REINVENTING TRANSPARENCY
Governance, Trust and Passion in Activism for Food Sovereignty in Italy

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In an increasing number of realms in everyday life, informal personal relations of trust are being replaced by a constraining formalization of standardization and certification implemented in the name of transparency. Examining the repercussions of this process for small-scale farmers in Italy, this article offers an understanding of ordinary experiences with transparency and explores attempts to resist it. Based on ethnographic research with a neorural activist network that opposes official food-certifications, the article describes ambiguities in ingenious attempts to reinvent procedures to attest the quality and safety of "genuine" food products in more inclusive terms. Restoring the primacy of trust and solidarity, these cases illustrate how a different type of transparency can contribute to realizing a humanistic potential that is nevertheless not free of contradictions.

Keywords: transparency, food activism, Italy, certification, food sovereignty

Clandestine Red

Clandestine Red (*Rosso Clandestino*, in Italian) cannot be bought in a supermarket. Clandestine Red, a red wine of juicy and rustic taste, is distributed only by its producer in person; it can be found at informal markets, in squatted social centres and during alternative festivals. The producer of Clandestine Red – let's call him Ronnie[1] – sells his bottles while adding stories or jokes that conclude with a bright smile. Sometimes he also offers insights from his former life as a pub owner and traveller.

Clandestine Red, no surprise, is a relatively clandestine product. Ronnie never attempted to obtain any official certification, not even one that certifies basic hygienic standards such as HACCP.[2] Instead, Ronnie's bottles are certified as "genuine" by members of a local group that is associated with the Italian national network Genuino Clandestino (Genuinely Clandestine). Despite being a "clandestine" product, Clandestine Red is guaranteed by the movement to have been produced according to standards that are in many aspects higher than those for official organic or hygienic certifications, for instance in relation to ethical conditions and the use of artificial food additives. In addition, the product is guaranteed to have been produced without employing exploited seasonal workers on which mainstream agribusiness relies. The grapes were grown without any chemical treatment, not even those allowed by organic certifications. They were collected without using one of those machines that collect leaves and insects in addition to the grapes. Ronnie is well known within

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the Genuino Clandestino network, which was created in 2010 as an ironic anti-label. As an unprecedented success-story, the network spread throughout Italy in a few years and became one of the major contemporary Italian movements that oppose the neoliberalization of social relations. In an "era of transparency," in which trust seems possible, apparently, only through objective measurement and standardization, Clandestine Red offers a unique prism to understanding evolving modes of the governance of transparency and the possibilities for opposing and reinventing them.

This article[3] aims to examine the effects of transparency as a paradigm of governance in changing rural peripheries. How does the rise of regulations implemented in the name of transparency affect informal relations in the countryside? What are the prospects to counter the requirements of competition and standardization? In a broader sense, this theme addresses also more fundamental questions: How is it possible to recover humanistic relations based on trust and solidarity in a world of constraining formality and competition? Within their limits and constraints, can these activities become a counter-practice to standardization and competition? Beyond small-scale growers like Ronnie, these questions concern everyone who is caught in mechanisms of standardization and evaluation under the paradigms of neoliberal governance, including many public institutions such as hospitals and universities.

In order to discuss these questions, I will attempt to deconstruct the assumption that transparency necessarily conveys trust, as neoliberal ideology attempts to establish as common sense. Then, I will shift attention to activist practices of members of the neorural network Genuino Clandestino who appropriate the right to certify the quality and safety of food, reinventing the modes to certify in more democratic and inclusive ways. Following a visit for an alternative grassroots procedure to guarantee quality standards, I will explore "partial connections" (Strathern 1996) of social relations around forms of activism that start off at the visit and create new forms of experimental collaboration. I will show how these collaborations liberate a humanistic potential of trust that eludes many aspects of governmental transparency. Although not free of contradictions, these experiments undermine some implicit neoliberal ideological assumptions, such as that subjects obey standards only out of fear of punishment or act in order to maximize profit.

The idea to think about the relation between trust, transparency and solidarity derives from my ethnographic fieldwork with small-scale farmers conducted between 2014 and 2017 in central Italy, using long-term participant observation with a number of key informants, as well as participation in assemblies, events, and open-end interviews with key stakeholders. Since 2016, I am coordinating a major ethnographic project on activism for food sovereignty in Italy, the Peasant Activism Project[4], working with a postdoctoral assistant in visual anthropology. During our fieldwork, a hidden but vivid world of political activism in peripheral and isolated regions came to our attention. Some of these farmers and breeders had only a few animals, an olive yard or an orchard of a few hectares, others produced very little honey, jam or bread – often under conditions that seemed precarious, self-made and beautiful at the same time (see ill. 1).

Not all managed to make a living out of their passion, but almost everyone was deeply involved in political activism and engaged in heated debates about global agribusiness, neoliberalism and changing capitalism. Almost none of these small-scale farmers or food processors used bank loans, but relied on mutual aid, mostly within the network. A few had received small amounts of public funding from the European Union programmes for minor works, such as the restructuring of a stable for five cows, but these were exceptions.

During our shared working days in fields and stables and during assemblies or debates over coffee and cigarettes (smoking was quite common), my assistant usually attracted more attention than me. With his enormous camera, he became respected within a short time in his role as a "filmmaker". My own role as a participant observer remained more ambiguous. It seemed as if I was standing around uselessly, asking repetitive questions. Thus, people

Ill. 1: A makeshift small-scale goat farm in a forest area of central Italy. (Photo: Fabrizio Loce-Mandes, May 2017)

would frequently ask me to help out carrying wood, keeping control of wild goats or cleaning up vegetable gardens, not always with satisfying results. This experience gave me a particular insight into artisan production processes as opposed to standardized products, as we will see. Used to the fast-working path of journalism, many of our subjects frequently insisted on viewing our documentary and commenting on it. My own vague explanations of plans to write articles in unknown journals about governance and transparency was often met with silence or distraction. However, my own interest took shape in the course of our work, moving towards an attempt to understand the potential of humanist relations of trust and solidarity. These seem clearly to contrast with neoliberal paradigms based on the assumption that only competition, fear of control and cost-benefit calculations can be main drivers for human agency. In particular, within the growing anthropological literature on food activism, my aim is to develop further reflections on co-producing and affective relations with local food products and to connect these themes more explicitly to issues of neoliberal governance and its inherent paradigm of transparency. At this point, some clarifications on the relation between transparency, trust and solidarity are needed.

Trust or Transparency?

