

**THE CHALLENGE OF GENERATIONAL
RENEWAL IN POST-INDUSTRIAL FARMING
CONTEXTS:
Regimes of Agrarian Social Reproduction in
the Basque Country**

**EL DESAFÍO DEL RELEVO GENERACIONAL EN LOS
CONTEXTOS AGRARIOS POST-INDUSTRIALES:
REGÍMENES DE REPRODUCCIÓN SOCIAL AGRARIO EN EL PAÍS VASCO**

by

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Dedication

To all of the 'forces of reproduction' giving meaning to and ensuring rural futures.



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Acronyms

ARC2020	Agricultural and Rural Convention
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CAPV	Autonomous Community of the Basque Country
CERES	Federación de Asociaciones de Mujeres del Medio Rural
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
EEC	European Economic Community
EGI	Euzko Gaztedi Indarra (Youth organization of the PNV)
EH Bildu	Euskal Herriko Bildu
EH Kolektiboa	Euskal Herriko Kolektiboa
EHNE-Bizkaia	Euskal Herriko Nekazarien Elkartasun Bizkaia
EIP-AGRI	The European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability
EITB	Radio Televisión Pública Vasca
ELA	Eusko Languillen Elkartasuna
ETA	Euzkadi Ta Azkatasuna (Basque Homeland and Liberty)
EU	European Union
EUSTAT	Euskal Estatistika Erakundea – Instituto Vasco de Estadística
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

ILO	International Labour Organization
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPES-Food	International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems
LAB	Languile Abertzaleen Batzordeak (Comisiones de Obreros Abertzales)
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale, (Links between the rural economy and development actions)
MNPA	Mutualidad Nacional de Previsión Agraria
NSMs	new social movements
OCA	Agrarian County Office
PAR	Participatory action research
PDR	Rural Development Programmes
PIR	Parti des Indigenes de la Republique
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party)
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español
SFP	Single Farm Payment
SRT	social reproduction theory
TNI	Transnational Institute
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores
USO	Unión Sindical Obrera
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	World War Two



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Abstract

In much of the global North, the continued decline in agrarian jobs and depopulation of rural areas is increasingly discussed by policymakers, and the media as a *crisis* of generational renewal, which affects the majority of the European region (especially the west) and also the future of the food system.

I suggest that this crisis of generational renewal is actually a symptom of broader ecological and political crises, as well as a crisis of social reproduction. Emerging efforts to overcome barriers to generational renewal are framed as one among many collective mobilizations responding to ecological, political and social crises more broadly. We are living in a global moment when the need for systemic transformation in order to ensure the survival of the planet and the majority of the people living on it is increasingly evident.

However, the analytical tools historically used to understand these efforts for social change suffer from some shortcomings, limit our view of political subjectivity and even can exacerbate instead of bridge divides between potential revolutionary subjects. These divides have backgrounded rural struggles, women's, racial justice and environmental movements, as distinct and separate from what Marxists have traditionally seen as the central force of revolutionary power: the urban proletariat, often represented as a white male union worker in the global North. I argue that it is precisely in those overlooked corners, and among what Nancy Fraser calls "capital's others," where crucial insights can be gleaned to help sharpen the analytical lens with which we look at social change in the 21st century. Social reproduction theory offers a way to see the structural role of the "forces of reproduction" (Barca 2020), as well as unpacking and broadening the scope to capture the different kinds of labour that contribute to expanded class struggle (Bhattacharya 2017).

I draw on insights from the Basque Country to highlight the work of agroecological farmers, women and racialized people in rural areas of the Global North dedicated to sustaining life. There, the collective and individual struggles of farmers attempting to curb the crisis of generational renewal can be understood as a window into the current phase of capitalism and the broader politics of rural resistance that are emerging in response. In order to explore these emerging agrarian political subjectivities, I develop an analytical framework to explore what I am calling, *regimes of agrarian social reproduction*. Such regimes can be looked at historically as institutionalized modes of reproducing the conditions necessary for agrarian production in rural areas and reveals how patterns of social reproduction are contested, undermined and change over time and in context. These regimes are made up of three dimensions:

- 1.) *Generational reproduction*: The work of birthing, caring for and attending to the biological and physical needs of the next generation of workers as well as the intergenerational relations that support this process.
- 2.) *Collective reproduction*: the work that goes into reproducing a collective identity, culture and social norms as well as the construction of the ‘other’.
- 3.) *Systemic reproduction*: the relationship between social reproductive work and productive relations, which reproduces the broader socio-economic system.

Using this analytical framework means expanding where we look and how we see politics and struggle taking place, and highlights the political subject as a social being first, and then a worker. It sees work as something that takes place inside and outside of the formal economy, and that serves a variety of purposes. This expanded conception of working class helps see how for some withholding of one’s labour power (a classic strike) is the strategy for contributing to social transformation. But for others, like Basque *agroecofeminists*, their strategic power is less about the ability to disrupt, and more about the ability to keep us alive, by feeding, caring and regenerating rural environments, in ways that are as unproductive to capital as possible and in solidarity with other workers.

Dutch thesis title



Samenvatting

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1

Introduction

1.1 The post-industrial food system in crisis

The industrialization of food production has changed rural life. The penetration of capitalism into peasant societies has reordered household priorities and fundamentally refigured production imperatives. Celebrated as progress, as modernity, as the most efficient way to feed the world, the projection of the logic of the factory onto the farm has set rural areas on a path walking arm in arm with the industrial sector. The countryside, specializing, mechanizing, streamlining, industrializing food production and in the process, bleeding workers whose need for jobs drives them in a steady stream onto the shop floors in urban areas.

In this thesis, I focus in on the nature of and challenges to agrarian capitalism in those places where industrialization has boomed, busted and subsequently transformed. Increasingly oriented towards the service sector, tourism, or the technology sector, much of what is often referred to as the global north, is now, as Daniel Bell described it, a 'post-industrial society' (Bell 1976, 14). The youth in such regions of late capitalism found throughout the European countryside, are now more likely to find their first jobs waiting tables at a restaurant than forging steel in a factory. After years of whitling away at farmer livelihoods and in turn, the social fabric of rural areas in favour of maximum productivity, the farm sector appears polarized. On one hand ever larger mega farms control more and more rural territory, while relying on low paid, precarious farm labour. On the other hand, smaller scale often family run farms are hanging on by a thread. After watching their parents struggle to keep the farm going, through physical and emotional stress and low returns, many children of farmers are opting to leave the countryside of their youth. Addressing rural

depopulation and the lack of generational renewal in farming is top on European policy agendas, but the most common solution is to erect museums of what is framed as a traditional agrarian past to attract tourism and diversify rural economies. Although many of these efforts romanticize the agrarian *past*, changing ways of inhabiting and using rural spaces raise questions about the agrarian *future* of post-industrial society.

While my aim is certainly not to attempt to predict the future, I suggest that in the panic about depopulation and generational renewal in agrarian communities, there is a failure to actually *see* the present. Nostalgic constructions of a traditional rural past combined with, yet dissociated from, narrow efficiency-based visions of food production hide from view a more complex and diverse web of actors who live, work and give meaning to the countryside. I take up the issue of generational renewal in farming, like a thread with which I attempt to pull open a broader view of post-industrial agrarian capitalism at, what I argue is a crucial historical conjuncture.

Decades of concentration of land and wealth have left the majority of farmers struggling to cover their costs. Falling prices for things like milk and meat add insult to injury. Some farmers simply can't sustain the pressure and take their own lives. 'French farmers are committing suicide on an almost daily basis, largely due to financial pressures arising from a crisis in agriculture. The problem is not just a French one; all over the European Union farmers are struggling to survive amid falling prices for products such as milk and pork' (Zabriskie 2015). Others abandon the sector, contributing to the loss of predominantly small farms throughout Europe (see Franco and Borrás 2013). Public subsidies channelled through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) have become a lifeline and a ball and chain, rendering farmers extremely dependent on economic assistance, and vulnerable to the conditions that such aid comes with.

To make matters worse, young people are not entering the sector at a rate fast enough to ensure continuity. In the European Union (EU) in 2016, 'The average age of farmers is very much at the older end of the age spectrum; one third (32%) of farm managers in the EU were 65 years of age or more. Only 11% of farm managers in the EU were young farmers

under the age of 40 years' (EUROSTAT 2018). From 2003 to 2013 the EU lost a third of its small farms under 10 hectares (Feodoroff and Kay 2016). Moreover, 'The farming profession is dominated by men, with only about three in ten (29%) EU farm managers being women. The proportion of young farm managers who were women was lower still (23%)' (EUROSTAT 2018).

During the industrial period reducing the number of farms was seen as strategic to make agriculture more efficient and provide labour for industrial jobs. However, with the loss of industrial jobs and the continued decline in the number of farms, a farmerless depopulated rural future is becoming an imaginable reality. Now with the impacts of this shift being felt throughout rural areas, not just in the agricultural sector, the ongoing loss of agrarian livelihoods in the post-industrial period is increasingly discussed by policymakers and the media as a *crisis* of generational renewal. This trend affects the majority of the European region (especially the west) and the future of the food system. Despite the flurry of policy attention, aid, and programming dedicated to fixing this crisis, numbers of farmers continue to fall.

1.2 Generational renewal: a symptom of broader issues

While the intention is not to devalue the importance of the economic and productive challenges that farmers face, nor deny the dissuasive impact this is having on potential future farmers, I nonetheless suggest that looking beyond a narrowly construed farm economy brings into focus other important factors shaping the future of the food system in post-industrial late capitalism.

1.2.1 Ecological crisis

Industrial agriculture, like capitalist industrial production in general is based on what can be understood as an extractivist logic (Giarracca and Teubal 2014). Rather than focusing on stability and regenerative systems that mimic the natural ecological cycles which sustain production over the long term, specialized production has encouraged monocultures, dependent on chemical inputs, which are very productive at first, but do not replenish soils with organic matter and are prone to environmental crises over time. 'Today as more and more farmers are integrated into

international economies, the biological imperative of diversity disappears due to the use of many kinds of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, and specialized farms are rewarded by economies of scale. In turn, lack of good rotations and diversification take away key self-regulating mechanisms, turning monocultures into highly vulnerable agricultural ecosystems (agroecosystems) dependent on high chemical inputs' (Altieri 1998, 61). Coalitions of small-scale farmers, advocating for more diversified and ecological ways of producing food have been sounding the alarm about the numerous environmental problems that the growth in large-scale industrial farms across Europe has created (Chancellor 2019). Some of the key issues include, biodiversity loss, pesticide residues and pollution of waterways, declining populations of bees, birds, and other important insects, soil degradation, and not least greenhouse gas emissions. UNESCO Director General notes, 'Biodiversity is the living fabric of our planet - the source of our present and our future. It is essential to helping us all adapt to the changes we face over the coming years.' However the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystems services for Europe and Central Asia warns that biodiversity is threatened and in continuous decline (IPBES 2018, vi). Pesticide residues in European soils are now widespread. Some 80 per cent of the 317 agricultural topsoil samples collected in 2015 by a team of researchers from across the European Union contained residual pesticides (Silva *et al.* 2019). And the European Commission has formed a special council, 'The Nitrates Directive' to address the current levels and prevent future contamination of waterways by nitrates from agricultural sources (European Commission 2018). The crucial role of bees as pollinators is also threatened by extended pesticide and herbicide use (Sánchez-Bayo *et al.* 2016, 10). Threats to European soils are wide ranging. Beyond pesticide residues, some 16 per cent of European soils are vulnerable to erosion and landslides, and soil biodiversity and organic matter are in decline as a result of industrial agriculture (Courvoisier *et al.* 2018, 9). Some 26 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions come from food production (Ritchie and Roser 2020). In short, industrial agriculture has significantly contributed to an ecological crisis being felt throughout rural Europe.

1.2.2 Crisis of social reproduction

The growth of industrial farming in Europe has consequently undermined smaller farms, contributing to widespread processes of depopulation of rural areas. From 2015 to 2020 the total population living in rural areas fell from 28 per cent to 21 per cent, with northern, southern and eastern regions seeing much more exaggerated declines (Margaras 2019, European Commission 2020), and concern over the emptying out of the countryside (Labianca and Navarro Valverde 2019, 223). Many small towns enter into a ‘vicious circle of decline’ where deteriorating public services and job opportunities cause people to leave, and lack of population further undermines public infrastructure and services. This can mean ‘inadequate health coverage, as public health provision tends to decline and private health service practitioners find operations in these areas unprofitable, thus moving to other areas. Areas suffering from depopulation may also see a decrease in transport services and a closure of public services (e.g. schools)’ (Margaras 2019, 5).

Women are leaving rural areas faster than men, leading to ‘rural masculinization’ (Camarero and Sampedro 2008). And for those who stay, their entry into the agrarian world as heads of farms is often seen as out of the ordinary and subject to community scrutiny (Valiente *et al.* 2019). This, in addition to the ongoing challenges of entering the labour market felt by both rural and urban women throughout Europe: ‘In 2019, the employment rate for women with children less than 6 years old was almost 14 percentage points lower than for those without children. Women still also receive lower pay for their work than men, with the gender pay gap currently at 14.8%’ (European Commission 2020, 15).

Ageing rural populations with deteriorating public services face serious care deficits. ‘With the out-migration of younger people, it is not only care facilities that are at risk of disappearing, but also, for example, shops, community centres and post offices. These closures increase the risk of older people becoming socially isolated and negatively impacts upon their overall quality of life, possibilities to find sources of informal support and the community vitality in a broader sense’ (UNECE 2017, 12). For those who can afford it, domestic workers cover gaps in public health care. However, the rich literature on global care chains (Truong 1996,

Hocshchild 2000, Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2011, Kofman and Raghuram 2015, Díaz Gorfinkiel 2016, Hester 2018, Lewis 2018, Civersity Grupo de Investigación 2019) suggests that in the EU context, as women have increasingly entered the labour market and the care and public services provided by the welfare state is uneven and suffers from budget cuts, domestic work is overwhelmingly feminized, racialized and low paid. Within this field, less attention has been given to rural areas in particular, however increased levels of isolation and white notions of the ‘rural idyll’ indicate that rural care workers face even more challenging labour conditions than their urban counterparts (Chakraborti and Garland 2004, Spiliopoulos *et al.* 2020). Taken together, the depopulation of rural areas, decreasing numbers of new farmers, the unmet care needs of ageing rural populations and the exploitative labour conditions of care workers suggest that post-industrial rural areas are experiencing a crisis of social reproduction.

1.2.3 Political crisis

The demographic realities in rural areas, in many places no longer align with traditional collective imaginaries of who lives there and the activities that they engage in. This disconnect is a reflection of ‘Europe’s undigested colonial history’ (Ponzanesi and Colpani 2015, xi). Post-colonial migration has reshaped demographic and racial realities, yet the construction of European identity lags behind. Indeed from mainstream publications like *Foreign Policy* (Adekoya 2020) to globally networked alternative media (García 2020) to hyper local radical activist groups (Marcha Mundial de Mujeres de Euskal Herria 2021), the past decade has heard a proliferation of voices arguing that Europe needs to talk about race. Lentin argues that after the Holocaust, race as a marker of difference in Europe, ‘was literally banished from publicly acceptable discourse, particularly in continental western Europe’ (Lentin 2008, 496). This silencing of race talk does not however mean that racialization or, importantly, racism cease to exist. Especially given the way European colonial history has framed race issues, ‘always as a disruption, as the invader, as over there’ (Goldberg 2006, 332), but certainly not a European issue, like the Holocaust.

