projects.

Leader decided that we were one of the few groups that covered the whole area; also, our priority is to be involved in the region's economy. We fit the system like a glove. But still it is difficult; it is not a happy marriage.

—Waddengroup member, 56 years old.

After several meetings, the Waddengroup teamed up with *WLTO Texel* and with *Stichting Stimuleren Texels Produkt*. These three organisations, and the LAG⁷⁸, co-financed a project named *Promotie Texels Lamsvlees*.

The first phase of the project comprehended the following three main activities: 1) market research; 2) the design of the future Code of Practices; 3) promotion trials. The research was done by the company *Texelse Milieuvriendelijke natuurproducten B.V.* (Texel environmentally friendly nature products), with the support of *VVV Texel*, among others. The research confirmed the project's economic viability, and pointed out that promotion should focus on these seven target-groups: 1) catering companies in Texel; 2) butchers in Texel; 3) guests staying in Texel; 4) Texel residents; 5) potential visitors to Texel; 6) the culinary press; 7) potential customers outside Texel.

⁷⁸ The LAG supported this phase under the LEADER + Initiative with a total budget of 10,565€. The project started in August 2003, and lasted 18 months.

The Waddengroup had several meetings with potential supply chain members; for instance, farmers, slaughterers, butchers, shops, and restaurants. The first step, however, was to contact some of the most important local farmers. It took several weeks of individual meetings before they could gather a group of ten under the same roof.

I started this with Marc van Rijsselberghe. I was there from the beginning, and also in the projects that didn't work. The municipalities started one. We worked there, in the gemeentehuis (town-hall). We talked to several people, but it didn't work. Marc was there and said, "Well, this doesn't work, it leads to nothing. But I have a plan". That took us further, and I eventually figured out the rules with some other farmers.

—Farmer, 47 years old.

This part was very important; as Marc said, "you may know a lot of things, but not everything". The Waddengroup did not bring a predefined set of rules to the table, but rather asked what was necessary to make Texel lamb the best possible lamb⁷⁹. This pattern was replicated throughout the whole supply chain in order to design the final version of the Codes of Practices. This process moved the discussion back and forth; previous agreements were often modified. At the end of phase one, the partners defined a set of rules that embraced 13 main. Five years later, the *Streekige Producten Nederland* approved the code's final version, which came into force on October 15, 2008.

What we can see here is a wise and interesting unfolding of a new institutional framework designed with the participation of every actor in the supply chain. Once institutionalised, it became a tool for the island's sustainable rural development. The farmers that join the initiative have to start interacting with their own resources in a more sustainable way; this changes the nature of their co-production. For example, one of the code's rules is that sheep must feed in open fields at least 100 days per year. This apparently small change assures that the sheep contribute to the soil's quality, enhances the flavour of the meat, projects beautiful cultural landscapes, improves the sheep's health and quality of life, and reduces the cost of feed.

⁷⁹ It is necessary to remark that the whole project followed a bottom-up approach, one of the big key differences with Sierra de Cádiz. I elaborate upon this in the next chapter.

This Code of Practices is, furthermore, divided into different contracts between the actors in the supply chain, on the one hand, and the Waddengroup, on the other. This is another key strength of the foundation, for these contracts translate complicated regulations into an accessible language, and thus simplify the regulations and help local actors to follow them. In this way, anyone who wants to join the supply chain knows precisely what to expect.

There is a contract between the Waddengroup and the restaurants and butchers. [...] The farmers, in turn, have a contract with the butchers and the Waddengroup. But there isn't any contract between the farmers and the restaurants.

—Waddengroup freelance, 57 years old.

Once there were enough partners to start working, The Waddengroup organised a promotion trial. This process followed the Waddengroup's typical strategy: using local events, getting free publicity from media, and allowing consumers to experience the product. In the case of lamb, there is a major event in the Netherlands: the season opening. Every year, politicians and representatives of this sector meet at Den Haag and have the first taste of the season. In 2003, the Waddengroup convinced the event organisers to move the venue, and the national opening act took place in Texel. The culinary press flocked to the island for the occasion and wrote glowing articles about the taste and texture of Texel lamb.

I phoned the association that promotes meat in the Netherlands, and asked them about their work with lamb. And they said that they were opening the season every year in Den Haag with the politicians and the media. [...] I said, "You should come to the island of Texel and open the season here". So, in 2003 they came and opened the season here.

—Waddengroup member, 56 years old.

Once again, we can observe the Waddengroup's style in action. They do not invest massive amounts of resources in their projects; they just try to identify assets that are already there in order to make the most out of it. There were 15 actors involved

in the project when this phase ended, 12 farmers and 3 processors, enough to move on to the next phase.

The second phase of the project brought even more organisations together. Three new organisations decided to work with the LAG⁸⁰ and co-finance the initiative: *Duurzaam Texel*, *VVV Texel*, and *Cold Food b.v.* Once again, the initiative was supported by local actors. This phase included a socioeconomic assessment to evaluate the potential economic contribution to the island.

Table 3: Prognosis for the development of the project

	Take-off	Year 1	Year 2
Number of lambs annual sales by within the initiative	1500	1800	2160
Carcasses weight on an annual basis (average 18 kg)	27,000	32,400	38,880
Net weight of the lamb to sell (average 17 kg.)	25,500	30,600	36,720

In this assessment, the Waddengroup created a prognosis of the initiative's development. They defined a starting point of 1,500 Texel lambs, which would then increase to 1,800, and finally to 2,160 lambs in a year (Table 3). The report included the comparison between the cost of ETL and New Zealand lamb for the restaurants. It established that the cost of ETL per kilogram would be 15€, whilst the cost of the New Zealand lamb was 6€. However, 95% of the added value would remain in the island. At the end of the second year, the added value of this chain was calculated at 36,720 kilograms of meat times 15€, which would equal 550,800€. If 95% of the added value remained in the island, it meant that the initiative's total contribution to the local economy would be 523,260€ per year.

During this phase, strong steps were taken in order to achieve success. The following two are the most important: 1) the creation of the cycle route; 2) the design of the logo.

The Waddengroup, in cooperation with *VVV Texel* designed a cycle route along which several certified partners of the initiative were located (restaurants, butchers, farmers, etc.). 65,000 booklets were printed and distributed among

⁸⁰ On this occasion, the LAG approved a contribution of 10,080€. The starting date was April 2004, and the duration 12 months.

the island's local tourist attractions. This route can still be cycled today and the booklet can be bought in the VVV Texel shop for 2.50€.

The creation of the logo was also crucial. The logo was first distributed among the partners in order to allow them to express their opinions, and it was then included into the plate that all partners would display in their businesses (Figure 33).

The plate shows three logos over the landscape of Texel and includes the sentence *Wij serveren echt Texels lamsvlees* (we serve real Texel lamb). The inclusion of *Wadden Goud* and *Echt Texels Produkt* in the plate adds the existing reputation of these two brands to the new one; this is another instance of the Waddengroup employing existing resources in its projects. This plate is usually combined with the flags of the different organisations, which also helps the consumers to identify them. From an analytical point of view, the combination of local and regional quality labels on the plate is the symbolic manifestation of an aggregate level of reputation (Loureiro and McCluskey, 2000). This practice adds value to each of the included labels, and manifests the existence of synergy and territorial coherence.

Figure 33: Plate of *Echt Texels Lamsvlees*



The third phase was the longest and most expensive⁸¹. It started in January 2005 and lasted three years. It focused on expanding the distribution, solving the problems within the chain, and promoting the initiative locally and regionally. Two trading companies joined the initiative and were certified as *Wadden Goud*: Goënga and the farm *Hoogvliet*. At the end of this phase, the number of farmers increased to 22; that of the restaurants to 32 (3 of them from the mainland). Today there are 26 farmers, three processors, five trading companies, 40 Texel restaurants, six mainland restaurants, and 12 butcher shops from outside Texel. The chain processes 3,000 lambs per year; using the aforementioned figures as a reference, it can be estimated that the ETL initiative contributes every year 726,750€ to the island's economy.

Nevertheless, this number only represents the initiative's direct economic contribution: the code and the supply chain generate many indirect economic and non-economic benefits for the island. For instance, the simple act of letting the sheep roam the fields freely helps to maintain the special cultural landscape that the tourists appreciate:

Sheep are very important for the local culture. [...] They are used mostly for their meat. It is very cruel to say this, but in spring you will see all these lovely tiny little lambs, and a couple of weeks later you will find them on your plate. [...] It is becoming a big business: if you have a stable with some sheep and lambs, and you ask 3€ per visitor for visiting them, you can make good money. [...] People want to see and pet the lambs, and locals tell them stories about them: their names, how they feed them, what happens when three lambs are born together (one is born dead). Then you have a little drink, and you have paid a little bit, and suddenly two hours have flown past.