"Trust relations provide the substance of everyday life," writes the philosopher Jay M. Bernstein (2011). Influenced by Annette Baier's seminal work, Bernstein defines trust as a "set of attitudes, presuppositions, and practices, which we typically fail to emphatically notice until they become absent" (2011: 395).[5] Over the past decade, anthropological literature began to pay attention to how trust and mistrust is embedded in everyday life. For example, this includes the interpretation of the rise of evidence-based policies as "audit cultures" and a crisis of trust (Strathern 2000a; Shore, Wright & Però 2011; Power 2007). However, the capacity to convey and

destroy trust has been widely overlooked in analyses of the rise of the "society of transparency" with its demand for accountability and control, in particular in studies of rural change. Critical agrarian and food studies only marginally examine the impact on social relations of a pervasive market rationality and technocratic formality. In many ways, the undermining of trust also makes the experience of solidarity[6] more arduous – informal social relations that allow exchange of knowledge and goods as opposed to competition and individualism. Social theorist Jeffrey Alexander (2006: 13) describes the importance of the value of solidarity as "the feeling of being connected to others, of being part of something larger than ourselves, a whole that imposes obligations and allows us to share convictions, feelings, and cognitions, gives us a chance for meaningful participation, and respects our individual personalities even while giving us the feeling that we are all in the same boat." The challenges of accountability and regulations tend to undermine precisely this sense of solidarity based on trust relations. As we will see, the neorural solidarity in this study assumes forms that go far beyond the ambiguous function of welfare solidarity and creates parallel, alternative insurrectional spaces based on anti-capitalist narratives that create forms of "concrete utopias" (Cooper 2014) and contingent autonomous spaces that do not simply aim to oppose the state, but often act beyond existing categories of activism as conceptualized in post-anarchist thought (Newman 2015) and yet often unnamed figures of activism (Isin 2008 in a sense that go beyond the recent wave of activism in Mediterranean and North African countries (Žižek 2012).

The first time I noticed these profound implications was when helping to clean out a makeshift stable overlooking an uninhabited valley. Five cows were standing in the muddy dung in front of us, and we were sweating as we cleaned the cement floor. Taking a short break and checking a bunch of hay at the door, the middle-aged farmer, Claudio, explained that this was the first time that he had to buy hay. Claudio moved to the countryside from Rome in the 1980s with a first wave of neorural activists, and at that time he had access to pastures on a nearby hill belonging to his neighbour. "I used to bring him our fresh cow dung in a pick-up van." In exchange, he received access to these pastures as well as firewood and, once a year each autumn, a slaughtered pig. Since regional authorities implemented European regulations a few years ago, it became illegal to transport dung in pick-up vans. In the name of environmental protection, a "special waste" truck needs to be ordered from a subcontracted communal facility, and the dung needs to be recycled in another, distant, communal facility, all of which costs money. For a while, Claudio and his neighbour continued their practice and simply ignored the new regulations. But, after an informal visit by an official of the local hygienic authority (ASL),[7] his neighbour expressed anxieties about potential fees and further "trouble". Their collaboration and informal exchange ended; the informal solidarity between small-scale farmers had been undermined.

This short vignette exemplifies why Ronnie and his Clandestine Red is not the only small-scale farmer who feels "pushed into clandestinity", as someone said. Ronnie, Claudio and many others frequently narrate how they on a daily basis witness that regulations implemented in the name of transparency, food safety or environmental protection *de facto* erode informal relations and favour large industrial productions, thus fostering a continuing integration of farming into global agribusiness. Step by step, with every newly introduced standard or regulation, many people seem to experience the perils of undermined trust. Through a simple restriction on transporting dung to a neighbour, farmers are pushed into buying fertilizers, heating material and animal food, rather than exchanging these materials informally. Instead of visiting each other, they are pushed into visiting commercial venues in anonymous metal buildings on the outskirts of industrial zones that specialize in farming equipment. Here, transparency, as a governmental paradigm, remains inherently entrenched with the emergence of the "corporate food system" (McMichael 2009).[8] The emergence of transparency is one aspect of a broader dynamic that can be described as the "financialization" of more and more realms of life (Zerilli &

Heatherington 2016; Krippner 2005).[9] Unlike Claudio's informal exchange with his neighbour, trust is channelled through credit card or cash payment systems, ISO certified standards of products and professional marketing strategies.

During our ethnographic fieldwork, stories of how regulations had threatened and even ruined trust among neighbours were inexhaustible. For example, a goat-keeper with a stable a few kilometres outside a small village lamented the loss of times in which it was possible to bring a goat to a local festival for seventy euro without hiring a special animal transporter for an additional three hundred euro, thus pushing the organizers to buy frozen meat in a supermarket in the industrial zone instead. Another farmer described missing the times when it was possible to slaughter the pigs at home without paying for transportation and the services of a professional slaughterhouse, or when it was possible to make cheese in makeshift laboratories that did not comply with the complex food safety regulations such as HACCP. The common plot in all these stories focuses on the way in which informal relations of trust are rechannelled into formalized technocratic regulations. Community relations, neighbourhood friendships, and informal relations are threatened by a constantly growing regulatory regime based on governmental transparency instead of informal trust and solidarity. Claudio, like many others, is very aware of this process. He once described the financialization of agriculture as "perverse". I will call this type of transparency "governmental transparency".

Small-scale farmers and neorural activists are particularly vulnerable in the face of the impact of governmental transparency. Those who aim to create sustainable lifestyles and produce quality food often find themselves in difficulty with tightening regulations regarding food safety and the certification of standards that are considered by many as favouring large industrial productions. In contemporary advanced capitalism, transparency is emerging as a political paradigm and moral imperative from all angles. Transparency is defined as the physical property of allowing the transmission of light through a material, but this word is used metaphorically to imply visibility in relation to the conduct of individuals, groups or institutions. In common understanding, transparency aims to provide a basis for trust, but as we will see, governmental transparency in fact erodes and substitutes relations of trust in many realms of life. In the name of transparency and public safety, Claudio is asked not to personally bring his dung to his neighbour.