This is a radically anti-relational presumption, one failing to understand how much modern and contemporary Europe has been made by its colonial experiences, how deeply instrumentalities of the Holocaust such as concentration camps were products of colonial

experimentation, how notions such as racial hygiene can be traced to racially predicated urban planning around sanitation syndromes by colonial regimes, how the operations of emergency law worked out in colonies like India were re-imported into European contexts such as Ireland and later Nazi Germany (Goldberg 2006, 336–7).

In order to facilitate this silencing of race, ‘Europe, through the vehicle of its institutions, has transformed race into “identity”. In other words, race is no longer something that is imposed upon subjugated others. By anaesthetizing race and labelling it “ethnicity” or “culture”, it becomes something that is possessed, rather than something that is unwillingly acquired’ (Lentin 2008, 498). These racial euphemisms allow white Europeans to celebrate discourses of universal human rights, ethnic diversity and post-racial society, while leaving their whiteness and Europe’s role in colonialism unexamined. ‘As a result, the millions of non-Europeans, often the descendants of those emerging from the “racialized governmentalities” of the colonies into the post-racial metropole, have no words to express their negation. If race was a bad word, it at the very least, was historically explanatory’ (Lentin 2008, 497). This false racial blindness is becoming increasingly untenable as, ‘in the extended aftermath of decolonization for the hundreds of millions of people who formerly were largely confined to the mass prison labour camps that were Europe’s colonies, Europe is now confronted with migrants and refugees from those same countries,’ whose presence declares, ‘We are here because you were there’ (De Genova 2016, 351). Fortified borders, racial profiling and the criminalization of migration has turned race into a criterion for illegalization, and in many cases a death sentence.

[J]udging it on the basis of its real effects, the European asylum system is precisely not a system for granting asylum to refugees. It routinely and regularly denies the great majority recognition as legitimate asylum seekers, and ordinarily grants ‘refugee’ status to less than 15 % of applicants. It is premised upon a comprehensive suspicion of people seeking asylum, and is effectively designed to disqualify as many applicants as possible as allegedly ‘bogus’ asylum seekers. In terms of its real effects and of what it actually produces, therefore, the European asylum system is a regime for the production of migrant ‘illegality’ (see De Genova 2002 , 2005 : 213–249, cited in De Genova 2016, 351–2).

In the face of potential threats to the tenuous racial silence, assimilation of newcomers is expected in return for rights (Lentin 2008, 490). And the question of European identity, ‘manifests itself as a resurgence of nationalist particularism or as one of universalistic secularism’ (De Genova 2016, 349). De Genova goes on to argue that, ‘The national question has thus reasserted itself in Europe today in the form of a variety of profoundly racialized projects from which there is of course no immunity for the native-born European children and grandchildren of the migrants, who commonly remain permanently inscribed as being “of migrant background” or indefinitely categorized (in some instances, officially, juridically) as (non-citizen) “foreigners”’ (2016, 346).

These silenced racial realities make processes of identity formation key sites of scrutiny for revealing how they are shaped by migration and ‘post-colonial whiteness’ (De Genova 2016, 345). This is fundamental for understanding who is seen as, *in* Europe and who is *of* Europe? In the context of agrarian politics, demands for food sovereignty¹ and local control over the food system bring up questions about who is seen as the legitimate sovereign? Who is included in the idea of the local community? Further, is it possible for nationalist and ethnically driven politics to be inclusive?

Bolstering all of these dynamics, EU border policy has been fortified reflecting a desire to continue avoiding coming to terms with its colonial past and also ensuring a racial hierarchy providing precarious subjects to occupy the jobs deemed too exploitative by white Europeans. The European political script is clinging to a narrative that is buckling under weight of cultural incoherence and its undigested colonial hangover, leading to increasingly evident political crises as larger and larger segments of both urban and rural populations are invisibilized and or criminalized.

1.3 Wanted: Revolutionary subjects for the 21st century

The crisis of generational renewal in farming is just one indication of the fact that the golden years of industrial capitalism are waning, and the wreckage a linear model of infinite accumulation and growth has wreaked on our planet, our bodies and our societies is becoming increasingly clear. Industrial capitalism or, ‘modern economic growth is a tale of human

liberation from nature' (Barca 2020, 10). The realization that we have collectively contributed to and been carried by this system beyond the social and ecological limits that can be sustained, is no longer the language of clairvoyant activists, or radical ecologists. It is an increasingly widespread feeling: the fact that we can't continue structuring our economies this way, guzzling fossil fuel, spewing waste into the soil, the water and the air, and sacrificing the lives of the less fortunate to keep the train chugging forward, stockpiling capital in the coffers of fewer and fewer hands. Plus, the failure to support the essential work of the people who care for, teach, tend to and grow human and planetary life has left us vulnerable, something made abundantly clear by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Certainly, as the list of climate change deniers dwindles, it is refreshing for the many already feeling the impacts of increasingly extreme weather events to see a growing consensus that change is needed. Of course, the nature of that change, by who, how and for what are the questions that shape 21st century politics.

However, the intertwinement of multiple global crises has made clear the importance of alliances and the limitations of existing frameworks for conceptualizing collective action and social change to support them. Marxist scholarship has made important contributions to understanding the structural logic of capitalism and the revolutionary potential embedded in the class relation between labour and capital. However, this perspective has tended to prioritize the male industrial wage worker as the revolutionary subject, to the point that other types of organizing and collective action get backgrounded or invisibilized as superfluous to class struggle. Indeed, the Eurocentricity of orthodox Marxism has been highlighted by scholars like Chakrabarty in his work, provincializing Europe (Chakrabarty 2009). And a long line of feminists has launched scathing critiques of the obfuscation of women's work by Marxists. As Federici describes,

[B]y the 1960s, under the impact of the anticolonial struggle and the struggle against apartheid in the United States, Marx's account of capitalism and class relations was subjected to a radical critique by Third Worldist political writers like Samir Amin and Andre Gunder Frank who criticized its Eurocentrism and his privileging the waged industrial proletariat as the main contributor to capitalist accumulation and revolutionary subject. However, it was the revolt of women against

housework, in Europe and the United States, and later the spread of feminist movements across the planet, in the 1980s and 1990s, that triggered the most radical rethinking of Marxism (Federici 2012, 96).

Yet another contentious corner of Marxist thought has been its treatment of the rural world. Orthodox Marxists saw revolution taking place only after the proletarianization of the peasantry which would lead to their disappearance and enable them to occupy the role of the revolutionary subject as industrial workers. In a sense this view disregarded the revolutionary potential of the peasantry and rural spaces (Sacks 2019, 152). Agrarian Marxists have dedicated significant energy to correcting this dismissive view of the rural world, ‘And the revolutionary and anti-colonial peasant wars of the twentieth century (Wolf 1969) underwrote much of the creative energy and the massive outflow of work associated with the peasant studies boom of the 1970s, leading to significant revision of Marxist views on peasant politics’ (Levien *et al.* 2018, 855). This rich literature unpacks the processes of not only depeasantization, but also differentiation of the peasantry and the class dynamics of agrarian change (see for example Bernstein 2010), thus re-centring the importance of class position in rural social change.

Marx and Marxists up through the 1960s saw the driving force of revolution as a consequence of the contradictory relationship between the proletariat and capital. In this perspective, those workers who create surplus value for capital are potentially revolutionary because of their ability to withhold that labour through things like strikes and thus cripple the process of capital accumulation. ‘In all but the most heterodox Marxist (Thompson 1971) tendencies, class interest and historical agency derived unproblematically from class position,’ however, ‘[t]his framework too was of little use in making sense of movements in the 1960s that frequently had largely middle-class leadership and multiclass constituencies’ (Edelman 2001, 288).

In the 1970s this class-based Marxist view of how political subjectivity is conceived was also blown open by a series of related currents of scholarship, including ‘new social movements’ (NSMs), resource mobilization theory and identity politics, in the very same industrial

capitalist context of the global north where the male proletariat theoretically would lead the revolution. New social movements scholars like Touraine, argued, 'with the passage to a "post-industrial" society, labour-capital conflict subsides, other social cleavages become more salient and generate new identities, and the exercise of power is less in the realm of work and more in "the setting of a way of life, forms of behaviour, and needs"' (1988, p. 25, cited in Edelman 2001, 288). Melucci argued for the need to 'move from a structural analysis of class relations and of the logic of the capitalist system towards a definition, first, of class action, and, then, of political action' (Melucci 1980, 200). Resource mobilization theory focused on the opportunity structures and ways collectives channel contestation. However, in many cases participation in new social movements and the study of them became the goal in and of itself. This scholarship focused on 'struggles over symbolic, informational, and cultural resources and rights to specificity and difference' (Edelman 2001, 289). This fuelled a politics of claiming rights based on one's unique identity. This brought to the fore important struggles around race, gender and sexuality, however, '[w]hether and under what conditions the recent proliferation of particular identities produced opportunities for new alliances or merely political fragmentation remains much debated, as are the related tendencies of identity-based movements to oscillate between downplaying and celebrating differences from majority groups or to lose their political character altogether' (Edelman 2001, 298). Much of this debate centred around the criticism that in this literature, 'capitalism and class struggle disappeared' (Engelhardt and Moore 2017, 275). Although many scholars, who I draw on throughout this thesis have paved the way for overcoming the divides and gaps broadly described here, the general tendency of orthodox Marxists has been to overlook the revolutionary potential of, the rural, the feminized, racialized, and ecological labour, while its treatment by new social movements left it unhinged from the systemic logic that conditions how class operates and drives struggle.

One motivation for refining the analytical tools with which we look at emerging political subjectivities, is the fact that despite predictions otherwise, the peasantry has not disappeared. In fact, the last 25 years have seen a reassertion of the revolutionary potential of rurally rooted politics with the emergence of a wide array of movements for food sovereignty, and efforts to revitalize rural areas through food system transformation

(La Vía Campesina 1996, Desmarais 2003, Borras *et al.* 2008, Martínez-Torres and Rosset 2010, Holt-Giménez 2011, Edelman *et al.* 2014). Agrarian populists have reasserted the significance of the peasantry as a revolutionary subject by politicizing a modern peasant identity into which a diverse range of people of the land can fit (for the contours of this debate in agrarian studies see Bernstein 2006, 2014, McMichael 2014). In the post-industrial global North, farmers represent less than 5 per cent of the population and politicized neo-peasants even less, making the role of alliances and contextually specific forms of social organizing even more important for advancing food sovereignty (Holt Giménez and Shattuck 2011, Anderson 2013, Brent *et al.* 2015a, Roman-Alcalá 2015, Mills 2016, Calvário 2017a). However, this political landscape brings up questions about who the protagonists of social change are in these contexts and how we understand 21st century agrarian political subjectivities?

These are not just questions for scholars of peasant studies. The way we relate to the rural world and our food system informs how we confront massive challenges of our time like climate change, migration and public health. With more of the population living in cities than in the countryside, our total dependence upon rural areas and food producers as providers of our basic sustenance is a reality often forgotten. Though often overlooked as a driver of change in late capitalism, I contend that the agrarian world is indeed a context from which social change is emerging and it warrants our attention, even — or especially — in places like the post-industrial global North where the proportion of the population still farming has dwindled to the single digits. The farmers trying to grow food in a way that can both sustain people and that our planet can sustain, are battling on many fronts. From tragically low prices to climate crisis fuelling unpredictable weather that no amount of peasant wisdom can anticipate, they are forced to be agile, adaptable, tireless and committed. Throughout my fieldwork, the word I heard most often to capture the experience of new farmers trying to take up such work: precarious. Yet they continue to boldly reimagine what rural life means, learning through trial and error, and often exhausted by it all. In short, farmers can't do it alone. There is a need for an expanded view of political subjectivity which can facilitate alliances and solidarity rather than divisions in the face of the multiple crises threatening life on earth.

Throughout this thesis I show how social reproduction theory helps bridge the divides between different schools of thought about political subjectivity and brings explanatory power to how the systemic logic of capitalism informs the diverse political agendas emerging in contexts historically backgrounded by a view of capitalism narrowly focused on the ‘real economy’. Moreover, in many regions where the number of farmers continues to fall and rural depopulation has hollowed out the social activity in agrarian contexts, an in-depth analysis about the reproductive relations and the politics that take place in those spaces is an often overlooked yet potentially strategic realm of revolutionary politics.

As Federici claims, ‘if Marxist theory is to speak to twenty-first-century anti-capitalist movements, it must rethink the question of “reproduction” from a planetary perspective’ (Federici 2012, 92–3). Barca sees this as a renewed vision of historical materialism, ‘the theory of class struggle as the fundamental driver of change, [...which] would allow thinking in terms of alliances between industrial and meta-industrial workers based on a common material interest in keeping the world alive by transforming the relations of re/production’ (Barca 2020, 60).

This is indeed a welcome contribution since as Harcourt puts it, ‘There is a search for new value systems responding to today’s realities that current global political and economic institutions are failing to understand and govern’ (2014, 1308). Thus, the shift in perspective is a theoretical move, with real world political implications. As Sacks contends,

Taken to its logical conclusion, the understanding that surplus-value is first produced at the site of reproduction forces us to rethink our whole approach to revolutionary struggle. Instead of systematic change being understood as the capture of state power by a party that represents the working class, revolution is reconceptualised as the prefiguring of a more just society through a reorganisation of reproduction outside of capitalist exploitation while at the same time disrupting social relations that extract value from people’s labour. It is precisely through this debate about the (re)production of capitalism, that resistance can be re-articulated in the service of the struggle for an alternative society (Sacks 2019, 170).

This theoretical challenge takes on political urgency, when viewed in the context of the multiple crises impacting rural areas and food systems. The recent report by the International Panel of Experts on Food Systems (IPES-Food) frames this moment as a crucial contest of forces pushing on one hand for either diversified agroecological food systems or drone controlled hyper concentrated digital food factories (Mooney *et al.* 2021). Advocates of food sovereignty argue that agroecological farming is needed to repair the social fabric of rural areas, ensure regenerative ecological relations at the base of food production and provide dignified jobs and solidarity between peoples in the global North and the global South. The latter on the other hand, it is feared will only further exacerbate the existing crises (Mooney *et al.* 2021).

Thus, central to understanding the current political realities of post-industrial agrarian capitalism in the European context are, not only the ways that these multiple crises create barriers to entry to certain groups in farming, but also the dynamics of contestation and resistance. These processes not only shape the potential for generational renewal in farming, they also attempt to (re)define what farming and food production will mean in the future and for the next generations who take it up. However, as the preceding section suggests, the analytical lens used to understand these dynamics of contention needs updating.