—VVV Texel Head of Marketing and Communications, 32 years old.

As explained above, the sight of sheep grazing the fields is used as free publicity. Additionally, it highlights the important fact that the ETL is a closed chain.

81 The LAG co-financed this phase with 85,000€.

Q: Is it important that people see the lamb?

A: It's not so important, but it does help. Texel is an island of sheep, and people know that. But people don't really taste the difference. Texel lamb is not specifically from the island. It's a very popular breed because it's very fleshy. *Heerhugowaard* (a big market in the mainland) also has Texel lamb—but their lambs haven't walked on this island. The circumstances here on the island are different, and this results in a different product. [...] We created a chain from *Wadden Goud* for farmers who bring their animals to the slaughterhouse on the island, and from Göenga to us. That makes it special: the chain is closed.

—Restaurant owner in Texel, 46 years old.

Even if prior to this project the sheep were seen as cultural icons, they were not fully activated as resources. Once again, we can see here a process of embedded commoditisation of a product within the local ecology, economy, and culture. For some authors (van der Ploeg *et al.* 2000), rural development is the creation of “new” activities reorganising existing endogenous resources in a profitable and more sustainable way. And this is precisely one of this initiative's key characteristics. An existing resource was articulated with the new demands of a post-industrial society.

Figure 34: The sheep as icon of Texel



Aesthetics is an important part of this success. From the moment when tourists board the ferry, until they return to the mainland, they will see references to sheep everywhere. The role of this ferry is very interesting. Taking it feels like a transition ritual. Tourists leave their worries and duties on the harbour, and the ferry then takes them through a quiet and beautiful sea, where a salty and refreshing wind blows; they know that they are sailing to a special place. The whole ferry is full of images and representations of sheep and other island icons. Once the ferry arrives to its destination, the visitors are ready to experience Texel: they are completely conscious that Texel equals sheep.

e) Synchronic description of the system: how the grass becomes cash

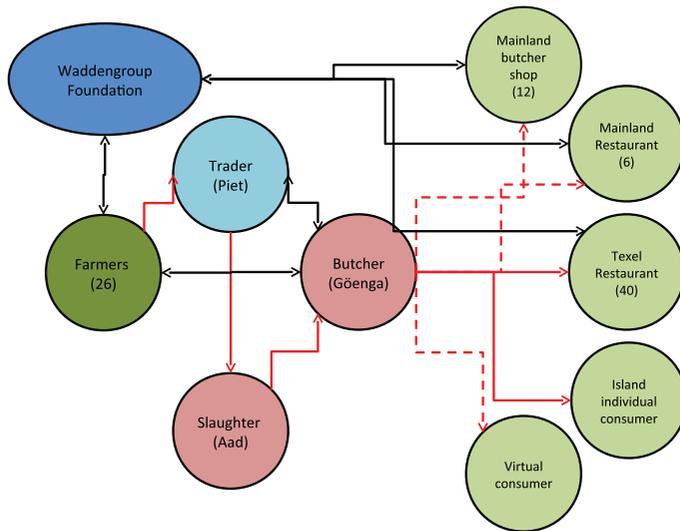
It seems clear at this point that the ETL initiative can be considered a success: it has survived one full decade with a sustainable growth, and the different partners are mostly satisfied with the current situation. In this section I do a synchronic description of the system in order to clarify the picture further. OFLs such as ETL are new institutional agreements that define the new rules of the game between the different actors involved in the production and in the processing and consumption of the labelled products. This means that the process of setting these new rules was an exercise of re-thinking and re-designing the reality where the product is embedded. This reality includes mankind, living nature, and their co-production. The previous system—as well as the conventional one—focused on the exportation of live sheep to global markets, which reduced most of the added value.

Well, in the past more lambs went to the mainland. Now more lambs stay here. That's for Texel generally. Before, many lambs used to go to the market in *Leiden* or *Purmerend*. I think 80%. This is different now because more lambs are sold on this island because of *Wadden Goud*. Nowadays, 60% goes to the mainland and 40% stays here; for the whole island, not for this project. Within the project 40% goes to the mainland en 60% stays here.

—Farmer, 47 years old.

The system follows a clear line and has five groups of actors: farmers, a trader, a slaughterer, a butcher, and consumers or places of consumption. The first and the last links can increase in number, but the trader, slaughterer, and butcher are limited to one each. Figure 35 is a representation of the contractual relationships and the movement of the product within the initiative.

Figure 35: The ETL contractual and processing and distribution systems



In this graphic, the straight red lines are the direct movements of the product, whilst the dotted red line is the indirect movement. The direct movements are those that the actors do themselves, e.g., the trader selects the lambs and transports them to the slaughterhouse. The indirect movements are those that require an external actor; e.g., the use of distribution companies to send the product to restaurants on the mainland. The black lines are the contracts that sustain the system and are held between two parties or categories of actors, never more. These contracts divide the Code of Practices into individual duties; most of these contracts are held with the Waddengroup, which is also responsible for the auditing of all the actors in the chain. However, there are two actors that do not hold formal contracts: the slaughterer and the consumer. The first one is independent from the system and charges the same price for any lamb since no special treatment is required. The final link of the chain, the consumers, has an unsigned contract represented by the initiatives logo.

Figure 36: Göenga supermarket in Den Hoorn and Web shop



This label assures the quality of the product that they are going to consume, and can be acquired within the initiative's venues (restaurants) or can be consumed within the initiative venue (in restaurants) or outside. Göenga, Aad, the butchers and several shops sell to individual consumers on their own, but Göenga went further and opened his own online shop.

The system begins to work two weeks before Easter and stops at the end of the year⁸², its workings are based on demand. The restaurants and shops send their requests to Göenga who in turn calculates the number of lambs that will be needed that week. Göenga then sends that number to Piet Douma (the trader) who already knows where to find the requested number of lambs with the proper quality. Once the trader has decided where to buy them, he phones the farmers to inform them the day that he will pass to collect the lamb, this is one of the most sensitive moments of the system since he must select only the right lambs.

82 ETL products are available most of the year, but not the slathering system that I describe in this part of the chapter.

Figure 37: The selection of the lamb



Due to the sensitivity of this part of the chain, the Waddengroup had to find a “specialist” such as Piet Douma, who used to be a butcher before he became a trader as well as having previous experience as a livestock trader and lived on the island for over 25 years, which means that he not only “sees” what’s under the wool but he knows the production cycle of different farmers. Every time he buys a lamb he must inspect it by checking the animal’s structure as well as pressing his back in order to feel its muscles

Once Piet has all the lamb that Göenga requested, following the ETL regulations, he takes them by truck to a barn where they will spend the night. Next morning, around five, he picks them up and drives them 2 km down the road to the slaughterhouse. Once in the slaughterhouse, Aad sacrifices and cuts the lamb according to Göenga’s instructions. The lamb is weighed and placed in a cold chamber in order to preserve it until Göenga needs them, then Göenga collects and prepares the lambs that are required each day. The lamb is divided in pieces; some parts are sold raw and others are cured. Göenga makes more than 20 products from the lamb, all of them labelled ETL.

The final consumption of ETL takes place in five different ways. The restaurants of the island and the mainland are the main way of consumption. There are

40 restaurants where consumers can enjoy ETL, which cover a wide range of consumers. The restaurants go from the accessible pizza restaurant “Pizza Mondo” in Den Burg, to the exquisite Bij Jef located in Den Hoorn, which holds one Michelin star. The accessibility to the product is guaranteed by the diversity of the final presentation, and by the wide range of prices that the restaurants have. This wide range of prices existed before the initiative was in place due to the very nature of Texel as a seasonal tourist destination that attracts visitors with different purchasing power according to the season.

We looked at the market. We just made a marketing-mix. You have the people of the island and the tourists. The marketing mix is the most important thing that we do. [...] Our customers are people from the island, and the tourists. We have costumers that are fairly regular, they come more than once. We have all the ages and social classes. You can eat low-cost but also high-cost. [...] Through the years they have recognised that there are so many nice things here on the island. And that’s also what the market asks. [...] Well, you recognise it, through the years when you start to look for it. Customers ask you for things that you don’t have, and then you start to look for them. We have lots of cows here. Why don’t we slaughter some and use the meat ourselves?

—Owner of restaurant in Den Burg, 46 years old.

The last mean of distribution is the online shop created by Göenga two years ago (Figure 36) where consumers from around the world can choose the part and quantity of ETL that they wish to receive in their homes. Göenga uses transports with cooling systems, so the product preserves most of its quality; still, people that enjoy the lamb on the island during the holidays are the main market of this system.

Texel is satisfied. All the people know us here after 30 years of existence. But through the internet everyone can find you. Everyday 5 or 6 boxes with products go to the mainland. [...] 2 years ago it (internet sales) was zero, and now it’s 10% to 15%.