Transparency as a Governmental Paradigm

The value of transparency increasingly penetrates into more and more realms of everyday life, while at the same time transparency is not a common practice among the ruling classes. Introduced in the 1970s in high finance as a paradigm to promote the theoretical conditions required for a free market to be efficient (Epstein 2005), transparency has more recently become a requirement embraced in public administrations, service industries, family relations, friendships and love – all suddenly seem to need transparency in order to survive. In this way, transparency is becoming a moral imperative of how people and things should be governed, replacing previous forms of social relations, such as trust and solidarity. The paradigm of transparency has moved from financial services to the public domain with the neoliberal critique of social-democratic or socialist welfare practices (Shore, Wright & Però 2011; Strathern 2000a), while at the same time many decisions of the ruling classes are taken in the realm of opacity. According to the paradigm of transparency, basic trust in people's professionalism or ethical conduct leads to abuse and corruption. It is assumed that new mechanisms of control have to be implemented: We cannot trust those who receive welfare benefits; instead, we need surveillance practices to keep them in line. We cannot trust the post office employee on a permanent government contract, we need fixed-term postal employees who constantly fear for their working conditions and who compete with each other to provide good postal service. In other words, "trust" in people's ability is replaced by the creation of "quasi-market" conditions of competition based on the principle of transparency. This is

the broader political importance of the idea underlying the reinvention of relations of trust in Genuino Clandestino, which is to rebuild a humanistic value system of trust instead of fear. In order to promote global agribusiness, the creation of "quasi-markets" requires, first, a standardization of objects and subjects, which are expressed as numbers, stars or points (as evident, for instance, in rankings), so that they can effectively compete.

"Transparency becomes a hell of sameness" writes Byung-Chul Han (2012) in his recent essay *The Society of Transparency*. Drawing largely on the thinking of Jean Baudrillard, Martin Heidegger and Walter Benjamin, Byung-Chul Han suggests that the increasing proliferation of practices associated with the concept of "transparency" is not casual but indicates a paradigm shift in contemporary governance – the illusion that democratic politics can be replaced by increases in technocratic measures of certification, standardization and evaluation based on the ideal of transparency. The implications of this illusion become evident in many everyday difficulties of small-scale farmers, like Claudio. Meeting the standards of transparency comes at a high social cost. In his thought-provoking essay, Han investigates the nexus of power and visibility.[10] For instance, in medieval Catholicism, particularly in certain forms of Madonna worship, religious cult statues were ascribed with value and power precisely because they remained invisible. Some statues were hidden during the year and brought out just once, for example, during a special performance. Other statues might remain hidden, access being given only to priests or special persons.

In contrast, for Han, power in the "society of transparency" is convened only through visibility. This observation leads Han to rethink the Panopticon, the most used metaphor for governance in the Foucauldian sense. This institutional building proposed by Jeremy Bentham (1791) in the late eighteenth century allowed all inmates to be constantly observed from a central watchpoint without the inmates being able to tell whether they were being watched. In short, the impression that "you can always be seen" makes the inmates act more responsibly, tending to incorporate social norms. As a metaphor for how power works in complex societies, Han contends that the Panopticon loses its centralistic perspective, becomes "a-prospective" with increasing transparency. For Han, the penetration of transparency as a governmental paradigm has severe consequences; he observes how the "society of transparency is a society of constant suspicion." "Where transparency exists, no trust can exist," he concludes (Han 2012: 80). Also other authors, such as Strathern (2000b), investigate the contradictory implications of the value of transparency. In other words, the critique of the value of transparency leaves no hope for a positive way out. However, this literature pays little attention to everyday practices that elude, subvert or reinvent the paradigm of transparency or to how people may circumvent or resist the paradigm of transparency.

Transparency in Changing Rural Peripheries

The rise of governmental transparency is only one aspect of a broader dynamic. Studies of agrarian change leave no doubt: irreversible shifts have occurred over the past four decades. The deregulation of financial markets, new technological opportunities and economic liberalization have profound impacts on social relations in rural areas. A growing body of critical agrarian studies has documented the pervasion of a professionalized, globalized and standardized agribusiness, now the dominant model for producing food in globally interconnected markets. Voices of authoritative figures in critical agrarian studies, such as Henry Bernstein (2010, 2016), Marc Edelman (2015), Philip McMichael (2012) and Jan D. van der Ploeg (2009), agree that these profound changes have affected how the role and the figure of the "farmer" itself is conceptualized. In *Globalization and Europe's Rural Regions*, McDonagh, Nienaber and Woods (2015) trace the challenges resulting from the restructuring of rural spaces throughout Europe. Especially in advanced industrialized societies, such as Europe, the current agribusiness model is considered largely dominant. In the words of Michael J. Watts (2008: 276), changes in the world economy have "irretrievably altered"

traditional rural settings throughout Europe. In particular, as part of the broader process of finalization, the emergence of the contemporary global food economy relies on an increasing formalization of economic exchanges, leading to an "economization" of social relations in agribusiness in a way that reflects global corporate practices (Elder & Dauvergne 2015). This critique of financialization resonates with the debate in classical economic anthropology regarding the contested assumption of an increasing formalization and "contractualization" of social relations in the countryside, an area of studies inspired by Polanyi's (1957) classical work on the relation between rural transformations and economization. An often-overlooked aspect is that transparency, in this context, constitutes a prerequisite for the formalization of social relations. Transparency allows a veil of objectivity to be conferred on the value of objects, subjects and processes, thus creating comparable units based on standardized criteria that can be measured, evaluated, and put in competition with each other. In other words, the moral imperative of transparency is the last brick in the construction of global agribusiness based on competitive financial relations.

The overwhelming body of this literature pays little attention to those aspects that do not fit into the linear account of a rising industrialized agribusiness model. However, an increasing number of scholars have become interested in alternative or oppositional practices. A recent "peasant turn" (Bernstein 2016: 63) has emerged in the literature on agrarian change, focusing on a much-needed opposition to the industrial agribusiness model. Most notably, Van der Ploeg's (2009) concept of a "peasant mode of production" is influencing a line of analysis that investigates small-scale farming as a form of resistance against the pervasive imperial dimension of the global agribusiness system. According to Van der Ploeg, processes of "repeasantization" are complicating the process of agricultural industrialization. This scholar from Wageningen's renowned centre of critical agrarian studies distinguishes three ideal modes of production: peasant, entrepreneurial and industrial modes of production. "Repeasantization", for Van der Ploeg, describes the process of transformation of non-peasants or former peasants into "autonomous", peasant-like forms of production that are articulated as struggles for autonomy and striving for self-subsistence. In addition, the peasant principle includes a different understanding of the interaction between humans and nature as well as cooperative concepts of work organization that allow peasants to overcome monetary and market constraints. However, many of these studies continue to be based unproblematically on the assumption of a relatively clear-cut opposition of "global agribusiness" and "peasants" and "traditional farming" (Edelman 1999; Kerkvliet 1993), which is often associated with activist discourses in food sovereignty movements (Morena 2014). However, the emphasis on "peasants" as an idealized and generic concept has come under scrutiny. Interestingly, Josh Brem-Wilson (2015) critically analyses the emergence and construction of "peasant discourses" as a homogenizing category.