First, it is true that the issue of generational renewal may at first glance appear to be primarily about conditions of production. And the theoretical contributions of agrarian scholars are numerous and indeed offer especially insightful views of the strains on production that impact new and potential farmers' ability to remain in the sector. However, there is a need to see beyond productive relations in order to bring into focus the other elements that enable (or not) agrarian life to be sustained for future generations. Situating the challenge of generational renewal in post-industrial farming in relation to broader crises and contestation tendencies helps paint a more complete picture.

Second, even if we are paying attention to the social fabric of rural areas beyond production, the crisis of generational reproduction has been so closely linked to processes of rural depopulation, there is an implication

that simply repopulating and reservicing those areas will be enough to reverse the disappearance of farms. Or, with strong collective action, enough social muscle can be leveraged to push us in the direction of diversified agroecological food systems. In both of these cases collective action and repopulating/reservicing rural areas are presented as a kind of silver bullet. While these are no doubt important ingredients, is it enough to simply add people back to rural places, mix and stir? What generates cohesive collective rural identity over time, and can or should it change? What are the criteria by which collectives are formed? Who is in and who is out? Are agroecological projects and rural areas in general able to include all newcomers?

Third, in the climate of contestation and resistance, given the dwindling rural population and even smaller population of people actively engaged in farming, the role of alliances and coalitions is fundamental. But, how and why do these connections happen? Which political agenda do they propose? Which groups are left out? How do urban-rural divides shape these relationships? What other factors enable or complicate coalitions building and sustaining? Which factors reproduce the systems that undermine generational renewal in the first place?

In order to make sense of the social relations that enable, obstruct or attempt to transform generational renewal in farming I pay attention to three main factors:

1. Who is being reproduced as the next *generation* of farmers and how? How do they relate to the older generation?
2. What notions of *collective* identity and belonging are being reproduced and how? Who is seen as part of the next generation of farmers, who is not and why?
3. What *systemic* logic is reproduced or challenged? And what is the relationship between social reproduction and production in this system?

This work builds on the vast and growing literature and my personal professional experience suggesting that diversified agroecological food systems are more capable of attracting and supporting young farmers. This kind of farming is driven by the idea that decreased dependency on capital

can provide a stronger basis for sustaining life than industrial agriculture. However, I argue that such visions for future food systems are also often romanticized, which does not contribute to a deeper understanding of why and how they fall short. My aim in this thesis is to analyse emerging agrarian political subjectivities and offer a respectful yet critical view, centred on the processes of generational renewal that such agroecological ways of setting up food production offer. However, I attempt to situate these experiences in the broader social and political context in which they emerge, to help visibilize that which is often not seen or discussed in agroecological circles, and to better understand the structural dynamics that new agroecological farmers both reproduce and resist, and which shape who farms now and in the future.

1.3.1 The Basque case

In order to explore these questions, I draw on insights from the Basque Country, as an example of a post-industrial agrarian place to map, what I frame as, the crisis and fix tendencies inherent in industrial capitalism as drivers of change in agrarian social reproductive relations. But, why the Basque Country? The Basque Country is both typical and exceptional, in ways which make it an especially rich case to unpack the issues outlined above.

First, it is a typical case of a crisis of generational renewal in a post-industrial society. In the current period, like in the rest of Europe, the steady decline in the number of Basque farmers has been framed by scholars, media and policy makers as a crisis of generational renewal threatening the future of rural areas and food production. Agrarian life in the Basque Country, like many other post-industrial parts of the world, is at a crossroads. Rural areas throughout much of Western Europe and North America are experiencing a steady decline in the number of people farming the land, as well as an ageing and predominantly male farm sector. Farm owners under 35 years old only represent 8.5 per cent of the total farm owners in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (CAPV). Depopulation of rural areas due to out-migration towards cities is serious:² half of all towns in the Spanish state are in danger of disappearing (Conde 2018). In the Basque Country only 12 per cent of the population lives in rural areas compared to the 26 per cent average in the

rest of the EU (Gaindegia 2016, 16). The historical context provided in chapter 3 helps explain the structural factors contributing to the decline in the number of farmers, and reveals how this decline was first perceived as strategic and competitive during the industrial period, as it provided labour for urban production and facilitated the modernization of farming, but has since come to be interpreted as a crisis. I argue that this shift to the current notion of crisis in the context of generational renewal in fact reflects a crisis of social reproduction, which has manifested as the contradictions of Basque industrial capitalism have become untenable. As suggested above, social reproduction is the entry point, but the analytical tools that social reproduction theory provides help reveal the ways that social reproductive crises are intertwined with ecological and political crises.

Second, and in response to this, the nature of systemic fixes and lasting features of the next rural social reproductive regime are being actively contested and alternatives are framed in ways that emphasize the need for broader coalitions and cross-sectoral organizing in order to sufficiently address these multiple crises. The Basque landscape of emancipatory politics is exceptionally active, linking urban and rural areas, and calling into question the way class, race, gender and the environment shape the revolutionary subject. The collective imaginary of traditional agrarian life has been cultivated as a core component of Basque identity. The particularly strong expressions of unique cultural and ethnic identity combined with a vibrant history of radical agendas for food system transformation make the Basque Country an especially interesting place to explore the political subjectivities shaping generational renewal in the context of the multiple social, ecological and political crises outlined above. Structurally, the Basque Country is the definition of post-industrial, having been a booming hub of iron and steel production, which has shaped the nature of agrarian production for centuries. But the rugged terrain, has limited the ability for farming to scale up as it industrialized, thus maintaining a patchwork of family farms relatively intact. Basque farmers' union, Euskal Herriko Nekazarien Elkartasuna Bizkaia (EHNE-Bizkaia), founding member of La Via Campesina, has contributed to the mystique and fed a romantic narrative of small-scale traditional peasant agriculture, as the powerful force behind the transformation to diversified agroecological food system. Basque public institutions have developed policies and economic supports to try to encourage new farmers.

However, this case demonstrates that even here, generational renewal is threatened, and a fresh perspective is needed in order to see the problem in new ways.

I focus on the Spanish Basque Country, primarily on the province of Bizkaia, which has historically been the industrial centre, and is now deeply impacted by the multiple social, ecological and political crises characteristic of post-industrial agrarian regions. I look at two different kinds of agrarian production: vegetables grown under plastic tunnels, and dairy. My participant observation and interviews brought me to towns and valleys throughout the province, but I draw on two places in particular throughout this thesis.³ In the rural valley, where I lived for 1 year, the population hovers around 1000 people, and its proximity to Bilbao and the innovative municipal land bank programme which lasted for from 2012–2016 has made it a small but vibrant community of neo-rural, new entrant farming initiatives. These farmers mostly grow vegetables and actively participate in community supported agriculture networks, as well as food preservation in a collective space ceded by the municipality. In order to understand the reality of milk producers, I made frequent visits to what might be seen as the dairy capital of the Basque Country, where the impacts of the dismantling of the EU milk quota system are adding to an already fearful view that as one dairy farmer says, ‘nothing will be left in 10 years’.

1.4 An analytical framework for understanding new agrarian political subjectivities

Up until this point I have basically argued that multiple crises are triggering collective mobilizations and calling attention to the need for social transformation in order to ensure the survival of the planet and the majority of the people living on it. However, I have suggested that the analytical tools historically used to understand these efforts for social change suffer from some shortcomings, limit our view of political subjectivity and even can exacerbate instead of bridge divides between potential revolutionary subjects. These divides have backgrounded rural struggles, women’s mobilizations, racial justice and environmental movements, as distinct and separate from what Marxists have traditionally seen as the central force of revolutionary power: the urban proletariat,

often represented as a white male union worker in the global North. I argue that it is precisely in those overlooked corners, and among what Nancy Fraser calls ‘capital’s others,’ where crucial insights can be gleaned to help sharpen the analytical lens with which we look at social change in the 21st century. Social reproduction theory offers a way to see the structural role of these ‘others’ or as Stefania Barca calls ‘the forces of reproduction’ (2020), as well as unpacking and broadening the scope to capture the different kinds of labour that contribute to what Tithi Bhattacharya refers to as ‘expanded class struggle’ (2017a). As Gargi Bhattacharyya’s work on racial capitalism has demonstrated, this expanded perspective means that the fact that these struggles are racialized and gendered and informed by different human-nature relations, doesn’t make them any less relevant to class-based organizing (2018). This is markedly different from narrowly construed views of class struggle, which has proven to ignore crucial types of collective action and miss opportunities for strategic alliances by polarizing and dividing rather than collaborating and building coalition. At the same time, the goal is not to simply invert the hierarchy and flip the stage so that we instead prioritize the struggles that were previously backgrounded, letting class and conflict fall out of the picture. What I pursue instead is relational, horizontal and co-constitutive frameworks for understanding social change.

The analytical building blocks I draw on in this thesis contribute to my aim of expanding and nuancing the way we understand generational renewal and agrarian change. Taken together these conceptual bridges create the architecture of my methodological approach. This provides the foundation for the analytical framework of *regimes of agrarian social reproduction*, which I develop in chapter 2 and put to work in the subsequent chapters.

1.4.1 Agrarianizing social reproduction theory

By bringing the realities of life in rural areas as the preconditions for agrarian production into focus, I aim to agrarianize social reproduction theory. I bring together perspectives from feminist Marxist social reproduction theory and critical agrarian political economy in order to understand the challenges and opportunities for generational renewal in farming in post-industrial capitalist spaces. Social reproduction theory

focuses on understanding the role of invisibilized labour required for reproducing workers in capitalist relations, but has focused much more extensively on the conditions of production in urban areas (with some important exceptions, see for example Hall 2016, Cousins *et al.* 2018). On the other hand, given that the peasantry has proved to be more resilient than initially imagined by Marx and industrialization a less sure path to revolution, Marxists have been forced to reassess and update how they view social change and agriculture. The dispossession of peasants and the consolidation of agrarian capitalism has been the subject of much study and debate (Kautsky 1988, Arrighi 1994, Bernstein 2010). The classic formulation of the agrarian question as advanced by Kautsky, Bernstein qualifies as the ‘agrarian question of capital’:

It centres on the transition to capitalism in which two definitive (‘stylized’) classes of pre-capitalist agrarian social formations (‘feudalism’) - namely predatory landed property and the peasantry - are transformed (displaced, ‘eliminated’), by the emergence of capitalist social relations of production, in turn the basis of an unprecedented development of the productive forces in farming. Emergent capitalist landed property and agrarian capital displace predatory landed property and dispossess the peasantry - what may be termed the ‘enclosure’ model of agrarian transition and proletarianization (Bernstein 2006, 450).

Bernstein suggests that the nature of the 21st century agrarian question is different, proposing what he calls the agrarian question of labour to reflect the current processes of social change, which emerge from a much more complex web of multiple classes of agrarian labour attempting to survive. Agrarian class relations can emerge within the farm enterprise among differentiated forms of labour, but they also (and more commonly in the context of family farms) surround the site of production, via relations with upstream and downstream inputs and services, commodity chains and markets (Bernstein 2006, 454). Here it is useful to recall Marx’s distinction between real and formal subsumption of labour. In thinking about how capitalism penetrates agriculture, the idea of real subsumption suggests a full conversion of labour to a capitalist wage relation, thus subsuming or subordinating labour to the logic and imperatives of capital. In contrast, formal subsumption explains the fact that capital arrives and influences a pre-existing logic of production, and doesn’t necessarily have

to convert work into a wage system in order to subsume production to a logic of capital. This is the case for many small-scale petty commodity producers of agricultural goods, whose production relies almost entirely on family labour, but which is nonetheless subjected to the imperatives of capital via upstream and downstream relations (Goodman and Redclift 1985).

Agrarian Marxist theory, 'is often seen as encompassing three inter-related questions: how capitalism seizes agricultural production and differentiates agrarian classes; the contributions of agriculture to industrialization or the overall establishment of a capitalist mode of production; and the implications of all this for the political behaviour of agrarian classes' (Levien *et al.* 2018, 854). In this way agrarian Marxism provides a framework for situating the productive relations that take place on a family farm in relation to capital. However, Levien *et al.* note that its relevance today largely hinges on scholars' ability to update analytical frames. Indeed, bridges and engagement with questions of social reproduction are an important growing edge of agrarian Marxist scholarship helping the discipline respond to the political questions of the 21st century — namely how the 'heterogeneous classes of labour — a category into which Bernstein subsumes marginal peasant commodity producers, rural workers, and all shades in between — struggle to reproduce themselves' (Levien *et al.* 2018, 867). Such struggles are the focus of this thesis and contribute to a broader and nuanced understanding of 21st century revolutionary subjectivity.

1.4.2 The forces of reproduction

Social reproduction theorists have provided important building blocks for theorizing new agrarian political subjectivities. Stefania Barca elaborates upon Mary Mellor's idea of the *forces of reproduction* to describe, 'a political subject in the making' (Barca 2020, 7). For her this refers to all of the labour and resulting politics of struggle emanating from those activities and social relations which are invisibilized yet fundamental to the functioning of capitalism. These workers are overwhelmingly feminized, colonized and racialized. By bridging ecofeminism and historical materialism she uses this concept to mean:

Subsistence farming, fishing and gathering, domestic work, gardening, teaching, nursing, healthcare, waste collecting and recycling are all forms of reproductive labour insofar as they are essential to the development of human nature in its interdependency with the non-human world. By its own logic, reproductive labour opposes abstract social labour and all that objectifies and instrumentalizes life towards other ends. Life itself is the product of (human and non-human) reproductive labour (Barca 2020, 6).

By including what she calls earthcare labour in this conceptualization she incorporates attention to the process of environmental reproduction into the forces of reproduction frame. 'Environmental reproduction could be theorized as the work of making nonhuman nature fit for human reproduction while also protecting it from exploitation, and securing the conditions for nature's own regeneration, for the needs of present and future generations' (Barca 2020, 32). This kind of earthcare includes models of food production and farming which focus on regenerating soils, decreasing dependence on off-farm inputs and agrochemicals, and sustaining natural ecological cycles across generations. For this reason Barca includes not just feminist environmental organizations in her notion of earthcare, but also struggles of food sovereignty (Barca 2020, 35, Dalla Costa 2003). In short, by focusing on the forces of reproduction in agrarian places, a range of actors, activities and social relations emerge. As I argue in the subsequent chapters these forces of reproduction are often overlooked or even undermined by dominant social and policy structures, which is contributing to a crisis of generational renewal in farming. Specifically, I highlight the work of agroecological farmers, women and racialized people in rural areas dedicated to sustaining life. Many of these people and the collectives they participate in are not only providing clear solutions to the challenge of generational renewal in farming, they also help flesh out an updated framework for understanding new agrarian political subjectivities in the post-industrial period.