—Manager of Göenga, 50 years old.

Figure 38: The processing of the lamb



In summary, in this system, 3,000 lambs are transformed into added value every year in Texel. The system is under review right now, since the demand is increasing, and the potential number of lambs is 11,000 per year. There are disagreements about the path to follow, but what seems clear is that the initiative has engaged with the local population and the essence of the island. In this sense, it is possible to see how new initiatives can go further than just implementing existing models of organisation; they can design new systems that link food, people, and places in a sustainable and locally embedded way. Therefore, local actors are able to overcome the lack of support from the State; they can create and institutionalise new local food systems based on common pool resources that unfold new nested markets in a globalised society. In the following chapter this is analysed more deeply through a comparison of both observational units.

Chapter 6

Discussion and Conclusion

*No man ever steps into the same river twice,
For it's not the same river and he's not the same man.*

—Heraclitus

a) Introduction

Humanity, society, and ecology are continuously changing, as Heraclitus noted in the lines above. The complexity of this change is immeasurable; however, as scientists, we select specific episodes or parts of that reality to study and learn from them. We create heuristic boundaries that reduce time and space into a measurable size, then we jump in with our methods and theories to study what is going on. After a while, like a hunter that comes back to his clan carrying the dinner, we are expected to present our findings to the rest of the academic community. This ritual is rooted in the ancient need of our kind to feel in control of reality, although we know for a fact that it is impossible.

That need drove me to the study of transitions, but not just any transition; I wanted to study successful transitions, transitions that were the outcome of a local response to global change and whose outcomes were positive for the protagonists of the story and their reality. I wanted to understand how normal people are able to resist the huge pressure that powerful players and entities put on them. Furthermore, I wanted to study how they do this without breaking the rules. For that reason, I choose to study how people use OFLs to transform their reality and ours into a better place. I wanted to see if this tool was useful for supporting and promoting processes that foster the sustainable development of their territories.

In this chapter I include what I have learnt after four years of hunting. I translate my experiences and thoughts into an academic language, and then I explain in what sense the interpretation of my experience relates to already available and codified knowledge. The next part of the chapter contains a description of the four common elements shared by the two case studies. Then, I analyse the elements that make them different—the different traits and elements that make

each of them unique. The fourth part of the chapter tries to enunciate certain lessons that may be useful in the future; by using the research questions I mean to explain their meaning on a practical and theoretical level. Finally, I end with a brief note on the complexity of social processes.

b) The Common Elements

This dissertation studies the histories behind two contrasting OFLs: a Protected Designation of Origin and a Regional Label. The approach and study of both processes highlights the existence of these four common elements between them: 1) the creation of a new institutional framework that necessarily accompanies the creation of a new product; 2) both initiatives are linked to a specific and unique territory and type of livestock; 3) there is a strong and pre-existing tourist sector operating in their territories; 4) farmers needed external specialised support to design and unfold the projects.

The First Common Element

A new institutional framework necessarily accompanies the creation of a new product, and this lesson is very interesting for any community that wants to preserve any practice or product, because since the creation of a label implies selecting specific procedures, ingredients, and methods over the existing ones. However, the previous reality may be different, and the existing local and artisanal products can be multiple and diverse, especially if they are part of the domestic economy.⁸³

The creation of a quality label entails the standardisation of the labelled product. This process requires breaking down the internal diversity of the product, and the creation of a referential as well as a heuristic and an archetypical reconstruction of the product. In order to make this standardisation possible, it is necessary to induce a process of rationalisation on the production and control system (Weber, 1930; Ritzer, 1996, 2005). This rationalisation can promote efficiency,

⁸³ During fieldwork I observed many discussions on this topic: What is the real cheese of Sierra de Cádiz? Each shepherd described a different way to make the cheese, with different approaches to the key points of the process.

accountability, and prevision; but it may also reduce the human nature of the process, even increase the number of tasks in such a way that daily practice becomes inefficient. From the point of view of the theory of conventions (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1991; Sylvander, 1992, 1994, 1995), which study how quality is one of the spheres in which economic activity is regulated by procedures that go beyond regulation (Renard, 2003: 87), there are four main types of coordination for quality definition: 1) industrial; 2) domestic; 3) civic; 4) market. The institutional certification gives way to an industrial-type imperative, a kind of objectification of quality (Ibid: 88). The definition of quality of an artisanal product is rooted in a domestic type of coordination, where the producer, the place, or the brand is the source of trust for the consumer. The transition from a domestic to an industrial type of coordination reduces the flexibility of the interaction between producer and consumer to a list of objective parameters that embrace a small part of the complex reality of agro-food products, which also constrains the variability of the processes to those that produce the desirable quantities of each pre-defined element (fat, salt, vitamins, etc.). The achievement of such specific requirements requires the introduction of new and expensive technologies that not every producer can afford and that reduce their autonomy from external markets and fossil energy.

From the point of view of the actor-approach, the new product is the outcome of a conscious and collective intervention of a common reality that affects each individual actor. The actors involved have to re-think and re-design the product, and something that used to be an individual task, becomes a collective one. This process is quite sensitive, and as Long and van der Ploeg explain, “intervention is a ‘multiple reality’ made up of different cultural perceptions and social interests, and constituted by the on-going social and political struggles that take place between the social actors involved” (1989:226). Even more, in the case of agro-food systems, it also affects non-participant actors, such as other producers or consumers. In this sense, the institutionalisation of the “new” product can deny the authenticity of any other local system of production. You can have a winery in the region of Champagne that has produced sparkling wine for almost a century, but if you don’t follow the PDO’s Codes of Practices, you cannot call it “champagne”.

If we look at the viability of the new product, it is not enough to define the Code of Practices: the new product requires a new dynamic structure able to support and be connected with new markets, since a successful product needs to articulate producers and consumers and to share values in such a way that an adequate price can be agreed (Espeitx, 1996). The coordination of the supply chain has to improve the quality and increase the access to the market in order to ask for a better price, it also needs to create enough room for manoeuvre so the actors involved can articulate their own interests and projects. Furthermore, the new institutional framework needs to be a set of shared rules that preserve the common pool resources required to create the new products and connect them with a nested market (van der Ploeg, *et al.* 2012).

The Second Common Element

The linkage to a specific territory and type of livestock is important; OFLs cannot be implemented anywhere or on any products; they must have a desirable, observable, and reproducible distinctive element in them (Bonnet and Simioni, 2001; Loureiro and McCluskey, 2000). In the case of the cured sheep cheese and the lamb meat, these elements are the breed and the territory of origin. Both breeds are the outcome of a long process of co-evolution (Sevilla-Guzmán and González de Molina, 1990; Altieri, 1995; van der Ploeg, and Marsden, 2008), and their use gives the product a unique quality. By unique, I mean that it cannot be copied or replicated using technology (Stroper and Salais, 1997). Anyone may try, but in order to achieve the same quality it would require the use of the same breeds and their *terroir*. This is what Aviat and Bouquery (in Barjolle, *et al.* 1997) defined as the three dimensions of the particular qualities of agricultural products: ecological, organoleptic, and territorial

In the case of the cured cheese, we are talking about molecular particularities of the milk. This breed produces milk with a high content of fat and protein, but there are many more elements in the milk. The milk is alive, and it is full of microorganisms that affect the process of maturation and the final taste. The same happens with the lamb meat. Texel sheep is a very special breed, with a unique physiognomy. The muscles on this sheep are bigger than in other breeds, and so is the flavour. Even more, the aesthetics of the sheep as an animal are pleasant to most people, as are the landscapes where they reside.

That is the second link shared by both initiatives: the territory. Either in the island of Texel or in the mountains of Sierra de Cádiz, we are talking about beautiful and special places. When you link your product to this type of area, where nature is everywhere and accessible, your initiative accumulates symbolic capital immediately. The breeds are the outcome of a unique co-evolution of living nature and a society that makes them hard to copy; copying a whole territory is almost impossible.

The most interesting part of this uniqueness, which is socially and culturally constructed and perceived, is that it makes the consumption of the product a symbolic action. This symbolic action works on two levels. Firstly, the consumption of these products is one way to distinguish ourselves as consumers; it can be an act of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984; Espeitx, 1996; Lozano and Aguilar, 2010). When we eat, we incorporate what we are eating to our bodies as a magical act that can alter reality. In this sense, the explicit link that these products have with specific places defines them as desirable for the consumers who try to fulfil the wish of belonging to such a place, a common trait of consumers in globalised societies. At the same time, as Lipovetsky highlights (1992), western societies are becoming post-moralist societies; this implies that social responsibility has been replaced for the requirement of self-sacrifice. Thus, we can use consumption to calm our consciousness down; we can support the places that we love by consuming them, and the right label can help us identify the right product for the right action at the right time.