Against the backdrop of this binary picture, a long-standing focus of social and cultural anthropology highlights marginal and often overlooked phenomena that are based around cultural aspects of food production and consumption.[11] In particular, this literature begins to examine the innovative potential of cultural productions that are positioned in a dialectic relation to those practices of mass production and consumption that are characterized by increasing integration into global economic circuits. These studies seem to provide a more nuanced account against that of the apparently linear and ineludible pervasiveness of global agribusiness. Food production has been recognized as a symbolically charged practice that creates and reproduces social categories, particularly in classical anthropological literature. Bernhard Tschofen (2002) explores the link between regional food production and issues of identity. Within his area, political food activism has received increasing attention as a particular instrument to negotiate power relations. The recent volume edited by Carol Counihan and Valeria Siniscalchi (2014) offers a broad overview of how activists, networks and ordinary people challenge

agribusiness by negotiating and performing political relations through the prism of food. The work of Cristina Grasseni (2013) on solidarity-based purchasing groups in Italy has highlighted how these social groups help create new economic circuits that contribute to promoting sustainability on many different levels. Grasseni also discusses the ability of consumer groups to reinvent consumer–producer relations through the introduction of terms such as "co-production", which aims to change the consumerist imagination.

Importantly, *Ethnologia Europaea* has provided a forum for research highlighting the often-neglected practices of everyday forms of the contestation, subversion and re-creation of mainstream practices of food consumption and production. For instance, the special issue *Foodways Redux*, edited by Håkan Jönsson (2013), provides valuable insights into the ambiguous implications of the neoliberal politics regarding the branding of local or regional food. Sarah May (2013) discusses insightfully the politics of commercialization behind the regional branding of geographical indications. Fabio Mattioli (2013) offers unique insights into the political conundrum regarding different food labels in Italy, including the tensions between official organic labels, EU geographical indications and alternative "anti-labels". For Mattioli, the property labels of food should be understood as a form of meaning-making and as a site of conflict. In his discussion of the relation between food and the geopolitics of property labels, Mattioli thoughtfully uncovers the controversies and limits behind the politics of conferring geographical indications (GIs), the Presidia of Slow Food and its implicit class politics, and organic labels. Embedded in a rhetoric intended to provide "transparency", the proliferation of certifications, brands, logos and labels is ultimately connected to the "aggressive expansion of capitalist relations" (2013: 50).

The article of Pétursson (2013) published in the same issue discusses the ambiguities of "co-production", a term introduced by consumer-critical food movements to create more participatory and inclusive relations between food producers and consumers. In *Eduardo's Apples: The Co-Production of Personalized Food Relationships*, Pétursson clearly shows the limits and contradictions of attempts by commercial enterprises to create and maintain personal relationships between organic producers and consumers. In his case study, an online platform of a multinational organic food distributer attempts to create personal links between organic growers in the global South and wealthy consumers. Through the online platform, consumers can visualize a short self-presentation in video format by the growers of the products that they buy. Communication is mediated by a consumer relations team, and the grower remains strangely absent from discussions about sustainable apple packaging and nuances of apple taste. Pétursson's interesting case study shows the limits and contradictions of this attempt to create transparency using online tools and within commercial enterprises. For the author, storytelling remains a tool to create surplus value for the company's products rather than to enhance horizontal exchange. In summary, these studies do not explicitly address the ambiguous implications of transparency in food politics, but in many aspects these studies confirm the importance of transparency as a moral imperative and an ordinating principle, a tendency that penetrates more and more aspects of food politics, even in the realms of alternative food activism, local food networks and increased attention to ethical consumerism. However, the relation between transparency and trust is rarely addressed directly in this research, and more studies are needed to empirically understand the deeper political implications of the ways in which transparency penetrates how food systems are organized and practised in everyday experiences.

Genuino Clandestino: Beyond Governmental Transparency

In 2010, a group of small-scale farmers from Bologna were pushed out of an official organic farmers' market at the centre of Bologna. The farmers stated that they produced "organic" and "genuine" food and that everyone who wanted to come and see their facilities was welcome, yet they did not have the official certification. "Getting the certification" was too

complicated and expensive, they stated, according to later accounts.[12] As small-scale farmers, they wished to focus on their main task, that is, to cultivate quality products and protect the environment, rather than keeping up with complex bureaucratic tasks. The farmers relocated to a nearby area.[13] Pirate-style flags and an ironic "anti-label", Genuino Clandestino, appeared on the alternative market to the official organic market. The group soon attracted the attention of other networks and local groups throughout Italy, many of whom had become critical and distant from the official practices required by organic certifications and the commercialization of local food, as evident in well-established networks, such as the Slow Food network or those who received specific labels as geographical indications (GIs). The anti-logo Genuino Clandestino group soon developed into a national campaign for the "free" processing of food, free of the restrictions imposed by regulations implemented in the name of transparency. Within a couple of years, the groups became a network with a national dimension and with local branches in almost every major region in Italy.

The rapid rise of the network of Genuino Clandestino poses interesting and unique challenges to the governance of transparency. Its innovative potential derives from its capacity to frame issues that are usually addressed in the realms of ethical consumerism as more straightforward problems of governance in wider, political terms. Put plainly, one of the underlying ideas of the network contests the idea that official standards of transparency and auditing are supportive and useful. The mobilizing drive of the "anti-label" Genuino Clandestino group is derived from its anarchic spirit and desire to appropriate the power to certify and label their products both as "genuine" and "clandestine". Within the network, the creation of alternative exchange circuits of food, including setting up local food-buying groups, often serve as a platform for the launch of broader political campaigns (for instance, against privatization, the redistribution of public land or neoliberal reforms). In many local groups of the network, independent, solidarity economic and alternative political circuits are set up to oppose the pressure of integrating the markets of small-scale farmers. For instance, in groups such as Terra Libera in Lazio (the region around Rome) and Campi Aperti in Bologna, these economic and political circuits are highly sophisticated networks of cooperatives and include the organization of alternative markets, the coordination of direct purchasing groups and a range of other forms of political activism. In both groups, these activities emerge from a decade-long activism on the margins of communist and anarchist ideologies. In more peripheral areas of Italy, groups exist more often as loosely tied associations between independent farmers with less frequent and less well-organized activities. Importantly, the movements and groups connected to Genuino Clandestino overwhelmingly revive anti-capitalist elements in their attempts to invent models and create spaces that are not subject to commodification and that are outside the realms of competition, market relations or commodification. Many groups have adopted creative names that allude to anti-market principles and ideas of sustainability, such as Terra Fouri Mercato (Land Beyond the Market), Spazio Fuori Mercato (Space Outside the Market), Utopie Sorridenti (Smiling Utopias), and Campo Libero (Free Fields). This anti-capitalist inspiration makes these circuits radically different from most other alternative forms of food activism.