1.4.3 Expanded class struggle

The discourses emerging from the farmer collectives that I explore in this thesis centre issues of gender, race and ecology in the way they construct their political subjectivities. And the politicization of the peasant identity as the protagonist of social movements for food sovereignty has been

criticized for glossing over questions of labour and class position (Bernstein 2014). However, this doesn't mean they can be easily categorized as new social movements engaged in identity politics, nor class-blind environmentalism. But where and how is class located in their politics? As Acker reminds us, 'Class relations are created and re-created in the ordinary processes of organizational life. Gender and race relations are closely intertwined with class in these processes. Indeed, what looks like class from one conceptual point of view may look like gender and/or race from another point of view' (2000, 210–1). Erik Olin Wright suggests that class can be analysed as the interconnection between collective action, structural characteristics and social categories (Olin Wright 2015, xi). Feminist scholarship has emphasized the processual and relational nature of class, 'Rather than taking class as a predetermined category, this scholarship allows for discussion about class-making as a historical and spatial process' (Barca 2020, 44). Taking seriously the way these relationships shape and are shaped by the forces of reproduction suggests an expanded view of what constitutes class and class struggle. '[D]istribution through marriage and other family relationships and through the welfare state are essential economic transfers, and most of these are patterned along lines of gender and race as well as class. Thus private life becomes enmeshed in the processes constructing the gender and race contours of class' (Acker 2000, 203). I approach my analysis of new agrarian political subjectivities drawing heavily on Bhattacharya's recent work on *expanded class struggle*, which situates class squarely at the core of social reproduction and vice versa. She argues,

Every social and political movement 'tending' in the direction of gains for the working class as a whole, or of challenging the power of capital as a whole, must be considered an aspect of class struggle. Significantly, one of the greatest tragedies of the destruction of working-class power and the dissolution of proletarian living communities in the last forty years has been the loss in practice of this insight about the social totality of production of value and reproduction of labour power (Bhattacharya 2017a, 85–6).

Beyond the political importance of overcoming analytical frames which divide workers, social reproduction theory builds on Marxist analyses of class as a social relation derived from the relationship between labour and the creation of surplus value for capital. Sacks argues that the point of

production of value is not necessarily the same as the point of extraction of surplus value by the capitalist. This means that a range of labour that *contributes* to value creation is embodied by the worker who transports that productive value to the point of extraction in the workplace. The relationship between value and social reproduction is a debate I take up in much more detail in the following chapters, but for now it is important to outline Sacks' useful distinction between directly productive, indirectly productive and unproductive labour, which flows from this point.

The first fits well with the more traditional definition of productive labour. On the other hand, the concept of indirectly productive labour suggests the existence of labour that contributes to surplus-value production while not being directly extracted by the capitalist. Being 'indirect', it flags for us the way surplus-value is hidden in the reproductive relationship with the productive worker. Unproductive labour, therefore, would include any labour that has not been made to produce for capital, or which has refused/resisted capitalist forms of production and reproduction altogether (Sacks 2019, 160–1).

Bringing these ideas together, I suggest that the forces of reproduction are primarily driven by indirect and unproductive labour. Indeed, the difference between these two categories is perhaps not as clear cut as Sacks makes it sound. However, the conceptual distinction does help to capture the aspirations of certain ways of organizing life-making, and in the agrarian context, food production, which strive to be completely autonomous from capital. Nonetheless, as long as capitalism continues to function, this will necessarily remain an incomplete goal. As Susan Ferguson has pointed out, despite the existence of many powerful efforts to 'carve out a space that resists much of the capitalist disciplining of life-making, that space cannot, in my view, ever totally escape capitalist disciplining. And it is specifically for this reason that the transformation of capitalist society requires politics that work across the productive and socially reproductive sectors' (personal communication, 2021). Expanded class struggle, then is rooted in the disruption of surplus value creation for capital via resistance efforts by productive and indirectly productive workers, however it relies on the support of increasingly unproductive labour if such struggle is to be sustained. This reemphasizes the strategic importance of agrarian relations as potentially revolutionary. The ability to increase unproductivity to capital depends on autonomy and self-

sufficiency — central objectives of food sovereignty and agroecology. It is no wonder then that,

The long history of primitive accumulation demonstrates how the true enemies of capitalist/industrial modernity are subsistence production, food sovereignty and autonomy, based on the direct relationship of people with nonhuman nature [...] In short: from a historical-materialist perspective, the working class, or proletariat, and metabolic rift originate from a unique, global process of violent separation of people from their means of subsistence, which also disrupts the biosphere. The ecological crisis is thus a direct consequence of class making (Barca 2020, 42).

1.4.4 Situating intersectional identities within a systemic logic

Both agrarian political economy broadly, and social reproduction theory are incredibly helpful for understanding how class and social structure shape generational renewal in farming, but there is a need to develop further our understanding of the specific experience of different intersectional identities (according to race, gender, urban, rural, migrant, indigenous, etc.). By bringing together the particular experiences of intersecting vectors of oppression with a structural analysis, I demonstrate how the reproduction of certain racialized and gendered collective identities create barriers to generational renewal. Intersectionality theory can contribute to a better understanding of the complex ways that inequalities are crystalized in social reproductive relations. Emerging from the lived experience of Black feminists (Crenshaw 1991, Hill Collins 2017) in the US as a way to analyse the multiple and intersecting forms of oppression experienced by Black women, this conceptual framework has inspired work in a range of disciplines from legal studies to psychology to sociology. Intersectionality has offered insightful analytical tools to scholars of peasant studies like Luna whose work on the cotton sector in Burkina Faso demonstrates ‘that relations of exploitation between “fragmenting classes” (Bernstein 2010) are not solely determined by class or gender, but by multiple overlapping social attributes that determine power relations between actors (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013; Collins and Bilge 2016)’ (2018, 2).

This structural view combined with attention to intersectionality helps avoid the tendency to ‘perceive racism as a mere packet of ideas,

prejudices, and stereotypes' (Garcés 2018, 136) and reveals the systemic logic and institutionalization that makes racism so much more pervasive than individual opinions. It also helps understand then, the need to focus on alliances and coalition building to tackle what are in fact structural issues, and assess the degree to which these efforts are responding to social reproductive crises, intertwined with other ecological and political crises.

As useful as intersectionality is as an analytical tool, putting the concept in dialogue with social reproduction theory requires some theoretical bridging. Some strands of intersectionality are associated with a kind of identity politics that zooms in on the particular, and the lived experiences at the intersection of multiple vectors of oppression. On the other hand, social reproduction theory tends to swing in the other direction embracing macro analyses of systemic logics that weave together the distinct vectors of oppression.

Both theoretical currents engage with power as the central feature of their work. '[I]ntersectionality helps reveal how power works in diffuse and differentiated ways through the creation and deployment of overlapping identity categories' (Cho *et al.* 2013, 797). Put another way, 'Intersectionality primarily concerns the way things work rather than who people are' (Chun *et al.* 2013, 923 cited in Cho *et al.* 2013, 797). However, the core of critiques launched at intersectionality theory boil down to the failure to see the intersecting vectors of oppression as part of one system. Ferguson summarizes the point of theoretical tension as follows: 'many working within the intersectionality-feminism paradigm acknowledge the difficulty of theorising the ways in which distinct partial relations of gender, race, sexuality, and so on comprise an integral, unified whole. Feminists adopting a social-reproduction perspective have also struggled to articulate and explain the differentiated-yet-unified experience of multiple oppressions' (Ferguson 2016, 39).

As part of her development of intersectionality Hill Collins outlines the 'domains-of-power framework [which] connects the broader analytical space of a specific matrix of domination with the social dynamics of how it organizes individual and collective political behaviour across varying social contexts' (Hill Collins 2017, 23). The 'single, historically created

system' that Hill Collins describes opens the door to social reproduction theorists' attention to the systemic logic of capitalism. Nonetheless, for McNally, 'These relations do not need to be brought into intersection because each is already inside the other, co-constituting one another to their very core' (McNally 2017). Ferguson is more conciliatory arguing that 'intersectionality feminism foregrounds [...] those formulations of social reproduction feminism which view the social through the lens of the daily and generational labour undertaken to (re)produce it provide a promising way to theorise the integral unity of the diverse, differentiated social relation' (Ferguson 2016, 48). And despite his criticisms, McNally proposes 'Dialectical organicism, [which] sees a diverse and complex social whole as constitutive of every part, and each part as reciprocally constitutive of every other,' as a way to 'overcome the aporias of intersectional atomism' (McNally 2017). Seeing vectors of oppression like race, class or gender as constitutive parts of a whole means 'There is no labour (or "work") outside of gender, race or ability, just as there is no gender, outside of race, labour or sexuality' (Ferguson 2016, 55). Put another way, "'race" cannot be disarticulated from "class" any more than milk can be separated from coffee once they are mixed' (Bannerji 2005, 147 cited in McNally 2017 Kindle Locations 2473–2474). However, the ways in which gender discrimination is experienced, for example, will be conditioned by different processes of racialization. Ferguson sees complementarity in the two theoretical currents since,

While many intersectionality feminists would agree with such statement[s], a social-reproduction feminist perspective completes the dialectical journey by identifying a capitalist logic in and through which the parts of the whole are integrated. It makes no claim to describe the experiences of racial, gendered or sexual oppression more effectively than intersectionality-feminist accounts, or to provide transhistorical explanations. But social-reproduction feminism can more convincingly explain how and why such experiences are integral to the social whole – how and why the social totality ensures that oppression will persist and be reproduced (2016, 55).

Another way to see the difference between these two schools of thought is a historical materialist allegiance among social reproduction theorists vs. a more representational approach focused on identity formation and specific individual experience. I suggest that both are

needed. To fully grasp the inequalities shaping generational turnover, one must be able to see on one hand, questions of political economy, and the systemic dimensions of power. On the other hand, the cultural construction of Basque rural identity and the lived experiences of rural populations cannot be overlooked.

1.4.5 Racial capitalism

Further broadening the structural analysis of racial inequality, social reproduction theory, though rooted in a critique of the patriarchal gender order that enables capitalism to reproduce itself, also opens doors to conceptual linkages with the concept of racial capitalism. Gargi Bhattacharyya's work in particular provides this analytical bridge. She builds on Cedric Robinson's work on Black Marxism, which in light of the tendency of Marxists to overlook the liberation struggles of Black radicals, 'has contributed to the reassertion and wider appreciation of a black radical tradition and offers a way of thinking about the histories of the African diaspora/s as a resource for anti-capitalist struggle' (Bhattacharyya 2018, 15). Robinson's work challenges the Eurocentricity of Marx's account of the transition to capitalism, which frames the exploitation of slave labour in the colonies as a kind of primitive accumulation. Instead, he argues that slave labour was not a pre-capitalist catalyst which fuelled the transition to capitalism but was integral to its systemic logic.

For more than 300 years slave labour persisted beyond the beginnings of modern capitalism, complementing wage labour, peonage, serfdom, and other methods of labour coercion. Ultimately, this meant that the interpretation of history in terms of the dialectic of capitalist class struggles would prove inadequate, a mistake ordained by the preoccupation of Marxism with the industrial and manufacturing centres of capitalism; a mistake founded on the presumptions that Europe itself had produced, that the motive and material forces that generated the capitalist system were to be wholly located in what was a fictive historical entity. From its very foundations capitalism had never been—any more than Europe—a 'closed system.' (Robinson 2000, 4)

Bhattacharyya draws on these insights and reformulates the key idea in the framework of social reproduction theory.

Embedded in this argument is the suggestion that populations relegated to the margins, including as 'surplus' to economic

requirements, may contribute a reproductive role in relation to those deemed to be economically productive. This might be quite direct, in the sense of households where the combined activity of non-waged, informal and formally waged work all contribute to the collective survival of members. However, it may also be envisaged through a more stretched out set of relations, whereby the categorisation and management of so-called surplus populations operates to enable the functioning of waged labour, sometimes in another place altogether (Bhattacharyya 2018, 114).

The way that these sets of reproductive relations, both near and far are organized is ordered by the logic of racial capitalism. Racism and capitalism each have their own distinct histories, but the current system is one in which, 'the world made through racism shapes patterns of capitalist development' (Bhattacharyya 2018, 112). And the racism that Bhattacharyya speaks of 'was not simply a convention for ordering the relations of European to non-European peoples but has its genesis in the "internal" relations of European peoples' (Robinson 2000, 2). Indeed, as Robinson and Bhattacharyya both emphasize:

There has never been a moment in modern European history (if before) that migratory and/or immigrant labour was not a significant aspect of European economies. That this is not more widely understood seems to be a consequence of conceptualization and analysis: the mistaken use of the nation as a social, historical, and economic category; a resultant and persistent reference to national labour 'pools' (e.g., 'the English working class'); and a subsequent failure of historical investigation (Robinson 2000, 23).

Although the racialization of certain populations as inferior benefits capital, racial capitalism also relies on pro-capital political infrastructure to remain intact. Like social reproduction, this political apparatus is seen as outside of the real economy, yet it enables the accumulation of capital through things like legal systems, police control, and taxation. In her 2016 article, Fraser outlines her dual conceptualization of exploitation and expropriation, which fleshes out this idea.

In capitalist society, as Marx insisted, exploited workers have the legal status of free individuals, authorized to sell their labour power in return for wages; once separated from the means of production and

proletarianized, they are protected, at least in theory, from (further) expropriation. In this respect, their status differs sharply from those whose labour, property, and/or persons are still subject to confiscation on the part of capital; far from enjoying protection, the latter populations are defenceless, fair game for expropriation—again and again (Fraser 2016b, 169).

In this formulation, race politics become more than individual grievances denouncing discrimination, instead the focus is shifted to seeing the way racism and capitalism are mutually reinforcing systems, whose logics are intertwined. In the current period, as I discuss in subsequent chapters, this racial ordering of labour is enabled by a racist immigration system which renders some people fair game for expropriation, and which builds on centuries of racialized relations both external to Europe as well as internally.

1.5 Regimes of agrarian social reproduction

In order to explore the emerging agrarian political subjectivities in the Basque Country, throughout the following chapters I unpack what I am calling, *regimes of agrarian social reproduction*. Such regimes can be looked at historically as institutionalized modes of reproducing the conditions necessary for agrarian production in rural areas and reveal how patterns of social reproduction are contested, undermined and change over time and in context. These regimes are made up of three dimensions:

- 1.) *Generational reproduction*: The work of birthing, caring for and attending to the biological and physical needs of the next generation of workers as well as the intergenerational relations that support this process. Razavi's 'care diamond' is introduced as a way of conceptualizing the different actors and institutions (family, market, state or community/charity organizations) that mediate access to care and shape generational reproduction.
- 2.) *Collective reproduction*: the work that goes into reproducing a collective identity, culture and social norms as well as the construction of the 'other'. The construction of nationalist identities is presented through this lens, in order to highlight the current tension between the historic defence of rural

Basque identity and increasing role of outsiders in stemming depopulation of rural areas.

- 3.) *Systemic reproduction*: the relationship between social reproductive work and productive relations, which reproduces the broader socio-economic system. I draw on agrarian studies literature to situate agrarian social reproduction in relation to capital, using land, labour, food provisioning and debt/credit as sites in which to explore that relationship.