The Third Common Element

The existence of tourist demand for both territories is strictly related with the previous shared quality of both initiatives. They make reference to and are located in outstanding areas. The existence of a strong tourist sector in their territories is no doubt helpful: there is no need to deliver the product to their doorstep, for they come to yours.

Goodman says that alternative quality food production is dependent on subsidies—as if the rest of the current European agro-food system could survive without them—and that without subsidies it will be reduced to an elitist narrow class diet (2004). My research proved him wrong. The link of quality products and tourist activities is a good example of the potential of this new reality to

be autonomous and independent from subsidies. Even more, the internal diversification of the production has increased the range of final presentation in such a way that many have become easily affordable, e.g., lamb croquets or cheese cream.

Rural tourism is a growing economic activity in post-industrial societies. People get tired of living in the city and use the weekend to have a break and breathe fresh air. Rural tourism usually goes hand in hand with gastronomic tourism (Bessière, 1998), thus the demand of local food products tend to increase. Both cases are extremely well connected with tourism. Indeed, most of the cheese in Sierra de Cádiz is sold directly in the factories and houses during the weekends and holidays. I have spent many Saturdays and Sundays seated in front of the shop at the cheese factories, and counting hundreds of visitors that leave the place with bags full of cheese. These customers did not come just for the cheese; they came for the whole package, which includes the acquisition of cheese. Although there is no cheese route in Sierra de Cádiz, the quality of the product and the link of this industry with other sectors through horizontal networks increase dynamic synergies and coherence in the territory (Brunori and Rossi, 2000; Murdoch, 2000).

The same happens with the lamb in Texel. This island is one of the main tourist destinations in the country, as is shown by the high rate of shops and restaurants per capita on the island. Most of the tourists are from the Netherlands, and if there is something that Dutch people love, it is cycling. Texel has lots of cycling-routes, and once the sun sets, there is nothing better than a taste of the local cuisine in one of the local restaurants. The diversity of cultural landscapes of Texel is high, but the high point of the landscape is the farms with the grazing sheep. Thus, a nice taste of them is the logical main dish for the dinner. However, this reality is a weak point of the initiatives, since they base their sales mostly on tourists and people that have been tourists in their territories before. In the case of an eventual change on the tourist demand, the systems would have to be able to re-adapt and build new markets fast. In both cases, the local population would not be able to assume the production of each system, and if their re-orientation fails, they could be subsumed by transnational companies as raw material producers.

The Fourth Common Element

The fact that farmers needed external specialised support in order to design and unfold their projects is illustrated by what a shepherd near Benaocaz told me one morning: “I’m a shepherd, nothing else, nothing more.” With this sentence he was closing a conversation about the possible benefits of a PDO for the territory, but he was saying many other things. The most important of them is that farmers, peasants, anthropologists, teachers, etc., know to do what they have learnt to do. If you want to create a PDO, you need experts that know how to do it, because a farmer—in most cases—only knows how to farm; you therefore need an entrepreneur facilitator (Marsden and Smith, 2005).

The LAG and the Waddengroup are the specialists, the new project-class (Kováč and Kucěrová, 2009); they are actors able to assume the transaction cost of the process because they have the resources (Coase, 1960), experience and will. They are mediators with the market, the administration, and the legislation. The EU has designed and created a massive and complex iron cage (Weber, 1930), thus farmers do not have the time or knowledge to design and implement the labels.

However, there was a big difference between the LAG and the Waddengroup, namely, their respective levels of independence and commitment. The LAG is involved in a powerful network with many hidden agendas, and their real objective is to tend to the needs of the network. When local elites stop caring about the project, they close the file and go for the next project. The situation of the Waddengroup is totally different; they need the projects to work as well as possible in order to make a living. They are free from political interest, and lack hidden agendas. The problem of the project-class is that they are a necessary evil and local actors have to be careful when selecting the organisation that will support them.

In the case of Sierra de Cádiz, the actors involved in the process had to delegate in the LAG, a local actor used to work in such a bureaucratic environment but far from the production process. For example, the necessary restructuring of the milk system in order to separate milk by race entailed such a high cost, that no one wanted to do it. This means that, even when the system may work in paper, there are new transaction costs hidden on the new model that must be assumed. These new costs can be compensated with the creation of added value, but—as I

said before—it is necessary to do something more than designing a logo to create added value.

c) The Key Points that Made Each Case Different

When analysing both processes, I found more differences than similarities between them. The main sources of these differences are the cultural patterns and the local institutional frameworks. However, I divided them in the following nine categories:

Table 4: Differences and similarities between each case

	Sierra de Cádiz	Texel
Organisational pattern	Individualistic	Cooperative
Origin of the initiative	External	Internal
Economic agreements	Vertical (hierarchical)	Horizontal (democratic)
Economic preference	Informal	Formal
Scope of the label	Production and transformation	Production, transformation, and marketing
Relationship farmer-state	Co-dependency	Seek autonomy
Supporting actor	Semi-professional	Professional

I already mentioned most of these elements in the previous chapters, but their compilation makes a clear picture of the reason for the different outcome of each process.

Sierra de Cádiz has the characteristic individualism of peasant communities. There is a strong solidarity within the household, and even within the village, but it is almost impossible to find examples of cooperation between people of two different towns that do not share blood. This is a strong limitation for any local or regional initiative, and if they engage in collective action, it is usually when there is no real risk involved⁸⁴. Texel's history describes the exact opposite practice. In this island, local communities are used to cooperate and to share collective resources.

⁸⁴ According to Scott (1976) peasants manifest a generalised aversion to risk that might threaten their subsistence (Cited by Edelman, 2005: 332).

There is also a tendency to avoid the accumulation of resources in individual hands, as the example of *Texel Energie* highlights⁸⁵. This company was created by local inhabitants after a meeting concerning alternative energy resources. During this meeting, the speaker explained that 5m€ leave the island every year to pay for energy, a situation that after the meeting was defined as unacceptable. However, the company's structure is what reflects this pattern. Anyone can buy shares from the company, and if you do, your energy is cheaper; but there is a maximum of shares than can be bought. Behind this interesting strategy there is a clear sense of "us" summarised in one sentence that a representative of the company said during our interview: "The mission of the company is to provide a service to the island, not to make money."

The second point, the origin of the initiative, is another key difference. In the case of Sierra de Cádiz, the initiative came from outside; it came for the political elite, not from the sheepherders or cheesemakers. Indeed, as I already mentioned, it is a political project to reinforce the poorly legitimised territorial reference of Sierra de Cádiz. Meanwhile, the farmers of Texel had been looking for a similar project for decades. I described in Chapter 5 how the first attempt to create a label to certificate the origin of the lamb meat goes back to the 1970s. The sector was ready and eager when Marc decided to get the Waddengroup involved in the development of the initiative. Therefore, the process of labelling in the first case can be seen as an external intervention, even when it is at the same level. Following the thesis of the post-development school, sheepherders and cheesemakers are seen by the LAG as half-cultured, half-prepared subjects to be developed (Escobar, 1991: 668); as one of the technicians told me: "The people of our towns have learnt a lot thanks to us." When the local administration and the LAG approached the chain, there were other problems that could improve their economy and enhance co-production, but they could not see them, because they already have a recipe to cook.

The third difference reflects a sad historical reality in Andalusia: the continuity of hierarchical relations between landless workers and business owners. This situation dates back to the conquering pattern of the Christian kingdoms many centuries ago. The land and the economy—traditionally—have always been

⁸⁵ What we can see here is a manifestation of the protestant moral energy, which combines the idea of a *calling* and the practice of *austerity* to produce wealth (Weber, 1930).

in the hands of a small and powerful oligarchy. The arrival of the industrial cheesemakers to the system brought this dynamic too. Even more, the relation between the sheepherders and the cheesemakers nearly describes a perfect triangle without base that Cotler found in Peru (Matos, *et al.* 1968), where the lack of alternatives and internal organisation of the sheepherders perpetuates this organisation pattern (Matos, *et al.* 1969). The case of the Netherlands in general and Texel in particular, is quite different. The Netherlands is the country that gave birth to the *vrije boer* (free peasant), and there is a long tradition of civil, political and economic freedom, which facilitates the establishment of horizontal relationships in economy.

The fourth element makes the construction of new agreements more difficult. In the Andalusian countryside there is a saying when someone tries to make business with you: “Have we eaten together, or something?” Economy is strongly embedded in social relationships, and when we talk about families that have lived together for centuries, there is always a story that complicates the attainment of new agreements. However, in the case of Texel this is not so strong: people care more about a person’s capabilities than about his name. This makes economy more dynamic and open to new frameworks.