The promotion of alternative certifications became a key feature of the network. In a first wave of experiments, most groups promoted so-called "self-certifications" of their products. Producers would exhibit written statements describing the way in which they produced their products, sometimes accompanied by photos or drawings. The concept of "self-certification" derives from rural experiences in Peru and Brazil with fair-trade associations and was designed to compensate for the lack of state authorities that could guarantee certification standards (Cabras 2013). In a second wave of experiments, many groups of Genuino Clandestino considered the need to develop more sophisticated alternative certification principles, with evolving definitions ranging from "participatory self-certifications" to "participatory guarantees". Terra Libera (Free Land) can be taken as an example of the shift from "self-

certifications" to more participatory processes. The currently applied "participatory guarantee" is a collective process that involves fellow farmers, consumers (defined also by activists as "co-producers" in order to highlight their agency) and at least one food specialist of the products to be approved. After a visit by co-producers and activists, each participant drafts a short personal report to be published on the network's blog. Final approval is decided after a debate in the "general producer assembly". Having completed the procedure, new members have access to specific local markets that are organized by Terra Libera and can sell their products throughout consumer groups of the network. Terra Libera's certifications apply more stringent criteria related to ethical and quality standards than official organic certifications because they also pay attention to ethical labour relations and forbid any use of chemicals, even those that organic certifications allow. In the process, personalized forms of self-representations of the producers and his or her products are drafted, unlike the de-personalized mechanisms of official bodies.

"Where I Pass, wow, Everything Starts to Grow"

"Bring me one of Claudio's cheeses," Pedro reminded me a few days before the visit at Pedro's home for the "participatory guarantee". Originally from Spain, Pedro lives with Elena in one of the most isolated spots of central Italy. "I like to live where you can't find a highway close by," he once explained to me during a tiring drive through a seemingly endless number of small villages. Pedro's reminder to bring him cheese, is just a small indication of how "solidarity" relations can be re-established despite the perils of governmental transparency. But there is more. Pedro had prepared everything for a visit by Terra Libera activists to his home; he had cleaned up the garden of the old and isolated brick building, and lit a welcoming fire in front of the entrance. Usually distinguished by a long, uncultivated black beard and wild hair, for the occasion, he presented himself clean-shaven and with combed hair. The visit started with a presentation circle. First names and the type of production undertaken ("Mike, beekeeper") was enough formality. Analogically, in the blog sphere of the network, contributions appear in the same format: as loosely connected interventions from single individuals known only by their first names – a practice of horizontal representation. Mike, the beekeeper, coordinated the event and briefly explained to newcomers the objectives of the visit: to meet farmers outside the markets and to establish new and personal relationships to collectively share the work.

Afterwards, we moved into Pedro's laboratory. In an abandoned stable with a wooden roof, we found a handcrafted distillery in bronze, a beautifully crafted artisan piece. In response to our signs of amazement, Pedro narrated his adventure in importing this utensil from Portugal. It was made by an old friend of him in such a way that it would fit perfectly into his small van. During the summer, Pedro frequently goes back to central Spanish highlands to collect herbs and distil them directly there, moving back and forth by ferry. He emphatically explained that he uses only a real wood fire to run the distillery. This makes the distillation a complex and work-intensive process. From these small indications, it became clear how Pedro embraces an almost poetic spirit in his work. He emphasized beauty and style over rationality and considerations of profit, and this dedication returns indirectly to him in positive terms. He seems to have a thoroughly romantic personality. On another occasion, I helped him carry a spacious, antique wooden suitcase to a market. The heavy suitcase contained just light bags of herbal teas. Despite the light content, the suitcase was so heavy that two people were needed to transport it. Such episodes showed that there is no evident emphasis on efficiency or market rationality in Pedro's work, as mainstream understanding would have it. Yet, everything flows in a way that is inspired by beauty, style, and love. This is one example of how the "solidarity economy" of the network goes beyond a rational cost–benefit calculation.

In Pedro's laboratory, a long series of huge glass bottles decorated the stone walls. Two "experts" or "co-producers" (two young women from a clan-

destine distillery in one of Rome's squatted spaces) began to ask detailed questions about Pedro's distillation techniques. With great openness, Pedro answered all queries; shortly, he started to speak emphatically about his work and his relationship with nature. "I am the contrary of Attila [the legendary leader of the Hunnic Kingdom who led devastating military incursions against the Roman Empire and is widely known through the computer game, *Total War: Attila*]," he stated. "Where I pass, wow, everything starts to grow." He moved on to explain his extraordinary care in the use of plants. In the meantime, we started to prepare an abundant lunch on a long buffet table outdoors. Many of the participants knew each other only from the markets. The lunch seemed to be an occasion for debating future ideas. Before officially ending the visit, the coordinator started a final round of discussion, asking whether anyone had observed something worth commenting on. At the margins, some participants began to propose informal exchanges. "Can I take this stick?" one participant asked Pedro, pointing to a piece of wood near the stable; "It seems to fit the carpentry work that I am doing right now."

The following week, Pedro's official admission into the Terra Libera network had been approved. Every participant during the visit had to draft a report that would be published after Pedro's successful admission. Over the past several years, virtually all small-scale producers who approached the network have been approved. Only in two cases did the assembly discuss the admissions in detail, expressing doubts. In one case, an asbestos stable roof had been discovered, and some argued that this was not consistent with the "genuine" standards. The farmer in question promised to remove the roof and was admitted after going through the process a second time. In another case, a national cooperative that employs disabled people in community-based agriculture projects applied to join the network. The project found considerable interest among Terra Libera activists, and the visit went well. However, during the assembly in Rome, some activists noted that a national government-subsidized NGO with strong relationships with the political elite was not compatible with the spirit of independent small-scale farming. Both cases demonstrate the process employed by the network and how enacting principles of grassroots democracy does not simply constitute another form of control but rather enables the forming of social relations of trust that otherwise would not have been created. At the same time, the process has become quite formal and resembles elements of state bureaucracy with reports that are collated and debated in a sophisticated two-stage process.

"Between Reality and Dreamy Imagination"

Compared to official certifications, what did the reports say about Pedro's work? Pedro received a long list of eloquent, encouraging words and compliments. Participants highlighted Pedro's passion and his respect for nature, as well as his exhaustive specialist knowledge. After an objective-sounding description of Pedro's professional abilities, Mike the beekeeper stated: "The hospitality of Pedro and Elena was exceptional, not to forget also our happy final social gathering at the thermal baths, at the margins of reality and dreamy imagination" (translation by the author). While I and my research assistant had to leave because of our two-hour drive home, a group of participants went to bathe at a nearby thermal bath. During that visit, the idea to revive a collective kitchen for a festival was discussed. In another statement, Ettore the vine grower expresses his appreciation of Pedro's work no less eloquently: "Sincere, pure and honest nature, an incredible dedication and passion for his work, that is fundamental and very present in Pedro and Elena's work. This visit could represent the essence of the 'participatory certification,' where transparency is the queen" (translation by the author).