Using this analytical framework helps to expand where we look and how we see politics and struggle taking place, be they at the point of extraction of surplus value from productive labour, in the sphere of indirectly productive labour beyond the formal workplace, or amidst the alternatives and autonomous projects attempting to make labour as unproductive for capital as possible. The three categories I use as an analytical framework (generational reproduction, collective reproduction and systemic reproduction), help unpack the ways that social reproductive labour indirectly contributes to the production of surplus value and also opportunities and efforts for social transformation towards unproductivity.

Chapter 2 outlines my theoretical framework and makes the case that social reproduction theory (SRT) reveals a richer more complete picture of the crisis of generational renewal than existing literature on farm succession or depeasantization. It begins with an overview of existing work on generational renewal followed by a general literature review of SRT to identify the existing gaps, which this thesis contributes to. Namely, SRT suffers from an urban bias, and work that builds on Fraser's historical overview (2017) is needed in order to provide a deeper more contextually specific and detailed historical analysis of how social reproductive regimes are consolidated and changed over time. The concept of a *regime of agrarian social reproduction* is advanced in further detail. Building on the SRT literature, the co-constitutive nature of social reproduction and production in capitalism is discussed as part of the set of inherent contradictions that drive a systemic logic of crisis and fix tendencies. This logic fuels the shift from one social reproductive regime to the next.

Finally, I argue that given the central role of the state in mediating generational reproductive relations in the post-industrial period, Fraser's formulation of the politics of representation is useful for exploring the emergence of care deficits, and the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in the current crisis of the welfare state. Given the importance of nationalism in how rural Basque identity has been constructed, her framing of the politics of recognition helps understand the tensions that emerge in the face of increasing diversity. And her notion of the politics of redistribution helps map out the survival strategies of outgoing and incoming farmers in the face of crisis and contestation over the future of the food system (Fraser 2006).

1.5.1 Historical context

Chapter 3 discusses the end of the pre-industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction and the industrial regime which followed. I argue that during the pre-industrial regime the work of collective reproduction was expressed through the early Basque Foral legal system, the church and the family, all of which bolstered the notion of a unique, noble Basque identity, that must be defended against Moorish invaders, as well as the Castilian crown's attempts to dominate local affairs. Basques also negotiated a privileged position within the colonial enterprise affording every Basque noble status, and thus access to high-level positions in the colonial administration in the Americas, as well as exclusive trading rights. This identity was anchored to land and territory, understood as the collective patrimony of all noble Basque people. The multigenerational heteropatriarchal family was the primary site of generational reproduction and highly gendered care work. The marriage contract was a document that made clear the intergenerational responsibilities that facilitated what was essentially a land for care trade. Finally, an overview of the pre-industrial class structure reveals how peasant social reproduction contributed to upholding the feudal power structure through land and labour relations. However, the introduction of new forms of credit, increasing circulation of money, along with the rise of the industrial urban elite eroded this system, exacerbating care deficits, and triggering a restructuring of agrarian social reproductive relations to enable the consolidation of the new industrial agrarian social reproductive regime.

The second half of the chapter describes the features of the regime of agrarian social reproduction during the Basque industrial century. The reproductive fix that emerges and helps to crystalize a new set of social reproductive relations in this period is the massive migration of peasants to urban centres. There they access the initial foundations of public services and social policy, although access to these social reproductive supports is conditional and politicized, especially under Franco, whose brutal rule turned his experience in the Spanish colonial army in Morocco on his own people, targeting Basques, Catalonians, Galicians, and political dissidents. Nonetheless the resulting rural exodus breaks intergenerational patterns of succession, numbers of farmers decline, prioritizing modernization and specialization in the countryside. This combined with the rapidly growing ranks of urban industrial and domestic workers, is seen as beneficial to industrial progress. At the same time nostalgia for rural traditions of the past fuels a reformulation of collective identity from Foralism to Basque nationalism led by Sabino Arana, and the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) to protect the pure Basque race in the face of massive immigration from other parts of Spain arriving in search of urban jobs. The emergence of ETA and other branches of leftist radical Basque nationalism (also referred to as the *izquierda abertzale*⁴) during this period also mark the beginning of a more internationalist and working class collective Basque identity, but Franco represents a common enemy against which all Basque nationalists can unite. In sum, the undermining of peasant livelihoods and agrarian social reproduction *is* the fix to prioritize new modernized farms and urban-centred and productive imperatives.

1.5.2 Post-industrial agrarian social reproduction: crisis and contestation

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 unpack in greater detail the three dimensions of the post-industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction. Chapter 4 and 5 bring the indirectly productive labour needed to ensure generational renewal in the farm sector into view. This highlights the issues faced by and political subjectivities of primarily the women, the racialized and the agroecological farmers whose contributions to and role in the sector have been systematically backgrounded, yet whose labour is foundational to the functioning of productive relations. The institutionalization of care, explored in chapter 4 has made institutional dynamics especially relevant to current expanded class struggles. Thus, chapter 4 looks at generational

reproduction and the state. Generational reproduction is still mediated by the state now in a more consolidated architecture I call the *agrarian welfare state*. The agrarian welfare state and the institutionalization of care makes the politics of representation ever more relevant as misrepresentation excludes certain groups from access to the benefits of agrarian welfare. Indeed, access to public support is still largely dependent on a particular model of agrarian production, prioritizing the ideals of specialization and modernization introduced previously. But these reproductive fixes of the industrial period are withering. The land for care trade within families is no longer the only framework in which intergenerational relations and farm succession plays out. Old farmers don't have the money to retire and face massive care deficits, while new farmers increasingly come from non-agrarian families making state mediated land access programmes and agricultural schools all the more important. Institutionalized racism and sexism in state-society agrarian relations perpetuates misrepresentation and exclusionary 'frame setting' (Fraser 2016a), thus increasingly evident as a barrier to generational reproduction.

Chapter 5 takes up collective reproduction and Basque rural identity. This chapter explores one of the key cultural tensions embedded in the process of collective reproduction in the rural Basque Country today: the cultural importance of strengthening and defending a notion of traditional Basque identity rooted in territory and agrarian symbols vs. the importance of accepting newcomers into those areas if they are to survive in the current context of depopulation. I trace the ways in which the PNV has cultivated collective identity, attempting to deemphasize class and highlight acquirable cultural traits to make it more open to those outsiders who wish to become Basque, which can be understood as one response to the confrontation of identitarian politics with increasing cultural diversity. For leftist Basques, on the other hand, whose collective identity has also been constructed as class-based and internationalist, in solidarity with working class and decolonial movements around the globe, navigating this tension is at the core of collective reproduction. However, the implications and shifts in collective identity required when solidarity and decolonial struggles increasingly take root in the Basque Country, and within the Basque identity itself, are bringing new challenges to processes of collective identity formation. This chapter attempts to explore the political project of cultivating a diverse rural Basque identity, and how this

is shaped by the politics of recognition. I apply these broader social questions to the rural agrarian world in order to examine what implications this is having on generational renewal in Basque farming.

Chapter 6, takes up the question of systemic reproduction to show how the strategic nature of social reproductive relations can best be appreciated when we situate collective action in the context of the structural logic it responds to. The supply of labour that rural areas provided to urban industry in the industrial period is no longer needed. Modernized and scaled up farms are overburdened with debt. The adjustment mechanism that has been central in the post-industrial period is public subsidies via the agrarian welfare state, to ensure that social reproductive basic needs are met in rural areas. The dependence of farmers on CAP subsidies is deeply embedded in rural areas, however, this band-aid is faltering. The model of production enabled by the CAP exacerbates ecological problems, concentration of land and depopulation of rural areas. Thus, subsidies alone are no longer able to compensate for the intertwined economic, social and ecological contractions, which are manifesting. The contradictions of capitalism frame the proposals and political subjectivities of groups like Etxaldeko Emakumeak calling for what they refer to as *agroecofeminism*. The chapter digs into the strategies of struggle from these sites of indirect production, focusing primarily on the ways farmers attempt to make their labour increasingly unproductive to capital and in so doing, ensuring the reproduction of life and the renewal of generations. This I refer to as efforts to redistribute systemic values (that is, that which the system prioritizes) that build on and go beyond efforts to redistribute surplus value within the system.

Finally, the conclusion offers a synthesis of the key insights developed in this thesis as well as a broad overview of the relationship between the three dimensions of agrarian social reproduction and political subjectivities. It finishes by revisiting the subject of the political implications of social reproduction theory, and provides a critical look at the nature of political alliances.

1.6 Ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions and challenges

My point of departure, and the paradigm that guides my thinking is critical theory. As Guba and Lincoln describe, research paradigms are ‘belief systems based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions,’ which to a certain extent must be ‘accepted simply on faith’ (Guba and Lincoln 1994, 107). These basic assumptions are not a matter of argumentation, rather they set the stage for the ways in which arguments and descriptions of the world are developed, therefore the following is a brief overview of those otherwise omnipresent yet unnamed assumptions that undergird this work.

An ontology of ‘historical realism’ reflects the fact that reality is seen as something that ‘was once plastic, but that over time, shaped by a congeries of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors, and [it] then crystallized (reified) into a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken as “real”’ (1994, 110), thus this work explores this ‘historical reality’ as it has shaped regimes of agrarian social reproduction. This ontological position naturally shapes the understanding of what can be known, how the researcher relates to it and how he/she can come to know it. Coherent with this ontological view, the underlying epistemic and methodological assumptions in this work see the researcher and the research subject as connected entities. This sort of approach to research is what Creswell categorizes as ‘advocacy/participatory knowledge claims’, and ‘[i]n the main, these inquirers felt that the constructivist stance did not go far enough in advocating for an action agenda to help marginalized peoples. These researchers believe that inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda’ (2003, 9). This also differs from positivist scholars who believe that an objective truth can be found through controlled inquiry where the researcher observes without influencing or being influenced by the subject. Instead, a transactional or subjectivist view of research recognizes that all findings are ‘value mediated’ which suggests the importance of a methodology that allows for ‘dialogue between the investigator and the subjects of inquiry; that dialogue must be dialectical in nature to transform ignorance and misapprehensions (accepting historically mediated structures as immutable) into more informed consciousness (seeing how the structures

might be changed and comprehending the actions required to effect change)' (Guba and Lincoln 1994, 110). As Takacs puts it, 'Knowledge does not arrive unmediated; rather, knowledge gets constructed by interaction between the questioner and the world' (Takacs 2003, 31).

My interaction with the Basque Country and the questions I explore in this thesis began in 2010. The first time I was knowingly⁵ exposed to Basque culture was over a decade ago, when I coordinated a food sovereignty exchange programme at a non-profit organization based in California. One of the partners that we organized exchanges with was the Basque farmers' union, EHNE-Bizkaia, which welcomed groups of participants primarily from the United States (US) to visit and explore the ways in which they were working to build food sovereignty in the Basque province of Bizkaia. Having worked for some years on food policy, food systems change and global peasant movements, I had heard my colleagues speak about the Basque farmers' union and founding member of La Vía Campesina, always in awe, as an important global reference in the struggle for food sovereignty. Although I contributed to trip planning and curriculum development from a distance, it wasn't until 2013 when we hosted 13 participants as part of the EHNE-Bizkaia delegation for two weeks to learn about food justice in the California Bay Area, that I actually spent time with Basque people, listening to their language, learning about their culture, their agrarian realities and having lively debates about food sovereignty. In 2014, as I began my PhD I also took on the in-country coordination and translation of the exchanges in Bizkaia together with EHNE staff. Thus, my entry point into the Basque Country has always been through the agrarian world, and farmers trying to transform the food system to make it more just and sustainable. The food sovereignty exchanges came to an end, but in 2016 I moved to Bilbao to begin my fieldwork. As a part-time doctoral student, my professional activities and collaborations with EHNE-Bizkaia have continued in parallel to my research process, and this relationship has inspired and shaped much of the resulting analysis. At the same time, it has no doubt created biases and infused political convictions in the way I see the processes that I have set out to study.

Namely, my research is driven by a desire to contribute to social change. This work is inspired by Hale's argument that 'research and

political engagement can be mutually enriching' (Hale 2008, 2). This proposition has been at the core of diverse and overlapping traditions of research, including, but not limited to, 'activist scholarship' (Hale 2008), 'militant investigations' (Shukaitis and Graeber 2007) 'pedagogy of the oppressed' (Freire 1970), 'community-based participatory research' (Minkler 2004), and (participatory) action research (see Reason and Bradbury-Huang 2013 for a review of this literature). Reason and Bradbury-Huang provide a thorough overview of the 'family of practices' that make up action research, and offer the following working definition: 'action research is a participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities' (Reason and Bradbury-Huang 2013, 4). Unlike positivist traditions, this type of research is rooted in deepening connection between the researcher and research subject via participation.

Levels of participation and understandings of what that looks like in practice vary and can present tensions that must be navigated. *Participatory* action research (PAR), for example gained traction in the 1990s especially in the field of agricultural and rural development. PAR emphasizes a very high level of participation. It relies on a group of individuals representing different organizations that are central to the topic of study, who guide the research process through cycles of observation, reflection and action requiring long-term commitment to the process (Bacon *et al.* 2005, 3). Fox has advised that key to successful action research are 'realistic expectations' (2006, 31). While PAR can be a powerful tool, the time and academic constraints of a PhD make it challenging to use such a tool appropriately. Nonetheless, many of the principles of PAR *inform* the methodological approach used here. Within the family of action research, this work draws more heavily on a branch of action research that Jonathan Fox calls power-structure research, which consists of helping to understand how power operates through systemic logics combined with work, which 'serves as a guide for how to be strategic about public action by revealing where the pressure points in the system are' (Fox 2006, 28). In this sense, the analytical tools I develop aim to describe power

structures and the systemic logic that is conditioning generational renewal historically and shaping emergent political subjectivities in the current post-industrial farming context.

Despite the more than 10 years spent building political trust with Basque farmers and the cultural familiarity I have gained after living in the Basque Country for 5 years, my relationship as a researcher to the subject of my research is also and importantly mediated by the privileges and perspectives I bring based on my social and economic background, as well as the fact that I am an outsider. Concretely, this shapes my ability to communicate and understand. After working and studying in Spanish for over a decade I am comfortable and fluent in Spanish reading, writing, and speaking, which allows me to communicate easily. However, my ability to understand and speak Basque (*Euskera*) is much more limited. Upon arrival I studied for a year, and completed the A2 level, which has enabled me to engage in polite chit chat, follow simple conversation and listen for particular phrases and topics, as well as hear different accents. While this lack of fluency in Euskera is a clear limitation, the fact that I, as a foreigner, studied some has often been met with enthusiasm and encouragement, helping to put people at ease in the context of interviews and meetings. Plus, given that less than half of the Basque population speaks Euskera, the majority of events and meetings are either in Spanish or bilingual with interpretation. In fact, in some instances my dependence on interpretation has revealed subtle yet important tensions in the process of identity construction in the Basque Country, which have also helped me understand the politics of social reproduction.