The fifth great difference is the scope of the initiative. PDOs only focus on the regulation, production and transformation of the product, and tend to forget about the market. Andalusia is full of PDOs that can be defined as a market failure. The Waddengroup’s participation in the lamb initiative is the reason for this big difference. The Waddengroup is an actor and a network at the same time—an entrepreneurial facilitator (Marsden and Smith, 2005) that works as a socio-technical niche where novelties can flourish (van der Ploeg, 2003). Even more, the Waddengroup already had their own extended alternative food network before the project started with certification labels, codes of production, distribution and high local and regional reputation (Renting *et al.* 2003); they just had to link this new initiative within their safety net.

The way farmers and the State interact with each other makes for the sixth big difference between Andalusia and the Netherlands. In the case of Andalusia there is a traditional co-dependency. The Regional and National Government tend to intervene and subsidise most of the economic activities in the countryside. The

rural communities traditionally repay this practice with their unconditional political support. The continuous re-election of the Socialist Party in Andalusia since Spain's transition to democracy is partly due to this unwritten agreement. In Texel and the Netherlands the government is not such a pleasant partner. When I was doing fieldwork in Texel, I asked about the government support repeatedly, and the answer shocked me: they did not want the government near the initiative; the local population considers the government a messy and unnecessary partner.

The seventh difference is the supporting actor that guided and helped the actors involved in the process. As I mentioned before, although both were external, the quality and nature of the LAG and the Waddengroup are quite different, so is their position in the territory. The LAG, more than an instrument of development, is a political instrument to preserve and reproduce the existing political elite (Esparcia *et al.* 2000). The Waddengroup is the perfect niche for any project. Its connections, knowledge, and skills make it perfect to seed new and heretic projects. The differences in internal structure and the *leitmotiv* of both actors are the reasons for their different behaviours during the initiatives. The LAG dropped or pushed the project according to the interests of local political actors, whilst the Waddengroup would only stop if they ran out of resources.

There are more differences between both cases and trajectories, but I selected these seven based on the theoretical and methodological framework of my research.

d) Lessons for the future use of quality labels as tools for sustainable territorial development

The present research proves that, depending on the quality of the agreements defined in the Code of Practices, OFLs can have positive and negative consequences for the sustainable development of the territories. In this part of the chapter I use the research questions to explain the main lessons that can be learnt from my research.

1) *How do local actors construct new products to compete in the globalised agro-food system? Are new markets created?*

According to Porter (Barjolle *et al.* 1997: 485), there are four main marketing strategies: lowering production costs through economies of scale and standardisation, diversification of products and services to reduce risk, concentration of activities by specialising in one sector, and differentiation of the product to reduce competition. The differentiation of agro-food products can be done by answering to consumers' preferences or by unfolding specific qualities that link a knowhow, a region, and a production basin consistent with a logic where the price parameter is more flexible (Ibid, 486). Even when producers may create a new product with a unique quality, they need devices that allow consumers to identify such a quality (Renting, *et al.* 2003: 401). The behaviour of the consumer in the process of acquisition of agro-food products is very complex, and labels are an essential part of it (Boccaletti, 1999). Therefore, these labels need to have an efficient design that allows consumers to access all the information that is not noticeable to the naked eye (Loureiro and McCluskey, 2000).

The second part of this question is crucial, as the example of ETL highlighted: a new product requires a new market that does not follow the same dynamic and procedures as the global market. The ideal model would be a nested market grounded in common pool resources (Ostrom, 1990; Costanigro *et al.* 2009; Oostindie *et al.* 2010; Polman *et al.* 2010; van der Ploeg *et al.* 2012). This model requires the existence of the following five elements: 1) specific resources; 2) the production of a distinctive product; 3) specific producers; 4) consumers with specific preferences; 5) a comprehensive and shared normative framework that defines, sustains, and coordinates the nested market. Both cases had the resources to create a healthy nested market, but only the ETL initiative did so. This is one of the reasons for the success of the initiative and for the positive contribution to the sustainable development of Texel. The local lamb meat was in competition with the imported meat. The final price of this meat, produced mostly in New Zealand, is almost three times less than the local, and since there was no formal system to differentiate them, the consumption was guided just by the price of the product. The creation and formalisation of an institutional framework that regulated the use of the common pool of resources (material and symbolic) in a sustainable and fair way, allowed them to achieve an added value

for their product. Furthermore, they currently do not compete directly anymore with the global market. Texel lamb meat is now easy to identify and the quality of the product has achieved an added value that allows the actors of the supply chain to have a fair and decent compensation for their work. The lack of trust, the vertical relationships, and the hidden agendas prevented the actors involved in the production of cured sheep cheese from achieving a similar situation.

In the case of Sierra de Cádiz, it can be said that the cheesemakers' individual initiative—together with the transformation of other sectors of the local economy such as rural tourism— supported the creation of a high quality image for the territory. However, they did not institutionalise any common label. These actors created their own markets using the existing reputation of the local cheese, they managed to appropriate the values of nature and tradition that the former domestic system had, and introduced them in their products with the creation of a new narrative and aesthetics. In this way, it can be said that the actors involved in the transformation of the domestic system into the artisanal and industrial system created new products, new markets, and new rules.

2) How does the creation of the label affect the internal relationships of the supply chain? How are the relations and processes of circulation being actively reorganised in order to improve the livelihoods of those who are involved? What kind of coordination is enhanced?

The creation of a label entails the creation of a new institutional framework that usually redefines the relationships between the actors and their interactions with their context. Once again, there are differences between the two cases. The PDO scheme focuses on the critical points of the production process in order to preserve the protocol that will assure the required quality. They do not promote agreements to increase trust between producers and transformers, nor to reduce transactional costs; it is not their duty. The Regulatory Board only cares about the quality of the milk and the process of transformation. It is an aseptic and hygienic approach to the system that does not affect the relationship between the actors involved and between the actors and their context.

The approach in the case of the Regional Label was different. The Waddengroup is more than just a controller; it is a promoter of the system and the territory,

a facilitator (Marsden and Smith, 2005). The Waddengroup has field operators that meet with actors of each part of the chain to check their experience and satisfaction. In this way, the ETL initiative tries to assure and promote a fair distribution of the final income. The official trader of the initiative is responsible for the selection and transportation of the lambs; he pays to the farmers and to the slaughterhouse, and due to the size and location of the system, the demand can be—more or less—predicted, which creates a stable price for the whole system. The price is settled using the global supply chain as reference, but it remains stable if the former falls. At the same time, the ETL system is open and free, any actor involved gets access to another's markets if they need to, which allows actors to hybridise their production to reduce risk (Watts, *et al.* 2005; Sonnino and Marsden, 2006)⁸⁶.

From a theoretical point of view, the creation of the label may also affect the quality of the coordination system (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1991; Sylvander, 1992, 1994, 1995). The case of ETL represents a transition from an industrial coordination to a mix of civic and domestic coordination (Sylvander, 1994, 1995). The institutional framework of the initiative enhances the domestic coordination within the supply because the selection of the lamb is a face-to-face process rooted in knowhow and trust. At the same time, the product's quality is the outcome of a civic coordination because the actors involved in the system share a set of values—such as localism or environment protection—that drives collective understanding and negotiations. The transition from the domestic to the artisanal and industrial system of production in Sierra de Cádiz also represents a transition on this area. The artisanal system of production preserved the domestic coordination of quality because the face-to-face interaction dominates each part of the process, whilst the industrial system of production introduced an industrial coordination system based on standards and analysis. Cheesemakers have a system of penalties according to the quality of the milk, and the payment is done at the end of the cycle. These two elements make it difficult for the sheepherders to organise their own economy, since they cannot know the quantity of the final payment.

⁸⁶ It was very interesting to see that all the farmers were selling lambs both within the system and externally. When I asked why, they usually gave me a moral reason, such as “everyone deserves to have a piece” or “I cannot stop selling to my former customers, it is wrong”. Therefore, it can be said that there is a strong moral sense of duty among farmers involved in the initiative. The case of the trader and the slaughterhouse was similar, but they also made it clear that they need to work with other people to make a decent living.

3) *What kind of changes do local actors have to implement in their practices to join the initiative? How do these new institutional agreements affect the co-production and co-evolution of their territories? Does sustainability increase?*

This question is very important for understanding the local and regional impact of each initiative and crucial to accomplish the objectives of this research. I do not have a straightforward answer, but it is clear that this kind of process alters the co-production and co-evolution of the territory. In most of the cases, as in Sierra de Cádiz and Texel, local actors have to change the organisational patterns and daily routines of their production units to join the initiative.