Reading these words, I mused about the phrase: "Transparency is the Queen." What does this mean? In the midst of a pretty anarchist group, something of managerial jargon seems to have penetrated. Somehow, "Transparency is the Queen" sounds out of place here. Possibly, this expression may metaphorically stand for the ambiguous aspects of the "participatory guarantee". An element of an advanced neoliberalist consultancy philosophy seems

to emerge behind the emphasis on naturality, direct relations of trust and the horizontal and the participatory nature of the process. This last point may lead to a reflection on the broader implications of this procedure. These episodes illustrate how some of the immediate effects reinforce the spirit of community and strengthen friendships. The visit created extraordinary enthusiasm and offered a forum for new possibilities of exchange. Probably more incisive are the motivational inspirations that offer the experience of participating in the process. Asked after a month about the reports that he had received after his visit, Pedro stated: "When I am sad, when I lose faith in my work; yeah, then what do I do? I take out the reports and read them. They give me strength; they make me cry." Similar experiences are also related by other members of the network. In open-end interviews, many members outline their particular deep emotional attachment to the network and its motivating power. For instance, Claudio similarly stated, "When I am feeling down, I read my reports and I cry out of happiness. They are so beautiful." Here lies one of the most interesting potentials of alternative certifications; they are able to create a dedication to work, a sense of belonging and a passion like no other official form of surveillance would be able to achieve.

On the other hand, the highly engaging "inner motivational" spirit of the "participatory guarantee" contains something almost suspect for scholars of neoliberal work ethics. This strong emotional attachment seems to realize a utopia of governmentality, realigning the individual spirit and mentality to a collective belonging, reflecting a post-Fordist shift in methods of social control and the production of motivation. Commercial actors, as well as many discourses on local or traditional products, emphasize the moral and relational attachment to products. Probably one distinction between neoliberal motivation techniques and the anarchistic network remains. In the words of one former movement leader, "They can copy our ideas and take over our slogans and knowledge about local products, personal relationships and co-production, but they cannot recreate our 'community', our collective way; they will never be able to copy that sense of community and sharing."

A Delirium with Frictions

The visit at Pedro's house also had some more long-term, indirect consequences, one of which can only be called a proper delirium. The idea to set up a collective kitchen materialized on the occasion of Enofila, an effervescent festival by "independent" wine makers. With the kitchen project, the personal relations of trust developed at the visit for the certification at Pedro's laboratory created also more immediate forms of economic solidarity at the festival. However, this solidarity turned out to be more challenging and ambiguous than imagined, with a tension between informal trust and formal regulations, between a reproduction and rupture of neoliberal values of transparency. Until that point, members of Terra Libera had been selling their food at the festival individually. Compared to individual food stands, running a collective kitchen at a large festival requires a massive organizational effort and constitutes a qualitative step forward in terms of coordination. Collective kitchens have a long history at alternative festivals, demonstrations and other events around the world and are part of a globally interconnected movement comprising collective experiences in South America, Europe and North America (Bray 2013; Cabras 2013). However, it is unusual to find collective kitchens at alternative peasant or farmer markets, which are often based on individual or small-scale autonomous units.

Enofila has been a great success in recent years, attracting hundreds of alternative wine producers and thousands of visitors, but this year, according to rumours spread by the organizers, was going to become one of the biggest editions of the festival. And with these rumours the expectations of the kitchen members rose. To be able to display their products, wine makers had to be defined as "independent" and were preferably not part of the large commercial circuits of professional wine sellers.[14] Together with the wine sellers, concerts and food stands would complete the festival activities, attracting mostly a young crowd, in search of fun, amusement and low-priced

wine. In recent years, Terra Libera has proposed documentary screenings, workshops and debate sessions related to issues of food sovereignty. In an informal meeting at a market, Claudio outlined why these activities should not be proposed anymore. "When we do something, a debate or a screening, I always see the same faces," he stated. "It's just us, the usual people who already know, who come to these kinds of events. The youngsters just flock in because they want to have fun and get drunk."

The festival takes place every year in one of Europe's largest occupied social spaces, an ancient Roman fortress in the eastern neighbourhoods of the Roman metropolis. The place in itself is a jewel of Roman military architecture. During the festival, its large open space surrounded by walls serves as a space for concerts and to relax. All kinds of sellers populate the area, such as small-scale artisans selling handcrafted jewellery, food or drink. The central open area is surrounded by long dark tunnels made of seemingly endless rows of small single cells, once the rooms for soldiers. Each cell hosts a different vine stand, offering free tastings. This is the main attraction of Enofila: visitors move from one cell to the next in small groups with glasses of wine in their hands, flirting, joking, and drinking.

Given this background, the project of the collective kitchen had to meet seemingly contradictory challenges. On the one hand, the kitchen should remain a political project based on personal and horizontal relations and, on the other, afford a reasonable opportunity to make money. These lines of friction came to characterize the organizational process, which was decided and debated collectively in assemblies of the kitchen working group. To create a collective and just system that would reflect individual needs and possibilities, the concept that finally received approval was highly complex. In previous assemblies, it was decided that small-scale farmers participating in the group would sell their products at subsidized prices to the group. Each member of the group who would contribute to the work of the kitchen would be remunerated according to the amount of time they put into the work. In a side discussion, in one of the assemblies, a motion was approved that those who ate some of the food prepared during work would be charged for it. This motion was discussed particularly intensely since it entailed an implicit clash between different notions of solidarity. Does solidarity mean allowing free access to meals for those who work or does solidarity mean that everyone pays for what he actually consumes? Such questions reflect the broader political implications of collective organization and its contested ideological underpinning.

The collective kitchen was conveniently located at one of the main entrances of the squat. Along the tables of Terra Libera's stand, endless flocks of youths flowed into the dark tunnel entrances all evening long. While I was preparing bread with cheese, Pedro commented, "If I was not married, you know how many girls I would find here?" while two well-dressed ladies with opulent hairstyles and tight jeans were passing by. Most visitors are not visibly dressed "alternative", but people who are looking for cheap wine and fun; the festival assumes connotations of an almost mainstream enterprise. The group of the collective kitchen surrendered to the idea that Enofila was just a delirium, a collective ecstasy. At the same time, with such large, well-off crowds, it also represented a unique opportunity to make some money. This tension between the demands of solidarity and the values of the network and the attempt still to participate at the festival and earn some money became more and more salient. By evening, increasing numbers of visitors flocked into the festival stands. The members of the group became more and more excited. Vegetables, cheese and bread had to be carried from the store to the stand; the food had to be prepared and served (see ill. 2).