For example, during the feminist congress in Durango in 2019 that I discuss in detail in chapter 5, I went to a workshop. I had heard about the incredibly effective volunteer translation systems in many of the workshop sessions, plus, I have a basic level comprehension of Basque, so I figured in the worst case, if there was no translation available, I would see how much I could pick up on my own. When we entered, it was packed. We wedged ourselves into a corner on the floor. I scanned the room for evidence of translation, and saw nothing. A few minutes later one of the presenters asked (in Basque) if anyone needed translation to Spanish. All eyes darted around. I slowly raised my hand, which, being the only one raised, like a magnet attracted the stare of what felt like every pair of eyes

in the room. My friend whose Basque is only a few courses more advanced than mine inched away as if she did not want to be accidentally associated with me. I was told that the translator was on her way so we would wait until she arrived to start. People shuffled and shifted freeing up two chairs, insisting that one was for me and the other for the translator. As we sat waiting for her arrival, in the hot attic, I couldn't help but feel like everyone was waiting because of me, and the questions about inclusivity of the movement fresh in my mind from the panel of the day before. At first, I found myself tempted to express in my elementary Basque that I am from California, and I am learning, something that typically inspires contentment rather than stigma among Basques I had met. But I caught myself. I know that I was not the only one in the room that needed translation. I was the only one willing to ask for it in front of everyone. If you are Basque and you don't speak Basque the anxiety and social stigma is real. What is the source of this feeling that I must justify needing translation? Is it because based only on my physical appearance people usually assume that I am Basque? I began to wonder how it would be different if I were racialized. Would it be assumed that I need translation, because people assume that racialized individuals are not from here? Finally the translator arrived apologizing for her tardiness and the session began.

Perhaps most directly related to my sense of being a foreigner, I admit that for many years in my engagement with the Basque Country, I avoided explicitly positioning myself in terms of the Basque conflict and struggles for independence from the Spanish state. The subject is everywhere and nowhere. So divisive and deeply rooted, it can feel like the elephant in the room that no one ever explicitly mentions. After spending some time in the Basque Country one begins to see the visual codes, which can in fact be quite clear markers of political tendencies. It's not fool proof, but I have come to understand how small aesthetic differences, ways of dressing, styling one's hair, using Euskera (the Basque language), or the types of decorations, flags and napkins placed in public view provides a political map in social situations and public establishments.

And when I have taken advantage of my naïve outsider status to ask direct questions, the wide variety of intelligent and convincing perspectives on the issue I have encountered among friends,

acquaintances and informants has only painted a more complex picture. It is an issue that fragments the left and the right, by adding another ‘territorial’ axis to the political spectrum. Intellectually, this creates messy and fascinating dynamics, and politically the familiarity with collective struggles for sovereignty has provided well prepared terrain upon which to advance a food sovereignty agenda as EHNE-Bizkaia has done. Nonetheless, as the descendant of and beneficiary of a white settler colonial culture and system, and having grown up in the United States during an era of massive cultural and linguistic imposition and hegemony around the world, I have never known what the need to defend my language or my culture’s right to exist feels like.

I attempt to understand it intellectually, but I admit that this territorial axis is not deeply rooted in my personal emotional register. If anything, my political education has taught me, given my position of colonial privilege, to avoid repeating the injustices of my ancestors who deployed racial and ethnically-based arguments to claim a right to sovereignty over the place where I grew up. Race and racism are talked about in social movement spaces in the US, in a way that is quite different from what I have experienced in the Basque Country. Very much in response to the untenable nature of European narratives that have silenced race talk, over the course of my 5 years of residence in the Basque Country the public debate about race and racism is gaining traction and challenging preconceived cultural values in important ways, that I discuss throughout the thesis. My point is by no means to say that Basque territorial claims are unjust. Quite the opposite, the level of collective mobilization for social justice, the number of alternative initiatives, and the depth of the political debates challenging the current capitalist system maintained by the Spanish government is staggering compared to the small size of the Basque population. Instead, my point is to recognize the very different cultural context that my foreignness brings to my analysis and the shortcoming that this inherently creates. At the same time, knowledge is constructed in the exchange between the researcher and the subject, which has given me the opportunity to recognize and interrogate my own privilege as a means to better understanding the subject. That said, I also hope that my observations as an outsider provide new perspectives which might help unpack some of the questions about European identity that I flagged above.

Finally, I feel the need to clarify, this is not a thesis about the Basque conflict. There are many other, more well informed resources on the topic, thus I do not pretend to contribute new ideas to that literature (Beltza 1976, Elorza 1977, Pérez-Agote 1984, 2006, Apalategi 2006, Alkorta and Leonisio 2019). Nor, however do I feel comfortable discussing generational renewal and processes of collective reproduction in the Basque Country without analysing how they are shaped by Basque nationalism and struggles for independence. Minkler suggests approaching the work with ‘cultural humility’ (2004, 691), thus, I try to strike a delicate balance throughout, between the need to talk about the elephant in the room, and the understanding that as a foreigner, I will never fully understand what its presence means. There is, however, one seemingly subtle, yet remarkably divisive point I must mention about the terminology that I use. One of the most quickly noted markers of where someone lies on the territorial political spectrum is whether they use the term *Spain* or the *Spanish state*. Using the term, Spanish state suggests that it is seen as an outside presence, occupying Basque territory, while Spain implies a consolidated nation state. I frankly do my best to avoid either, as I hope to avoid my analysis being defined primarily by an oversimplified view of where it stands in relation to the Basque conflict. That said, it is sometimes unavoidable, and thus I have opted in most cases to use Spanish state, as a way reflecting one of the languages of contestation that is woven into everyday life in the Basque Country. I have also chosen, when relevant, to refer to the names of places in Euskera.

1.7 Research methods

This research is based on a combination of qualitative methods which draws heavily on a co-developed participatory research design as well as a year (2017) of ethnographic fieldwork living with two new farmers in a small rural town. This has been complimented with 5 years of participant observation during protests, conferences, lectures, and informal gatherings with food sovereignty and agroecofeminist activists as well as forty semi structured interviews conducted between 2016 and 2019 with baserritarras⁶, union representatives, local authorities and activists who are part of the movement for food sovereignty in the Basque Country and

other regions of Europe. These interviews were conducted in Spanish, audio recorded and later transcribed.

The key priorities and concerns facing Basque farmers which have helped guide the direction of this research were identified in the context of a co-developed collaborative research process between the author, Bizilur⁷ and EHNE-Bizkaia. An advisory group was also formed to guide an investigation and provide comments and feedback throughout. This group is made up of farmers, members of the farmers' union EHNE-Bizkaia, Etxalde⁸ and Bizilur. This process resulted in an initial publication in a popular format translated into Spanish, Basque and English, the objective of which is to provide a snapshot of generational renewal in the Basque farm sector and explore the possible opportunities that the reform of the CAP may create for change in this landscape. This publication showcases the perspectives of farmers and helps us see how public policies are understood and lived at the local level, from an agrarian perspective. The process which lasted 3 years also provided a structure for consultation, access to contacts, and engagement with the farmers union and farmers who participated in the consultative committee.

Other important insights came from my roommates in a shared house in a small rural town in Bizkaia: a couple of young farmers who I refer to here as Nuria and Iñaki⁹, and their three small children, who had received access to farmland via a municipal land bank just 3 years prior.

Iñaki is Basque, mid 30s, white, grew up in the suburbs of Bilbao. He is bilingual, occasionally picking up translation jobs he does in the evenings after farm work. He speaks Euskera with his 3 children, but not with his partner Nuria, also in her mid 30s, also white, because she is from Valencia. Although she understands a lot of Basque, she is timid speaking and more comfortable in Spanish. She is a trained nurse, and the two met during their master's studies in international development. They spent time together living in Chiapas doing solidarity work with the Zapatistas and are still active in the Basque – Chiapas solidarity network. Neither come from a family of farmers but were inspired by agroecology and the politics of food sovereignty after taking a course coordinated by EHNE-Bizkaia. They were already living in town when they saw the call for

projects put out by the municipal land bank and decided to give farming a try. Since then, Nuria has become deeply involved in the coordinating committee of the women's collective, Etxaldeko Emakumeak, which has developed the concept of agroecofeminism, explored in chapter 6.

Emmanuel is one of the other recipients of land via the land bank. He is a racialized immigrant new entrant farmer originally from Haiti, also in his mid 30s. He has been in the Basque Country for almost a decade, studied, carried out a Basque government fellowship, and participated in a post graduate course on food sovereignty co-coordinated by EHNE-Bizkaia and Hegoa, a research institute at the University of the Basque Country. It was there where I met him. I was part of the teaching team and he was taking the course while working on his agroecological farm. He has worked with peasant organizations around the world through his connections with La Via Campesina, and finally when he saw the opportunity to start his own farm in town, he went for it. He is one of few racialized farmers I met during my fieldwork, but my interactions with him also helped me understand the everyday expressions of structural racism that were wearing him down and creating barriers capable of preventing other racialized individuals from even seeing farming as an option.

This period of ethnographic inquiry into the day-to-day rhythms of new farmers, who do not come from farm families, in all of its gritty reality, from screaming children to broken farm tools, most certainly contributed to my appreciation of the importance of the life sustaining, preconditions necessary for new farmers to manage to establish themselves in the sector. In this sense Whitehead's framing of ethnography is especially relevant, which he defines 'as the study of the socio-cultural contexts, processes, and meanings within cultural systems' (2005, 5).

The year that I spent in this town offered an intimate family portrait, but it also shed light on the human experience of engaging with, depending on and being frustrated by political institutions. In this sense, I deploy a political ethnographic method, that helps understand the ways in which farmers navigate institutions, and how intersecting oppressions create differentiated relations between the farm sector and public institutions, thus prioritizing and visibilizing some farmers as the legitimate next

generation of farmers and others not. My aim is to shed light on the motives and drivers behind different strategies for change as they are mediated by structural factors. In this sense, my objective is not to drill down into the particularism of a single farm household, nor a unique case study. However, the experience of land bank recipients in that town capture many of the issues which I explore in the following pages. And my more frequent interaction with them over the course of that year provided me with anecdotes and subtle details which complement my analysis of broader themes throughout this thesis. By connecting these intimate moments with political themes experienced throughout the post-industrial global North, I seek to draw on insights from the Basque case which speak to broader trends in agrarian social reproductive regimes.

Notes

- ¹ 'Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers' (Comisión Internacional de Dirección de Nyeleni 2007 2007).
- ² See for example: <http://www.ikusle.com/un-centenar-de-municipios-vascos-se-encuentran-en-grave-peligro-de-extincion-por-la-despoblacion/>
- ³ I intentionally avoid using the names of these towns in order to maintain the anonymity of interviewees.
- ⁴ In Basque this phrase literally means 'patriotic left' and is used as an umbrella term to refer to the range of groups and collectives associated with the nationalist or independentist left.
- ⁵ I say knowingly because symbols and evidence of Basque culture are in fact found all throughout the Americas, where I have spent most of my life, from hotels and bakeries in California where I grew up to street names and cultural centres in Buenos Aires where I did my MA and lived for two years. But it wasn't until after having lived in the Basque Country that I began to recognize these visual markers as traces of the Basque diaspora. For more on the Basque

diaspora see: *Amerikanuak: Basques in the New World* (Douglass and Bilbao 1975).

- ⁶ Baserritarra: Basque peasant farmer, residing in a typical Basque farmhouse (baserri).
- ⁷ Bizilur was established in 2002 as an organization of people with deep connections and long trajectories of involvement with activism in the Basque farm sector as well as internationally. It is assembly based and sees the root causes of poverty, global inequality, and the multiple oppressions experienced by people and communities as a consequence of the current neoliberal, imperial and hetero-patriarchal system. As a result of this diagnosis, the objective of all the organizations activities is system transformation and is mainly put into practice by accompanying emancipatory social movements. Both the origins of the organization, as well as its experiences and goals, have meant that the main focus of its work is on the rural world and peasant struggles — both local and global. In this framework, the proposal from peasant movements, food sovereignty, is central to the construction of new social relations as a theoretical, practical and political agenda that is based on the right of people to make decisions about their own food system. Therefore, Bizilur works primarily with La Vía Campesina and the Zapatista Movement in the international sphere and EHNE-Bizkaia and the Etxalde-Nekazaritza Iraunkorra movement at the local level, as they are some of the main leaders of change and progress towards food sovereignty.
- ⁸ The Etxalde-Nekazaritza Iraunkorra food sovereignty movement is led by baserritarras (Basque peasant farmers) but is open to all people and groups connected to agrarian issues in the 7 provinces of Euskal Herria, who are committed to a process of social change towards food sovereignty. This movement emerged out of an intense process of reflection among a group of baserritarras, who then established an organization in alliance with the rest of society to help deal with the difficult situation of dependence they faced. In their first meetings in Elgeta, the group considered it necessary to organize collectively to promote transformative alternatives via sustainable agriculture. This movement is dedicated to collective construction of proposals and debates. It aims to build counterpower to the current system and bring together the tools, mechanisms and networks that enable the construction of food sovereignty.
- ⁹ In order to respect the anonymity of the people who I interviewed, I have changed all of their names in the text that follows.

2

Theoretical framework

2.1 Generational renewal in farming

The process of generational renewal in European farming has become the focus of concern among scholars, policy makers, farmers and the general public especially in the past decade. The number of farmers is declining throughout most of Europe and the age distribution among them leans heavily towards those near or past retirement age. These demographics call into question the future of the food system if trends continue in this direction. However, exactly what the problem is and how to deal with it, remains the source of much debate. According to Williams and Farrington, ‘high start-up costs and low expected rates of return, low rates of exit (farmers and living and remaining active longer), labour issues (the use of family as opposed to hired) and the increasing importance of pluriactive income (potential successors are now more likely to have another job),’ may all be factors that deter new entrants, or shift the nature of farming that does occur to one which ‘extends beyond the sole motive of profit’ (Williams and Farrington 2006, 3). Other authors suggest that ‘it is unattractive for young people to engage in a job that entails low income, long and uncertain working hours, few holidays, life in isolated rural areas, and many uncertainties’ (Eistrup *et al.* 2019, 3). In his report for the European Parliament Regidor argues that ‘The present scarcity of new entrants into farming is visible in the form of a dual problem: the scant number of young farmers and the rapid ageing of the farmer population’ (Regidor 2012, 7). In contrast, Matthews argues ‘Reflecting on the ways the cards are stacked against new entrants, it becomes clear that the problem is not mainly a shortage of willing entrants (as argued by Jesús Regidor in [this European Parliament paper](#)) but rather the lack of sufficient exits’ (Matthews 2013). Indeed, ‘older farmers in Europe are reluctant to release meaningful control over their land and/or farm business. The rising capital value of agricultural land, in addition to the

considerable emotional and time investment of operating a long-term farming business, make farmers reluctant to sell their land, or pass meaningful control onto the next generation' (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011, cited in Zagata and Sutherland 2015, 42). These insights about the importance of outgoing farmers having ways to exit the sector are an important reminder of the dialectical nature of the intergenerational relations that shape generational renewal.