In the case of ETL, for example, the farmers had to reintroduce routines that were removed by industrialisation—such as grazing—and recover former farming styles (van der Ploeg, 1992). The limitation of the supply chain to the borders of the island reduced the food-miles for the production and increased the initiative's territorial added value. These changes were perceived with scepticism at the beginning, but after a while, they started to be perceived as helpful because of the positive impact in their individual and collective economies, and because work started to be more pleasant. Furthermore, the sense of community and belonging increased among them. Farmers and producers achieved social recognition for their work, because now it was clearer that they made possible the continuity of the island icon: the Texel Sheep. Therefore, in the case of Texel, the new institutionalised agreements changed the co-production pattern in a positive way. The new requirements enhanced the interaction between farmers and living nature, and re-embedded most of the system in the local ecology and culture. These facts facilitated the creation of a nested market grounded on well-managed common pool resources.

Meanwhile, the situation in Sierra de Cádiz was different. First, the project was seen as an external intervention, which made sheepherders and cheesemakers suspicious. Second, it is important to remember that the PDO for the cured sheep cheese was the last step in the institutionalisation of the industrial system of production after the ban of the domestic agro-food system. This industrial system reduced co-production to milk production, and sheepherders to milk producers, which affected the co-evolution of the sheep and the territory. The sheepherders that adopted the artisanal system did not change their practices

too much; they adapted their houses in town to produce cheese and changed the materials used for the different instruments. However, local administration and development agencies took the industrial system as reference for the PDO, which meant that the achievements of the PDO would have affected the sustainability of the territory in a negative way. When I questioned the different actors about the possible changes that they would have to do if the PDO was approved, the answers were different according to the position in the process. The actors in the industrial system were worried about the cost of the new system, and the actors in the artisanal system questioned the process of production described on the Code of Practices and the consequences for their cheese.

Therefore, it can be said that an increase in sustainability may depend on the successful adoption of a nested market grounded on the existence of a common pool of resources.

4) How do these initiatives engage with other actors and networks within the territory? Does synergy or coherence increase? How do these initiatives influence or affect the broader structural context?

This question is very important to measure the impact of the initiative in the regional and/or national level. The initiatives described in this dissertation are both actors and interfaces at the same time. There are several sectorial and non-sectorial actors involved in these projects, and they bring new connections to the rest of the group. In the same way, public and private actors are usually part of them, which allows for each to learn about the needs and resources of the other. According to Murdoch (2000), there are two types of networks: vertical (which link rural spaces into the agro-food sector) and horizontal (which link rural spaces into a more general and non-agricultural process of economic change). The involvement of public actors and development agencies—directly or not—facilitates the creation of horizontal networks with other local actors. In this way, the project itself increases its symbolic capital or reputation in other sectors of the local and non-local economy. These dynamic can enhance the creation of dynamic synergy between the producers or transformers and other local actors, such as restaurants, hotels or tourist agencies (Brunori and Rossi, 2000). These networks can work as roads where information and resources can flow in all directions. The continuous exchange of information and resources

can reduce transaction costs and increase trust on a regional level, which can in turn generate social capital (Onyx and Bullen, 2000). The creation of this social capital may also influence future and current projects within the territory, which would increase the internal coherence, and create a territorial image of quality. From a practical point of view, unfolding this process is a matter of persistence and social skills; it requires time and energy.

In the case of Sierra de Cádiz, political power facilitated the connection and resources to bring the different parts together. In the same way, the delegation of the projects in the hands of the LAG facilitated the participation, since local actors perceived them as a local resource pool. However, the selection of an institutional model, the PDO, drove them into an iron cage where horizontal and vertical possible networks were already in place. Thus, they followed a pre-defined path and missed many possible connections with external actors and networks of the PDO system. However, the meetings of the PDO also reinforced and legitimated the figure of both associations, the local sheep, and the local goat herders. Furthermore, they increased their cooperation and started to see each other as equals. In the same way, cheesemakers increased communication between them, although they did not stop seeing each other as competitors.

In the case of Texel, the Waddengroup and Marc already had a strong network in the island and a positive reputation as active supporters of entrepreneurial local producers. However, their approach was different. They visited each potential partner one by one before calling them for a meeting, and they gathered information from the visits to each actor of every link of the supply chain to design the final Code of Practices. Step by step, ETL and the actors involved engaged with other actors and networks in many ways and occasions. In one occasion, the Waddengroup called for a meeting to the farmers of the project to talk about the possibilities that *Texel Energie* offered for their farms regarding green energy production. The meeting was in the evening and almost 20 farmers came. ETL was already the outcome of an agreement between local actors and networks. Indeed, the plate designed for the certified restaurants has the label of three networks (ETL, *Wadden Goud* and *Echt Texel Produkten*). The engagement of this initiative also takes place on the organisation and participation of local events; ETL participates in every major event of Texel, from the *Koog culinair* in September, to the *Schappendag* in July.

However, to influence the broader context is a harder process, and it requires a different (yet similar) approach. In the case of the Netherlands, the State does not favour origin food products so much; thus, the actors involved in this kind of practices had to organise their own national infrastructure in order to lobby the government and the provinces. For that reason, the Waddengroup, together with five similar organisations, created the *Stichting Streekeigen Producten Nederland* in 1999. This vertical engagement is rooted on the existence of a common institutional framework and the existence of common interest to change it. This is a platform for lobbying, but it is also a place to discuss their common problems and design solutions for them. This kind of platform also enhances and facilitates the design of common projects and strategies to increase synergy and coherence at the national level. The union of several actors and networks at this level also makes it possible to afford advertisement and campaigns which otherwise they would not be able to afford.

5) *How do local institutional contexts and cultural patterns affect local actors in the design and implementation of the labels? What constrains can be identified in each case?*

This question has been partially answered in the previous part of the chapter: institutional contexts and cultural patterns can restrict or promote the design and achievement of origin food labels. In the case of Andalusia, the individualism, the hierarchical nature of economic agreements, and the traditional interventionist approach of the public administration drove the initiative to a failure. On the other hand, the cultural patterns of Texel enhance and facilitated the achievement of the label; they were even able to design and maintain their own autonomous institutional framework for this kind of initiative. However, it is also necessary to underline that the institutional framework designed by the Waddengroup lacks the public support in case of the appearance of fake substitutes of their products, since *Wadden Goud* or *Echt Texels Lamsvlees* are brands with just an origin indication (Barjolle, *et al.* 1997; Falconi, 2009). If the time comes, it will be the Waddengroup Foundation who will have to take on the faker; and if the faker is a big corporation it will be almost impossible to win the case. Therefore, the lack of support from the State or development agencies can put these initiatives out of business (Miele and Pinducciu, 2001).

6) *Who are the critical actors and how can they increase the number of farmers involved in this kind of initiatives? What can be the social, political, institutional and economic arrangements, programs or interventions that might stimulate further dissemination?*

This last question is key for the future of sustainable rural development in Europe, since entrepreneurs are the agents of change (Barth, 1967)—not the policies or the experts, but the farmers (van der Ploeg, 2003). They are able to create heresies and deviations because they have the land and resources (van der Ploeg and Renting, 2000). However, such heresies are novelties: they are new configurations that promise to work and need time and support to become new social institutions (van der Ploeg, *et al.* 2004). The mainstreaming of these deviations is crucial to unfold a new path—a new possibility to do what needs to be done (Hoselitz, 1968). It is not an easy job. These changes can be introduced by combining practices of resistance, modification, and evasion (Kerkvliet, 2009), but with the right support and context they can grow quickly and safely.

In this sense, I found that in order to increase the number of farmers involved in this kind of initiatives it is necessary to reduce the farmers' perception of risk. The freedom assured and promoted by the ETL system was crucial for encouraging the participation of farmers and other actors. They did not have to put all the eggs in the same basket; indeed they were increasing their baskets. At the same time, the speed of the process was also very important. The Waddengroup did not want to suddenly change their lives; they had time to adjust to the new framework. They did not need to change much of their former practices; even more, they were the very same people who defined what practices should be introduced. Therefore, the risk perception was small enough to involve the first group of farmers, and later on the success of the initiative attracted the rest.

The quality of the supporting actor is the other critical element. The supporting actors need to speak the same language; they need to know the farmers' reality in order to understand how they work and how they might change. Farmers are suspicious of other people and tend to be conservative and defensive; however, if they receive an invitation from someone similar to them or from someone that understands them, it will be easier to get their attention and participation. In the case of Sierra de Cádiz, the LAG was always perceived as some kind of foreigner. The way they speak, dress and behave was perceived as presumptuous

and arrogant. Furthermore, the places chosen for the meetings were always offices and formal spaces, which are strange for the shepherders. In the case of Texel, the Waddengroup had well-known local farmers in their staff to drive the meetings and activities. It made it easier for the local farmers to trust the new initiative, because the members of the Waddengroup also knew what to say; they knew the weak points of the project from the point of view of a farmer. At the same time, the places and times of the meetings were always familiar to the farmers, always after working hours and either a local pub or another farm.