In the dark storehouse, it became difficult to find the products needed at the counter. Along other activists, I was searching in the dark for the needed products. At the beginning, there were no clear rules regarding who would do what; the lack of organization was obvious. The line of people ordering food became longer and longer, and things became more and more chaotic behind the desk. Under the pressure of mounting orders, the efficiency and coordination grew. At the same time, people of the group

Ill. 2: Food plates of "genuinely clandestine" products ready to be served at an alternative festival. (Photo: Alexander Koensler, July 2016)

frequently started to enjoy their work, and laugh. The ingredients that the kitchen offered were of exceptionally high quality. Some members of the kitchen group had prepared hand-made pasta, fresh cheese and bread for days. Someone also brought fresh meat, as if a wild pig had been slaughtered for the occasion, which created an outcry among the vegans and vegetarians. Finally, a subgroup of vegans created a separate cash desk, so that their income would not be "contaminated" by those who had been processing meat. Later in the evening, the group worked stunningly smoothly; there seemed to be a rhythm in the flow of movements. For most it had been great fun, the atmosphere was effervescent, full of jokes, laughing, and hugs. At a first glance, it seemed that this event was a successful step forward in the collective organization.

Definitely, participating in the kitchen project unleashed unique enthusiasm. More than the visit at Pedro's house, the attempt to create a "real solidarity economy", as one participant put it, the kitchen project appeared as an experimental practice that created strong emotions connected to a utopian imagination. However, in the following assemblies, members had to cope with some unexpected difficulties. For instance, the overall earnings were less than expected, probably because too many workers had to be paid. Additionally, many of the ingredients had not been processed, not because there was insufficient demand, but for simple organizational reasons, such as the fact that those in charge of carrying them to the sales area had not found them in the storage room. If a vegetable grower did not sell his vegetables simply because someone did not find his boxes in the storage room, how should he be compensated? These questions were debated openly in the assemblies. Although a way was found to redistribute the small amount of money such that everyone was satisfied, for many, the event turned out to be more of a voluntary service than a well-paid job. On this and many similar occasions, I observed how the spirit of solidarity and friendship had been able to soften or resolve frictions that might have threatened the collaboration in the group. As these ethnographic episodes have shown, this form of solidarity practices is an indirect result of the enthusiastic visit for the "participatory guarantee" at Pedro's laboratory. However, the tension between the attempt to earn some money and, at the same time, create a social and political adventure, was not completely

resolved. The practical limits of the here-and-now of capitalist constraints, were challenged by the striving for enthusiastic solidarity and utopian aspirations in the way Monique Scheer (2017: 8–9) describes "emotional practices": Emotions are not always a conservative reflection of the existing world, but are relational practices in the Bourdieuan sense which can be a utopian performance. Understanding the experience of utopian solidarity within the limits of the crude reality of the festival sheds light on the role of such emotional practices for activists' reconstitution of the interconnections between enthusiasm, joy and solidarity (Zackariasson 2015) as a counter-concept to the cold rules of governmental transparency.

Conclusions: Liberating our Humanistic Potential

This article has followed the path from the dissolution of trust relations due to the pervasiveness of governmental transparency to the re-emergence of new, experimental attempts to establish trust and solidarity in neorural activism. The ethnographic episodes highlight the inventive potential of re-inventing the procedures of official certifications in more democratic, horizontal and inclusive terms. The event related to the alternative guarantee illustrated here, this has also led to the creation of other, more direct forms of collaboration and solidarity. Within the horizon of national networks for food sovereignty, the movement has created alternative modes to guarantee the quality and safety of local food products. This "participatory guarantee" is based on personal relationships, trust and passion – as opposed to the official principles of transparency that work on the basis of fear, surveillance and de-personalized relationships. Against the backdrop of a growing formalization and de-personalization, these selected episodes illustrate a form of vanguard resistance against the governance of transparency: the visit at Pedro's laboratory differs radically from the common practice of certification inspectors. A friendly, horizontal and benevolent atmosphere created new bonds of friendship and new ideas, strengthening the network. The final delirious visit at the baths – unfortunately missed by the author – was a type of informal conclusion that is not easy to imagine in other certification contexts. Furthermore, the visit for the alternative certification at Pedro's laboratory led to the creation of a collective kitchen as a form of "solidarity economy". The work for the kitchen was possible only for a group based on trust relations, solidarity and cooperation. From my own participation, I experienced how the kitchen group at the festival is an extraordinary example of how trust relations can unleash enthusiasm with almost a utopian leap. These elements are rare, almost impossible to find in the pervasiveness of governmental forms of transparency. The often elegant and creative way in which various mounting difficulties were managed was surprising and indicates how the group was able to liberate a humanistic potential of agency unknown to neoliberal logics.

However, not everything worked out smoothly. An underlying tension between the attempt to "make some money" and the socio-political project with its layers of idealism could not be completely resolved. Similarly, the visit at Pedro's laboratory has subsequently been described in some reports using allusions to technocratic, neoliberal overtones ("Transparency is the queen"). In other words, the underlying truth that "transparency is needed", in one form or another, remains reproduced also in alternative counter-movements. In this way, transparency remains a key theme of contemporary governance, even if its principles are challenged by activism for alternative certifications like the one analysed here. In a broader sense, these experiences and practices touch important questions of evolving contemporary governance. It is a dynamic that has significance far beyond the agri-food sector; it concerns all aspects of contemporary governance. Alternative certifications do not simply constitute an alternative form of control, like self-control or the interiorized control described by the Panopticon. Alternative practices of certification, as the case above shows, can be embedded in a vibrant circuit of an alternative "grassroots" micro-economy that is able to liberate a humanistic potential based on trust and freedom, values neglected and repressed in

neoliberal dynamics. Solidarity based on trust relations is presented by activists as a counter-concept to neoliberal principles, as a tool to counter the "loneness" of competitive agribusiness, as one informant put it. This solidarity is not just "another side" of an economic or ideological crisis (Rakopoulos 2016), nor does it fit neatly into a moral imperative of neoliberal individualism, as the interesting research of Muehlebach (2012) on welfare activism in northern Italy has convincingly argued. The forms of solidarity illustrated above go far beyond the rise of voluntarism after the withdrawal of the welfare state and are located in anti-capitalist and post-anarchist insurrectional autonomous, yet contingent spaces (Newman 2015) of "concrete utopias", yet they tend to reproduce some elements of hegemonic thought. The danger, here, is not to fill a vacuum of neoliberal desert, but to unintentionally reproduce an underlying, constructed "truth" that "transparency" is good.