EU policy makers have attempted to address the issue as early as 1992 in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (Hamilton *et al.* 2015, 2) with two primary mechanisms: subsidies to young farmers and early retirement programmes. However the early retirement programmes have been viewed as ineffective (Mazorra 2000, Bika 2007a) and largely abandoned. Thus the focus has shifted almost exclusively to 'the young farmer problem', which despite being the centre of policy aims remains unresolved (Zagata *et al.* 2017, 9). The EU policy discourse and public debate on the issue has only increased.

The EU has stated unequivocally through its Presidency recommendations (Council of the European Union, 2014), official literature on the CAP (Europa, 2015) and Economic Briefs on generational renewal (European Commission, 2012) that this 'Young Farmer Problem' is an area which will receive attention in the long term. Furthermore lobbyists for European young farmers (e.g. The European Council of Young Farmers [CEJA]) as well as national groups are receiving support and endorsement from major national and European policy makers (Hamilton *et al.* 2015, 1).

Although the challenge of generational renewal is not unique to the EU (see for example, White 2015, Mills 2016, Qualman *et al.* 2018, Žmija *et al.* 2020), the failure to curb the decline of generational renewal in European farming after three decades of policy attempts has triggered a notable proliferation of regionally specific research on the issue (Žmija *et al.* 2020, 2). A key debate is over the issue of who the target of subsidies should be. Not all new farmers are young, and not all farm succession takes place within the family. 'New entrant' is the term used to refer to the growing population of farmers entering the sector as outsiders, often moving from urban areas to rural areas, without inheriting the farm business from previous generations in their family. The support needs for this group are

distinct, and the relative importance of this type of generational renewal as compared to intra-family succession varies throughout Europe. ‘In some countries, such as the UK, farming is viewed as a “closed profession” meaning that only those individuals who inherited farming resources could afford to continue farming’ (Symes, 1990, cited in Zagata and Sutherland 2015, 42). Indeed, given the lack of access via the family, formal training programmes are more commonly used and access to land and is especially challenging among new entrants. Nonetheless, increasing numbers of new entrants often marks a labour crisis in other sectors, and/or shifting visions and politics about food and farming systems drive urban to rural migration that seeks to implement more ecological and locally based agricultural practices (Chatzitheodoridis and Kontogeorgos 2020, 14).

This points to the related current of research that explores the relationship between different models of production and generational renewal. On one hand some scholars claim that there is no generational renewal problem on large profitable farms, and in fact ‘The “young farmer problem” may instead reflect a broader reaching “small-scale farming problem”, where the structure of agriculture in Southern and Eastern European countries in particular, does not allow for the establishment of viable farm businesses. A particular issue appears to be limited opportunities for young people to access agricultural land, particularly in Eastern Europe’ (Zagata and Sutherland 2015, 49). Young farmers are seen as more entrepreneurial and innovative, attracted by and able to manage large, modern farms (Williams and Farrington 2006, 4–5), while small farms face profitability and efficiency issues and fail to identify successors. ‘Under such conditions, farm closures due to the absence of a successor or to low profitability offer the remaining farms opportunities to increase farm size, efficiency, and profitability [...] Such growth can provide substantial economic benefits at the regional level, but policy makers should be aware of possible trade-offs with potential environmental spillover effects’ (Pitson *et al.* 2020, 3).

On the other hand, new entrants are seen as increasingly sensitive to such environmental questions, more likely to engage in small-scale organic production, alternative agri-food networks, value added farming activities and pluriactivity (Zagata and Sutherland 2015, 41). Van der Ploeg’s work

on the new peasantries details this approach which blends traditional peasant-based farming with a political agenda for food system transformation. Though not limited to new entrants, this growing figure represents a paradigm shift (van der Ploeg *et al.* 2000). Regidor (2012) also recognizes that the decline in the total number of farmers is a consequence of agricultural modernization policies, which encouraged specialization, concentration and scaling up of farm enterprises. ‘Whilst caricatures of the earlier modernization paradigm should be avoided, it is nevertheless clear that the development model it entails is increasingly at odds with society’s expectations of agriculture and with the interests, prospects and perspectives of an increasing segment of the agrarian community’ (Ploeg *et al.* 2000, 392). In response new entrants are bringing new and recovering old practices in rural areas. ‘Among them are landscape management, the conservation of new nature values, agri-tourism, organic farming and the production of high quality and region-specific products. Others activities being increasingly adopted by family farms include innovative forms of cost-reduction, direct marketing, and the development of new activities such as integrating care-activities into the farm’ (Ploeg *et al.* 2000, 394). Despite this shift on the ground, EU policy does not prioritize such environmentally oriented styles of farming (see chapter 4), and remains firmly rooted in ‘The modernist agenda [that] thus emphasizes increased production, diversification of farming activities and rural business development’ (Zagata and Sutherland 2015, 40).

Including an environmental perspective into the discussion of generational renewal suggests that the model of production is in fact fundamental to ensuring the long-term sustainability and attractiveness of farming to future generations. According to Williams and Farrington, low intensity, environmentally sustainable farming creates a ‘virtuous cycle,’ and contributes to ‘making for pleasant rural living space facilitating injections of human capital,’ in contrast to the ‘vicious cycle,’ created by high intensity, environmentally destructive farming which deters new residents from establishing themselves in nearby rural areas (2006, 4).

Yet another factor impacting the type of production systems that new farmers establish is the symbolic power that notions of ‘the good farmer’ have in shaping agricultural practices. Sutherland and Calo explain how, ‘Being seen as a “good farmer” is thus not about public perception or an

objective measure of farming practices, but a distinction made amongst farming peers' (2020, 532). Van der Ploeg et al. argue that the good farmer identity during the modernization period framed farmers as agrarian entrepreneurs. This agricultural 'script' is increasingly being challenged and contested by alternative notions of good farmers inspired by new peasant imaginaries, guaranteed social reproduction and diversified ecological production (2000, 403). This model represents a 'paradigm shift' and 'It also outlines the contours of a new identity' (Ploeg *et al.* 2000, 403).

A growing literature focuses on the emerging new peasantries of young, politically driven, often urban-born, new farmers. Accompanying this political struggle, a rich 'repeasantisation' literature has developed drawing on a Chayanovian perspective of agrarian relations. Recent work has focused on the pockets of energy and new peasantries (van der Ploeg 2008, Monllor i Rico and Fuller 2016) in Europe including the Basque Country (Calvário 2017b). A related literature has highlighted the institutional victories and allies that this struggle has won, through work on public policies for food sovereignty (Bizilur and Etxalde 2015, Desmarais *et al.* 2017, Trauger *et al.* 2017, Brent 2018), food sovereignty and human rights (Claeys 2013, 2015), and food sovereignty and the state (McKay *et al.* 2014, Schiavoni 2015).

Further highlighting the differences between agrarian entrepreneurs and new peasants is the accessibility of these different models of production for new farmers who do not fit the traditional image of white male son of a farmer. Female new entrants, historically socialized not to expect to inherit the farm, are more likely to practice organic farming on smaller parcels than their male counterparts (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016). And demographic shifts throughout Europe mean that migrants from non-EU countries make up a growing part of rural areas and potential new farmers. The role of migration in generational renewal in European agricultural has been addressed, but primarily through the lens of exploitative labour relations on large scale industrial farms (Kasimis 2010, ECVC 2017). Spanish geographers have contributed some important studies of specific rural places experiencing depopulation which describe patterns of immigration to those areas (Capote 2012 in Andalusia; González Rodríguez 2012 in Catalonia; and González Rodríguez 2012 in

Valencia, all in Baena Escudero *et al.* 2012). However, these dynamics have been less examined in places like the Basque Country where farms traditionally do not rely heavily on farm labour (though even this is shifting slightly), and which have not been zones of historically high levels of immigration. Similarly the contribution of migrants to generational renewal in organic production has received much less scholarly attention, despite its relevance to ‘EU-level concerns about the vitality of rural areas’ (Zagata and Sutherland 2015, 49).

Coopmans points out the importance of a longer view of generational renewal. The timing of economic aid for example, is concentrated during the farm transfer stage, however many potential farmers decide not to go into the sector well before this moment (Coopmans *et al.* 2020, 34). For example, ‘policies targeting the (re)construction of underdeveloped and/or abandoned rural areas hold potential for boosting entry into farming in such regions. Examples are improving transport infrastructure and services such as education and health care, as rural areas in Europe are often remote and lack basic facilities, which leads to out-migration, of the younger generation in particular’ (Coopmans *et al.* 2020, 34).

Taken together these overlapping debates within the literature on generational renewal suggest that, indeed policy mechanisms like subsidies are certainly important, but insufficient. However, an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of generational renewal in agriculture must go beyond policy mechanisms to consider the diverse structural factors shaping models of production over time. At the same time, it cannot be solely structural, but must also consider rural culture, identity and political subjectivity.

Some authors have already attempted to advance the theoretical field to better understand these dimensions of generational renewal in agriculture, but most offer valuable yet incomplete frameworks for dealing with this multifaceted question. Sutherland and Calo deploy the concept of ‘assemblages’ to explore the construction and contestation of symbolic capital that shapes the expression of the good farmer identity in a particular place. ‘Assemblage theory emphasises that most elements are part of multiple assemblages (termed “relations of exteriority”) and have

agency; configurations are thus constantly changing [...] It is the relations between the elements, rather than the characteristics of the elements themselves, which are particularly important' (Sutherland and Calo 2020, 533).

Taking a different more structural approach, Marxist agrarian political economists have refined the tools for mapping, and analysing the ways capitalism shapes food production. Much of this literature is framed as the agrarian question, wherein scholars have examined the ways in which agriculture is transformed by capitalist relations. A common feature of much of these analyses is the process of depeasantization (Araghi 1995, 2000). The dominant storyline revealed by agrarian political economists goes like this: Capitalism penetrates agriculture, driving industrialization, incentivized by the state in an effort to feed a growing population, farm size grows, wealth and control concentrates, the number of farmers declines, people move to cities in search of other jobs, rural areas become less populated, less agrarian and peasants disappear. There are places where this story has reached what seems like the final chapter and small-scale family farmers and peasants are on the brink of extinction. There are many versions of this story, which have already been written focusing especially on North American and Western European geographies where farmers now represent less than 5 per cent of the population, often less. Qualman *et al.*, for example follow this tradition and examine the issue of generational renewal in Canadian farming using classic tools of agrarian political economy as summarized by Bernstein's four key questions: Who owns what? Who does what? Who gets what? And what do they do with the surplus? (Qualman *et al.* 2018, 103).

Similar work focusing on the Basque Country began to emerge just over 40 years ago, in the first breaths of democracy in Spain, when Miren Etxezarreta warned of the crisis of Basque peasant farming, asking 'will the *caserío*¹ disappear?': 'The farms close and remain abandoned, the rural area is depopulated, youth prefer industrial jobs and urban life... The few farmers who remain in the village do not know what the solution for the future will be'² (1977, 8). Twenty years later José Ramón Mauleón Gómez, still concerned with essentially this same agrarian question, sought to understand the what and the why behind the diverse survival strategies among different peasant households, which had continued to decline in

number (1998). María Jose Ainz Ibarrondo's thesis added perspective to this literature, situating her study of the *caserío* in the context of Basque industrialization, showing how in addition to the changes within the agrarian sector incentivizing modernization, the pull towards cities that industrial jobs created hollowed out rural areas (2001). And Juan Cruz Alberdi Collantes has continued to document the disappearance of Basque small-scale farmers (2002) in the face of a lack of generational renewal.

Grubbström et al. attempt to weave together the emotional and structural factors that shape generational renewal by offering the idea of resilience as a lens for evaluating the 'web of relationships' that make up farm succession (Kennedy, 1991 cited in Grubbström *et al.* 2014, 153). 'With such an approach, the interdependence of social and economic systems and the co-evolution of the farms with their context are highlighted' (Grubbström *et al.* 2014, 154). However, this perspective remains concentrated on household level decisions, providing less insight into macro level social and economic shifts. Like Sutherland and Calo, Moragues-Faus' use of 'embeddedness' offers a framework that captures the social relations that shape generational renewal but which focuses more on the material realities of a particular territory, which shape production.

In this sense the notion of embeddedness which focuses on the social relations that are established among actors and influence economic activity and its territorial dimension that is, how those relations incorporate attributes of a specific territory and are shaped by them, constitutes a useful analytical tool to understand how different types of agricultural holders interact and carry out an economic activity in a particular territory, constituting an agricultural system (Moragues-Faus 2014, 142).

Though not central to her analysis the social questions that condition productive activities are also highlighted as important elements in the reproduction of a particular agricultural system (Moragues-Faus 2014, 48). Similarly, White also notes the 'importance of a relational approach to studying young people's experiences with farming, the dynamics of relations between younger and older generations, and the role of these dynamics in the social reproduction of agrarian communities' (White 2015, 333). Taken together Moragues-Faus and White allude to the analytical

direction which this thesis seeks to push conceptualizations of generational renewal in European farming systems. Specifically, I draw on social reproduction theory in order to respond to the need for a big picture framework that can address the issues related to agrarian political economy, culture, migration, gender and generation outlined in the existing literature on generational renewal.

2.2 Social reproduction

Social reproduction is a way of conceptualizing the work required to reproduce the labour force. Social reproduction theory, rooted in feminist historical materialism, takes as its starting point this simple notion that social reproductive labour, though historically invisibilized is in fact a core ingredient to the survival of capitalism itself. In Bhattacharya's words it is 'part of the systemic totality of capitalism. The framework thus seeks to make visible labour and work that are analytically hidden by classical economists and politically denied by policy makers' (Bhattacharya 2017b, Kindle Locations 168–172).

The publication of Bhattacharya's edited volume on Social Reproduction Theory in 2017 reflects a growing renaissance in Marxist feminist theorizing of social reproduction. However, this draws on earlier work, attempting to build on, and go beyond Marx's notion of labour to visibilize the many dimensions of largely unpaid and/or exploitative work, which ensures that the primary commodity in capitalism — the worker — is reproduced. One of the foundational thinkers on social reproduction, for example, was Selma James. Well known for coining the term 'unwaged' to describe women's work and the 1972 publication of *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* with Maria Rosa Dalla Costa. The following quote pulled by Monthly Review editors from one of her 1983 speeches eloquently describes the rupture in Marxist scholarship that her ideas represented at the time,

In 1969 and 1970, reading in Volume 1 of *Capital* all about the uniquely capitalist commodity labour power, I realized that this was the special commodity which housework produced. Being ignorant, I thought everybody knew and I was angry that they had neglected to tell us. It was a surprise to find that the obvious view—that women were the producers of everyone's labour power, everyone's ability to

work and to be exploited—was new. In the course of setting out the implications of this (and in the process of shocking some well-meaning Left-wing people out of their political minds), I tried to describe the work which produced and reproduced labour-power, the general sale of which defines a society as capitalist (2019).