The last part of this question is another critique based on my research, the internal logic of the supporting policies and programs can become the worst enemy of this kind of initiatives. The support for alternative practices within rural areas has increased since the McSharry Reform in 1992, but the idea of the ground-breaking approach that was interesting back then, may be a problem nowadays. When the LEADER Initiative started, there was much to do in the sense of unfolding new visions and practices around rural economies, but some models have been so successful that they have been institutionalised. This institutionalisation causes that rural development agencies and technicians define them as not innovative. This is the case of the labelling strategy and the Waddengroup. From an analytical and theoretical point of view, the difference between the initial approach to origin food labelling and the current one is massive. However, it seems the same for the experts that control access to public and private resources. This means that even when a system that promotes sustainable territorial development works, it will only be supported if it is brand-new. The Waddengroup has an interesting financial system that allows them to co-finance new projects, but they cannot be economically autonomous. If society wants to give autonomy to these actors (the entrepreneurial facilitators), then they will turn more conservative in their actions.

Rural communities (and Europe as a whole) need this kind of players to support the collective transition from a productivist and industrialised agricultural reality. Therefore, policies need to create a more suitable place for them, even when they use the same *modus operandi* each and every time.

e) A final note on social processes as highly complex realities

I would like to close this dissertation with a clear message about the reality that I have tried to understand: social processes are complex, chaotic, dynamic, and sometimes even contradictory realities. When so many different actors come into play in the same arena, anything can happen. I now understand that radical social changes do not take place very often. Our culture and institutional frameworks do not completely determine our actions, and there is always room for change. To behave in a different way than is expected can be considered a path of resistance. What I still do not understand is why some actors decide to challenge the establishment and fight for the right to be different, and why others prefer to stay as they are.

It seems to me that humankind tends to reproduce existing institutional patterns, but as I have described in this dissertation, there is always room for heresy. There are people that refuse to follow the river and prefer to swim in new directions. These are the people that humanity needs to materialise its transitions. Today it is clearer than ever that we cannot keep following the dogmas of modernisation. We need actors and networks that can, first, give birth to new ideas, and, then, nurture and develop them.

The two cases in this dissertation show the duality of human behaviour. A similar type of instrument was used, on the one hand, to give the last push to a process of industrialisation, and, on the other, to de-industrialise and re-embed a product in its territory. Thus, the values behind every tool are what matters. In July 2010 I left Wageningen to study how OFLs may have a positive contribution to the sustainable development of a given territory. I came back understanding how human agency and pre-existing power relationships may subvert, or even remove, any positive effects that these labels may have. I used to think that the problems that people have always come from somewhere else. As a young idealistic anthropologist, I believed in the idea of a good savage. I was blinded by the romantic idea of local resistance against global empires, the images of rural population united against the oppression of the machine, standing together against the empire, and so on. After my first period of fieldwork in Andalusia, I have experienced the old statement that “man is a wolf to his fellow man”. I

have experienced how practices and strategies struggle against obstacles at the local level. I have seen how specific groups keep concentrating power within their network, and how new programs or policies become new tools for their very own objectives. However, the fieldwork in Texel showed me that “mankind is a sacred thing to man”—or, at least, that it can be-. Science’s objective should be to materialise that potentiality in other places, even in Andalusia.

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CHAPTER 1

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CHAPTER 6

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Summary

The transition from domestic to market economy in rural areas of Europe is an ongoing process that affect and is affected by local and global dynamics. The outcome of this process is unique, but if we analyse and compare each case, it is possible to find patterns and common tendencies. This book highlights the unique and common elements of these transitions, and in order to do so, it takes as reference one case from the south of Europe, the attempt to achieve a PDO certification for local cured sheep cheese, and other from Western Europe, the design and unfold of a Regional Label for local lamb meat. The thesis of this book underline is the existence of a “quality turn” in Europe, and analyse how Origin Food Labels can instruments to institutionalise new forms of co-production and co-evolution that enhance sustainable territorial development. At the same time, the ethnographic nature of this research highlights that these are controversial and political processes, where local and non-local actors with different interests find each other and try to unfold their own projects. The use of a comparative strategy highlights how these transitions are influenced by local institutional frameworks and cultural patterns, but it also shows how collective action can change them.

The book is divided in 6 chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the context of this research, to its objectives and research question. The second chapter presents the theoretical framework and methodology that were employed, and is divided in 3 parts. First, I define my work, on the one hand, as the outcome of the critical and interpretative traditions of social sciences, and, on the other, as an example of the actor-oriented approach. I then justify the choice of this approach by making reference to the nature of the objectives of my research, which involves the understanding of dynamic relationships between social structure and agency in a process of social transformation. In the second part of the chapter, I explain and define the concepts and theories that I use to analyse and interpret the dynamics underlying the two case studies; I describe the techniques and methods used in my fieldwork; and I include a description and legitimation of both observational units. Finally, in the third part of the

Summary

chapter, I make a personal reflection about the problems and issues that arise when different cultural contexts come in contact with each other.

The third chapter focuses on the new European scenario that affects and is affected by this kind of initiatives. The chapter has three parts. The first part explains what Quality Food Labels (QFLs) are, and defines them as the outcome of the new globalised agro-food system. In the second part, I explain the three main contextual changes that created a suitable European scenario for this type of initiatives: 1) the opening up of markets; 2) the unfolding of new consumption patterns; 3) the redirection of common agricultural policies. In the third part, so as to contextualise both case studies, I explain the current European legal framework for this kind of labels.

Chapter fourth examines the first case: the attempt to achieve a PDO for the cured sheep cheese produced in Sierra de Cádiz. This chapter has five parts. In the first part, the case is introduced. Next, in the second part, the local territorial references are described. The third part of the chapter describes the key actors involved in the case, their relationships with each other, and their connection with the PDO project. The fourth part explains the former system of production, and defines it as an element of the shepherders' domestic economy. The fifth and final part is a description of the two contrasting and competing local responses to the changes in the European regulations that illegalised the traditional system of cheese production: resistance and adaptation. I explain how these responses created two different local systems of production, one artisanal and one industrial; and how the attempt to create this PDO was the last step in the institutionalisation of the industrial system as part of the local political agenda.

Chapter five examines the second case: the creation of a regional label for the Texel lamb meat, a local initiative that deindustrialised and re-embedded this product. This chapter has four main parts. First, I describe the case's territorial context. Second, I introduce the history and structure of the Waddengroup Foundation, the key actor of the socio-technical niche in which this initiative developed (van der Ploeg, 2003). Third, I study the history of the initiative itself, *Echt Texels Lamsvlees* (Real Texel Lamb Meat), describing the sequence of steps that made it possible. Fourth, following the concepts and theories described in chapter 2, I interpret the outcome of the initiative.

The last chapter reviews and discusses this dissertation's key contributions. The chapter has four parts. First, I summarise and describe the four elements that both processes share. Second, I discuss the eight key areas where both cases are essentially different. Third, guided by my research questions, I summarise the lessons that can be learnt from both cases, I suggest possible ways to apply these lessons when using OFLs as tools for sustainable territorial development, and I explore the theoretical and practical implications of doing so. Fourth, I include a brief note on the complexity of social processes.

Samenvatting

De transitie van productie gericht op zelfvoorziening op huishoudniveau naar een markteconomie in de Europese plattelandsgebieden is een proces dat gaande is en lokale en mondiale dynamiek beïnvloedt en daardoor tegelijkertijd ook wordt beïnvloed. Hoewel de uitkomst van dit proces uniek is brengt de analyse en vergelijking van casussen patronen en algemene tendensen aan het voetlicht. Dit boek benoemt de unieke en meer algemene elementen van deze transities aan de hand van twee casussen: een casus uit Zuid-Europa die gaat over PDO certificering (Protected Designation of Origin) van lokaal gerijpte schapenkaas en een casus uit Noordwest Europa over het ontwerp en de ontvouwing van een regionaal label voor lokaal lamsvlees. Dit boek benadrukt de voltrekking van een “omslag naar kwaliteitsproductie” in Europa, en analyseert hoe “Origin Food Labels” een instrument vertegenwoordigen om nieuwe vormen van co-productie en co-evolutie te institutionaliseren ten behoeve van duurzame gebiedsontwikkeling. Tegelijkertijd onderstreept het etnografische karakter van dit onderzoek dat deze processen controversieel en politiek van aard zijn. In deze processen vinden lokale en niet-lokale actoren met verschillende belangen elkaar en proberen hun projecten te ontvouwen. Het gebruik van een vergelijkende strategie belicht hoe deze transities worden beïnvloed door lokale institutionele raamwerken en culturele patronen en laat zien hoe collectieve actie deze kan veranderen.