Finally, let me stop here for a moment. Turning attention to a more fundamental insight, I have experienced through my own participation, to some extent, the importance of emotional practices that have some utopian elements in a society based on formalization and standardization. In opposition to the neat perfection of standardized products, it seems as if the roughness of artisan production allows and resonates complex emotional bounds. These experiences recall those "relations of resonance" that have been eloquently popularized by the sociologist Hartmut Rosa (2016) and describe an experience of fullness that people experience when listening to a beautiful song or are immersed in a prayer. Relations of resonance are based on respect and autonomy; they touch profound aspects of who we are (Walter Benjamin, in Rosa 2012: 318), a process that is undermined by the micro-political surveillance in the name of governmental transparency. In this article, the "resonance" is only one element that indicates the importance of fully recovering our human drive "to do something good" and not simply "better than others" (or more precisely, "to appear as better") as current hegemonic ideology would have it. In other words, with this article, I attempt to demonstrate how yet "unnamed figures of activism" (Isin 2008) make their appearance beyond the pervasive governance of everyday life; their task is to affirm the content of life against the empty form.

Notes

1 Names of private persons, events, groups and minor localities are changed in order to respect the privacy of those involved, but names of some of the public figures, institutions or organizations remain unaltered.

2 Developed originally by US astronauts for their food supply, HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) aims to offer a systematic preventive approach to the safety of food chains throughout all production stages. Since the 1990s, HACCP has been implemented in EU law and has become obligatory for all food processers, small and large. In short, the system aims to prevent hazards during all production stages rather than only at the finished product inspection. HACCP regulations became the centre of dispute in Italy following a critique of the Slow Food movement that HACCP regulations lead to a modern form of standardization that poses a threat to traditional small-scale and quality productions (Petrini 2012).

3 This article is based on a talk presented on July 29, 2016, at the SIEF summer school "Trusting Resistance: New Ethnographies of Social Movements and Alternative Economies," held July 24–30, 2016, at University of Tübingen. The summer school provided an extraordinary vivid forum to reflect on these issues and I thank the organizers and participants for their comments and feedback. I also thank Cristina Papa, Filippo Zerilli and Fabrizio Loce Mandes, the two anonymous reviewers and the two editors of *Ethnologia Europaea* for their feedback and comments on earlier drafts.

4 The Peasant Activism Project (www.peasantproject.org) is a major ethnographic research project that investigates innovative forms of neorural activism in Italy and is hosted by Queen's University Belfast. The project is financed by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK (grant number ES/M011291/1).

5 In a broader sense, trust is a cognitive attitude that anticipates that others will have and display goodwill towards me – or at least will not have or display ill will towards me. Annette Baier's definition places the issue of vulnerability in the forefront: "Trust (...) is accepted vulnerability to another's possible but not expected ill will (or lack of goodwill) toward one" (Baier 1995: 99). In the context of economic relations, the role of trust has been studied as a means of guaranteeing stability.

6 "Solidarity" remains a key concept in activist discourses. The term is notoriously hard to pin down and has often been used with different and often polyvalent

connotations. In a broad sense, in my fieldwork activists frequently emphasized that solidarity has to be understood as a social relation opposed to exploitation and competition, and thus as a clear counter-concept to contemporary neoliberalist ideology. Many neorural networks have established practices that help members to overcome financial limits or economic constraints without relying on bank loans. Importantly, a line of research has demonstrated the ambiguity of solidarity in neoliberal societies, where individual activism replaces welfare and state obligations (Muehlebach 2012), while others, like Rakopoulos (2016), have understood solidarity as a bridge concept to the "other side" of the crisis that allows to rethink the relation between democracy and economy or as a counter-practice in conflicts that can have unintended consequences (Koensler 2016).

7 Comparable to a national health service, ASL (Azienda Sanitaria Locale) is the Italian regional public administration body responsible for the provision of health-related services, including the running of hospitals and overseeing hygienic standards in the food business.

8 According to the critical agrarian scholar Philip McMichael, the term "corporate food system" describes the latest stage of the evolution of food systems, which began approximately in the 1980s with the rise of a global market of stateless money. The periodization and analysis of food regimes is widely debated in the *Journal of Peasant Studies*. For an overview, see also McMichael (2013) and Moore (2012).

9 Financialization describes the profound change that world economies have undergone for the past forty years, which is also characterized by the rise of globalization and neoliberalism. Some authors use the term to describe a mode of corporate governance focused on "shareholder value" as a guiding management principle and on processes of standardization that are used to evaluate company values (Krippner 2005). Russi (2013) analyses the financialization of the food industry as a process that is shaped by the growing power of multinational corporations that focus on economic profit rather than on concerns about sustainability, quality or safeguarding citizens.

10 Byung-Chul Han states that the "society of transparency" relies on the "value of exposition". In advanced capitalism, the Marxian concept of "value of use" is increasingly determined by its level of exposition rather than its actual "use". This is true, for instance, for companies whose shares are no longer related to the actual material value of their infrastructure but to their imagined global value (e.g. Youtube, Facebook).

11 Precursors of studies of food activism include analyses of how industrialization and globalization affect eating and culture (Counihan 1988). In studying reactions to industrialized food and its alienation, anthropologists have been at the forefront of those who investigate ethical consumerism. A growing body of research has analysed the role of ethical food activism, such as the Slow Food movement, in lifestyle changes (Wilk 2006), thus enriching a debate about important methodological issues regarding community and networks (Parkins & Craig 2006; Pink 2008; Allen 2006; Creed 2006; Martino, Giacchè & Rossetti 2016). This body of research has also begun to make a major contribution to considering relational political issues through food (Counihan & Siniscalchi 2014; Grasseni 2013; Papa 2004), in contrast to a more positivist strand that considers eating and culture as an issue in itself, as evident in *The Oxford Handbook of Food History* (Pilcher 2012) or the extensive writing on specific foods in circumscribed local contexts (Hirschfelder 2001; Wiegelmann 2006).

12 This anecdote was told by a founding member of the local network who later became member of Genuino Clandestino. Fieldwork diary notes of the author. Where not indicated otherwise, all further ethnographic descriptions are based on personal observations of the author, including event participation and informal conversations with activists.

13 According to another version of the founding story, the label Genuino Clandestino was invented by a group of small-scale farmers in Naples who criticized the institutionalization of organic agriculture.

14 According to my informants, this has been determined in assembly decisions of which they, however, have not taken part regularly themselves.

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