Het boek is ingedeeld in 6 hoofdstukken. Het eerste hoofdstuk betreft een introductie in de context van dit onderzoek, de doelstellingen en de onderzoeksvraag. Het tweede hoofdstuk behandelt het theoretisch raamwerk en de methodologie die werden toegepast, en bestaat uit drie delen. Om te beginnen definieer ik mijn werk, enerzijds als de uitkomst van een kritische en interpretatieve traditie in de sociale wetenschappen en anderzijds als een voorbeeld van een actor-benadering. Vervolgens verantwoord ik de keuze voor deze benadering door te verwijzen naar het karakter van de doelstellingen van mijn onderzoek: het begrijpen van de dynamische relatie tussen sociale structuur en agency in een proces van sociale transformatie. In het tweede deel van het

hoofdstuk leg ik uit en definieer ik de concepten en theorieën die ik gebruik om de dynamiek in de twee case studies te analyseren en interpreteren; ik beschrijf de in mijn veldwerk gebruikte technieken en methodes; en ik geef een beschrijving en legitimering van beide eenheden van observatie. Tenslotte, in het derde deel van het hoofdstuk, geef ik een persoonlijke beschouwing over de problemen en issues die zich voordoen wanneer verschillende culturele contexten op elkaar worden betrokken.

Het derde hoofdstuk focust op het nieuwe Europese scenario dat dit soort initiatieven beïnvloedt en tegelijkertijd daardoor wordt beïnvloed. Dit hoofdstuk bestaat uit drie delen. Het eerste deel legt uit wat “Quality Food Labels” (QFLs, voedsel kwaliteitslabels) zijn, en definieert deze als de uitkomst van het nieuwe mondiale agro-voedsel systeem. In het tweede deel geef ik uitleg over de drie belangrijkste contextuele veranderingen welke een passend Europees scenario voor dit soort initiatieven creëerden: 1) het openen van markten; 2) het ontvouwen van nieuwe patronen van consumptie; 3) de heroriëntatie van gemeenschappelijk landbouwbeleid. In het derde deel, om de beide case studies van context te voorzien, zet ik het huidige Europese juridisch raamwerk voor dit soort etikettering uiteen.

Het vierde hoofdstuk doet de eerste casus uit de doeken: de poging om een PDO te realiseren voor de gerijpte schapenkaas in de Sierra de Cádiz. Dit hoofdstuk bestaat uit vijf delen. Het eerste deel introduceert de lezer in de casus. Het tweede deel beschrijft de lokale gebiedsverwijzingen. Het derde deel beschrijft de sleutelfiguren in de casus, hun onderlinge relaties, en hun relatie met het PDO project. Het vierde deel beschrijft het voormalige productiesysteem en definieert dit als een onderdeel van de huishoudeconomie van de schapenhouders. Het vijfde en laatste deel betreft een beschrijving van de twee contrasterende en concurrerende lokale reacties op de veranderingen in Europese reguleringen die het traditionele productiesysteem voor kaas illegaal maakten: gestandhouding en aanpassing. Ik leg uit hoe die reacties leidden tot twee verschillende lokale productiesystemen, een ambachtelijk en een industrieel systeem; en hoe de poging een PDO te realiseren was de laatste stap in de institutionalisering van het industriële systeem als onderdeel van de lokale politieke agenda.

Hoofdstuk 5 ontrafelt de tweede casus: de realisatie van een regionaal label voor Texels lamsvlees, een lokaal initiatief dat dit product onttrok uit de industriële context en het opnieuw onderbracht. Dit hoofdstuk bestaat uit vier onderdelen. Ten eerste beschrijf ik de gebied specifieke context van de casus. Ten tweede geef ik inzicht in de geschiedenis en de structuur van de Stichting Waddengroep, de sleutelactor van de sociaal-technische niche waarin het initiatief zich ontwikkelde (van der Ploeg, 2003). Ten derde onderzoek ik de geschiedenis van het initiatief zelf, *Echt Texels Lamsvlees*, waarbij ik de volgorde beschrijf van de stappen die dit mogelijk maakte. Ten vierde, in aanmerking nemende de concepten en theorieën zoals beschreven in hoofdstuk 2, interpreteer ik de uitkomsten van het initiatief.

Het laatste hoofdstuk somt de bijdragen op die dit proefschrift doet, en bediscussieert deze. Dit hoofdstuk bestaat uit vier onderdelen. Ten eerste, vat ik samen en beschrijf ik de vier elementen die in beide processen aan de orde zijn. Ten tweede, bespreek ik de acht punten waarop de casussen wezenlijk verschillen. Ten derde, op basis van mijn onderzoeksvragen, vat ik de lessen samen die uit de casussen kunnen worden getrokken, doe ik suggesties hoe deze lessen mogelijkwijs kunnen worden toegepast op het moment dat OFLs als tools voor duurzame gebiedsontwikkeling worden gebruikt, en verken ik de theoretische en praktische implicaties daarvan. Ten vierde beschouw ik kort de complexiteit van sociale processen.

About the author

Ignacio López Moreno was born the 7th of March 1980 in Seville, the capital of Andalusia, the south region of Spain. He majored in Social Anthropology and obtained his bachelor's degree in Social Anthropology in the University of Seville. He left Spain and went to Brighton, in England, where he was admitted in the University of Sussex to follow the Master of Arts in Anthropology of Development and Social Transformation. His thesis entitled *Collateral Effects of Rural Development Strategies in the South of Andalusia* focused on the creation of local elites and new institutional maps as consequence of the implementation of the LEADER Initiatives. He finished this programme with the grade of Merit, and went back to his former university. There, with the guidance and support of Prof. Dr. Encarnación Aguilar, he started a new research project on the consequences of rural development policies. In 2009, he was awarded with a four year scholarship by the Regional Ministry of Economy, Innovation, Science, and Employment to join the Rural Sociology Group in Wageningen University to complete the PhD programme under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Jan Douwe van der Ploeg and Prof. Dr. Encarnación Aguilar.

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Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)

Completed Training and Supervision Plan



Name of the learning activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS*
A) Project related competences			
Etnocentrismo y Androcentrismo en la investigación Antropológica	Universidad de Sevilla (Spain)	2008	3
Etnodesarrollo y Autonomía Pluriétnica en América Latina	Universidad de Sevilla (Spain)	2008	3
La Nueva Dinámica Rural en Europa: entre la Tradición y la Innovación	Universidad de Sevilla (Spain)	2008	3
Situación Actual y Perspectivas de Futuro del Desarrollo Regional: El Caso de Andalucía	Universidad de Sevilla (Spain)	2008	3
Origin Food: a Market for Identity (RSO-21806)	WUR	2010	6
Writing research proposal	WASS	2009	6
B) General research related competences			
Introduction course	WASS	2009	1.5
Scientific Writing	Language Institute	2009	1.8
Working with EndNote X2	WUR Library	2009	0.6
Presentations at international conferences			
<i>Las etiquetas de calidad agroalimentarias. Herramientas de desarrollo o de dependencia?</i>	14to Congreso Nacional de Investigación Socioeconómica y Ambiental de la Producción Pecuaria, Toluca (Mexico)	2013	1
<i>The use of comparative analysis approach for social researchers</i>	5th Summer Seminar on Sociological and Political Research (RCC Harvard)	2012	1
<i>The complexity of the Local Food Systems> Stories of resistance and struggle in Sierra de Cádiz</i>	XIII World Congress of Rural Sociology (Lisbon)	2012	1
<i>Rural Development in Europe: New actors, new territories</i>	XIII World Congress of Rural Sociology (Lisbon)	2012	1
<i>La producción de calidad y el desarrollo sostenible: El caso del queso de la Oveja Merina Grazalemena</i>	XVI Coloquio de Geografía Rural (Sevilla)	2012	1
<i>D.O. y E.R.: Dos modelos de especialización territorial, Frisia (Países Bajos) y la Sierra de Cádiz (Andalucía)</i>	XII Congreso de Antropología FAAEE (Leon, Spain)	2011	1
<i>PDO in Sierra de Cádiz (Spain) and RL in the Wadden Sea (The Netherlands): A comparative case study of agro-food labeling strategies</i>	XXIV European Society for Rural Sociology (Chania, Greece)	2011	1
<i>Local food governance and territorial development: sustaining small scale olive farming</i>	XXIV European Society for Rural Sociology (Chania, Greece)	2011	1
C) Career related competences/personal development			
Teaching course "La gestión de los productos diferenciados a nivel nacional e internacional"	UAEMex (MARDTYTA)	2013	3
Teaching course "Gestión de los procesos de desarrollo territorial"	Universidad de Sevilla / Departamento de Antropología Social	2013	0.3
Total			39.2

*One credit according to ECTS is on average equivalent to 28 hours of study load

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