Fraser describes the concept as follows: ‘Variously called care, affective labour, or subjectivation, this activity forms capitalism’s human subjects, sustaining them as embodied natural beings while also constituting them as social beings, forming their habitus and the cultural ethos in which they move’ (Fraser 2017, Kindle Locations 609–611). Building on this rich history of scholarship I suggest that social reproduction can be understood as: 1.) The work of birthing, caring for and attending to the biological and physical needs of the next generation of workers — what I refer to here as generational reproduction; 2.) the work that goes into reproducing a collective identity, culture and social norms — or collective reproduction; and 3.) the relationship between social reproductive labour and productive relations which reproduces the broader socio-economic system — systemic reproduction.

Some definitions of social reproduction are quite narrow, referring simply to the work of ‘biological reproduction, that is giving birth to children, their care and socialization and the maintenance of adults at different stages of their lives to fit into the structure of society, and ensure the continuation of that society into the next generation’ (Mackintosh 1981: 12 cited in Kofman and Raghuram 2015, 41). According to Bakker, ‘Most definitions of social reproduction relate to three aspects: (a) biological reproduction of the species, and the conditions and social constructions of motherhood; (b) the reproduction of the labour force which involves subsistence, education and training; and (c) the reproduction and provisioning of caring needs that may be wholly privatised within families and kinship networks or socialised to some degree through state supports’ (2007, 541). This all fits into the dimension of social reproduction that I refer to as *generational reproduction*, which attempts to visibilize and understand the care work that ensures the physical wellbeing and survival of human beings, shapes and is shaped by intergenerational relations.

The work of *collective reproduction* is important to separate analytically in order to see not just how people's physical survival is ensured but also the way that notions of who belongs and who doesn't get constructed and sustained. This refers to 'the reproduction of people as physical beings and the reproduction of social identities within given social and cultural contexts' (Gunilla Bjerén 1997: 227). Katz elaborates further on the 'cultural forms and practices' that create collective identity: 'acquiring and assimilating the shared knowledge, values, and practices of the groups to which one belongs by birth or choice' (Katz 2001, 714). Importantly this work of collective reproduction helps define the terms of inclusion and exclusion making clear who belongs and who is an outsider.

Scholars of social reproduction have focused much of their theoretical attention on the function of this work to productive relations, and capitalism. An important part of the resulting debates has thus centred on the relationship between social reproduction and production. In this sense, 'social reproduction was also a way of reproducing classes and class relations and we might add gender relations' (Kofman and Raghuram 2015, 41). Thus building on Truong I argue that social reproduction also means 'systemic reproduction which enables a given social system to be recreated and sustained' (1996, 32 cited in Kofman and Raghuram 2015, 2). For Ferguson this systemic dimension of social reproduction theory is what gives it particular explanatory power and first 'carve[d] out a discrete and coherent theoretical territory' (2017). Margaret Benston's 1969 Monthly Review article called *The Political Economy of Women's Liberation* outlines the function of social reproduction in capitalism:

The material basis for the inferior status of women is to be found in just this definition of women. In a society in which money determines value, women are a group who work outside the money economy. Their work is not worth money, is therefore valueless, is therefore not even real work. And women themselves, who do this valueless work, can hardly be expected to be worth as much as men, who work for money. In structural terms, the closest thing to the condition of women is the condition of others who are or were also outside of commodity production, i.e., serfs and peasants (Benston 1969).

Nancy Fraser speaks to this debate using the concept of capitalism's others. Those elements of life that are treated as outside of the 'real

economy', yet without which production cannot continue and value creation comes to a screeching halt.

Ignoring or marginalising the needs of the human body with its frailties enables the illusion of an independently functioning 'Economic Man'. 'His' money-based life ignores the embodied-ness of human life and the embedded-ness of humanity in the natural environment. 'Economic Man' is not young or old, sick or unhappy and does not have pressing domestic demands that cannot be ignored or put off. Thus, the artificial boundary of human activities that is called the 'economy' fails to acknowledge its true resource base and the parasitical way it is sustained by systems of unpaid social labour and the resources and resilience of the natural environment (Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies 1999:31, Hutchinson et al. 2002:180, cited in Mellor 2010, 158).

For Fraser, nature, the political sphere and social reproduction are 'capitalism's others.' These divisions are assumed as systemic realities, until they 'bite back' and generate crises which fuel regime changes. Nature and social reproduction, when over exploited can undermine value creation, and/or force a shift in production (O'Connor 1988). Indeed, if the social reproductive needs of workers are ignored for too long, humans find ways to protect and prioritize their lives rather than production (Fraser 2017, Ferguson 2020). In addition to social reproductive work, and nature, Fraser suggests that pro-capital political infrastructure that the state provides, also similarly ensures the conditions necessary for production. Despite the separation of the real economy from the political world, in order to exist, capitalism depends on political supports like 'repressive security forces that contain dissent and enforce order; legal systems that guarantee private property and authorize accumulation' (Fraser 2021, 104). Political infrastructure also ensures the maintenance of a racial hierarchy which benefits capital accumulation.

Indeed, the vulnerability of transnational care workers denied legal administrative status in their country of residence, for example is captured well by this framing. Bhattacharyya builds on Fraser, and social reproduction theory to broaden and weave the analysis of race into our understanding of the systemic logic of capitalism and all of its others. For her, the politics of scarcity that the realization of ecological limits defining

our current planetary moment ‘informs the racial capitalism of the twenty-first century’ (Bhattacharyya 2018, 31). She further weaves together ecology and racial differentiation.

Racial capitalism also has functioned through the attribution of a lesser status to the arena of nature, including through collapsing some human populations into the category of nature and through this marking their lives, livelihoods and social practices as an absence to be colonised and exploited. In this process, the complex network of resources that enables life to be remade, including human life, becomes no more than territory or open land (Bhattacharyya 2018, 60).

Here we can begin to see the parallels and connections between social reproduction and nature as artificially separated from the ‘real, productive economy.’ Because of this interconnectedness of social reproduction and nature Fraser suggests, it is nearly impossible to have an ecological crisis without a social reproductive crisis (Fraser 2020). ‘Capitalism’s inherent contradictions interact with each other, they are not fully parallel. They can’t be completely disentangled or understood in isolation’ (Fraser 2020). The systemic reproduction dimension of social reproduction is where this entanglement can best be perceived. The crisis of generational renewal I argue is a symptom of an intertwined set of systemic contradictions, which directly implicate social reproduction, but are not limited to it.

One of the factors that has historically muted social responses to the systemic undermining of social reproduction, is the role of the state and social policy by periodically providing reproductive fixes to such contradictions. Fraser (2017) offers a global scale framework to understand the broad historical modes of social reproduction. She identifies three key periods, which on one hand provide a useful blueprint for understanding how, what she calls care regimes have shifted in broad terms, and the role of the state in these shifts on the other hand. ‘The first is the nineteenth-century regime of liberal competitive capitalism. Combining industrial exploitation in the European core with colonial expropriation in the periphery, this regime tended to leave workers to reproduce themselves “autonomously,” outside the circuits of monetized value, as states looked on from the sidelines’ (Kindle Locations 650–653). She describes this as a period of separate spheres, relegating women to the

domestic realm and invisibilizing their role in value creation, thus constructed as distinct from the formal economic sphere.

To mark the beginning of the second regime: enter the State. This period, according to Fraser, is characterized as state-managed capitalism in the global North. ‘Premised on large-scale industrial production and domestic consumerism in the core, underpinned by ongoing colonial and postcolonial expropriation in the periphery, this regime internalized social reproduction through state and corporate provision of social welfare’ (Kindle Locations 655–657). Fuelling this shift was the notion of the family wage, wherein men as wage workers provided access to their wives and families to a range of state welfare benefits and brought home an income sufficient to support the women’s social reproductive activities in the home. To consolidate this model it was necessary to create a collective imaginary of the modern nuclear family via ‘intensified meanings of gender difference; and by modernizing male domination’ (Fraser 2017, Kindle location 681–683). Or in Cobo’s words: ‘the patriarchal pact’ (Cobo 2019, 268). In 1994 she argued, ‘We are currently experiencing the death throes of the old, industrial gender order with the transition to new, post-industrial phase of capitalism. The crisis of the welfare state is bound up with these epochal changes. It is rooted in part in the collapse of the world of the family wage, and of its central assumptions about labour markets and families’ (Fraser 1994, 592).

Finally, the third regime is,

the globalizing financialized capitalism of the present era. This regime has relocated the paid workforce, and promoted state and corporate disinvestment from social welfare. Externalizing care work onto families and communities, it has simultaneously diminished their capacity to perform it. The result, amid rising inequality, is a dualized organization of social reproduction, commodified for those who can pay for it, privatized for those who cannot—all glossed by the even more modern ideal of the ‘two-earner family’ (Kindle Locations 660–663).

Emancipated women increasingly reject playing the role of a dependent housewife, seeking their own employment, and autonomy via wage work.

The care deficit they leave behind in the home is not filled by men, rather by hired help. This has led to what Hochschild (2000) famously called ‘global care chains’, creating new market demand for domestic labour, and the feminization of migration flows from the global South to Northern (post) welfare states (Truong 1996, Kofman and Raghuram 2015). Importantly, since the focus of much of the literature on welfare regimes has centred on countries in the global North where such policy infrastructure was most elaborated in the post-World War Two (WWII) period, Young explains,

Without adequate public child-care services, and without being able to fall back on the services of women from developing and transitional countries, educated women would not be able to climb professional ladders that demand great personal mobility and flexibility [...] On the one side is the ‘mistress’ and on the other stands the ‘maid’, separated by different racial, ethnic, class and national belongings and backgrounds (Young 2001, 316).

While this literature is pathbreaking, depictions of the recipients of care in the North, reveal experiences of class privilege in the midst of gendered inequality. However, a more nuanced picture of those who receive care at the ‘first world end of the chain’ is less common in the existing literature. Here if we bring into focus the, often precarious, conditions of dependency in rural areas of the global North, a more complex web of care deficits emerges. Precarious entry and retirement prospects limit farmers’ capacity to be effective carers themselves, and at the same time, drive ageing rural populations to rely on the increasingly privatized care work of others as their children move to urban areas.

2.3 Regimes of agrarian social reproduction

As insightful as the social reproduction literature is, it does not provide much depth for understanding how historically and geographically specific modes of social reproduction operate in rural areas in the global North. On one hand, the agrarian angle warrants deeper engagement, as I aim to do in this thesis. On the other hand, as insightful as the notion of a care regime is, it risks limiting our analysis to a narrow set of concrete care activities, and missing what I suggest is a much more multifaceted and complex constellation of social relations which fuel the reproductive

forces, which shape the agrarian productive logic a given period. Instead, I develop the idea of a regime of agrarian social reproduction.

Here Michael Levien's approach to the study of dispossession proves especially insightful. He asks, 'is accumulation by dispossession defined by its function for capital or by the means specific to it?' (Levien 2013, 16). His,

concept of 'regimes of dispossession' pushes us to start by appreciating the distinctive means of dispossession. Rather than beginning with a theory of dispossession's historical role, or whether it is internally or externally driven, let us begin with what characterizes dispossession as a social process in any context [...] If a regime of production (or factory regime) is an institutionalized way of extracting surplus labour from workers (Burawoy 1985), a regime of dispossession is an institutionalized way of expropriating assets from their current owners or users (Levien 2013, 18).

Regimes of agrarian social reproduction, then, can be looked at historically as institutionalized modes of reproducing the conditions necessary for agrarian production in rural areas. Importantly, this analytical device not only makes visible and describes social reproductive relations in a given period and place, it explains how a particular set of agrarian social reproductive relations gives meaning to and establishes the logic of how farming is sustained in a given period. These regimes will differ in each context according to three main factors:

1. Who is being reproduced and how? How do intergenerational relations shape agrarian relations?
2. What notions of collective identity and belonging are being reproduced and how? Who is seen as part of the next generation, who is not and why?
3. What systemic logic is reproduced? What is the nature and specifics of the relationship between reproduction and production? How and which agrarian systems are (re)produced, in relation to the rest of the productive activities?

Each of these dimensions are institutionalized through state (law, policy), social (cultural norms and practice, language), and market

(patterns of exchange) mechanisms, an exploration of which help reveal *how* particular regimes of agrarian social reproduction are consolidated and undermined over time. Ainz Ibarondo's thesis (2001) convincingly demonstrates the relevance of defining the key periods of Basque agrarian history (pre-industrial, industrial, and post-industrial) in reference to industrial development. She suggests that industrialization has conditioned agrarian relations since the medieval period. However, I argue that this conditioning has not been as unidirectional as her framing suggests. I therefore build on Ainz Ibarondo's periodicity throughout this thesis to show how agrarian social reproduction in fact co-creates the logic of these historical periods and shapes the way agrarian production survives throughout the course of industrial development.

Drawing on the way Freidmann and McMichael have used regimes in the context of food, 'the food regime concept allows us to refocus from the commodity as object to the commodity as relation, with definite geopolitical, social, ecological, and nutritional relations at significant historical moments' (McMichael 2009a, 163). In the context of agrarian social reproduction, regimes help us to refocus from agrarian social reproduction as narrowly construed activities related to care of future farmers, to the forces of agrarian social reproduction as relations, which consolidate into particular patterns of interaction, care, inclusion, exclusion, ecological relation and class formation. The way these regimes form, shapes and is shaped by the race, class and gender relations of a given moment. In other words, we can't fully understand how social reproductive regimes operate without applying an intersectional lens to the mechanisms that sustain their institutionalization.

Given the current crisis of social reproduction in Basque farming, I echo Levien in his hope that such an analytical approach can be 'not only analytically illuminating, but politically empowering. Once we recognize that dispossession is fundamentally a political process that looks very different across time and space, we can finally leave behind notions of its necessity and inevitability' (Levien 2013, iii). In relation to their concept of commodity regimes, Beckert et al. emphasize the changing nature of regimes.

The expansion of commodity frontiers was not a smooth unfolding of one universal logic or of unstinting human progress, but a series of regimes that transformed themselves in quite fundamental ways at certain moments. These transformations occurred because each regime ran into frictions that eventually made the further expansion of commodity frontiers impossible without fundamental changes (2021, 444).

In the case of regimes of agrarian social reproduction, over the course of the following chapters I explore a range of frictions, contradictions and crises which inspire fixes and drive change. These prove to be recurring, since capitalist societies ‘make their official economies dependent on the very same processes of social reproduction whose value they disavow. This peculiar relation of separation cum dependence cum-disavowal is a built-in source of potential instability’ (Fraser 2017, Kindle location 627–630). Thus, by understanding the way that regimes of social reproduction enter into crisis and evolve, the hope is to identify potential levers of change. ‘Because counter movements suggest some of the key themes around which people are exploited or oppressed, studying resistance within regimes is a crucial part of defining and analysing the regimes themselves – and helping to explain how over time they changed fundamentally’ (Beckert *et al.* 2021, 446). Such insights help remind us that change is inherent to social reproductive regimes, but the direction of that change is contested political terrain in which the forces of reproduction are actively expanding class struggle.

The following three sections of this chapter attempt to unpack the three theoretical dimensions of regimes of agrarian social reproduction. In so doing, I seek to provide a brief overview of how social reproduction brings explanatory power to the crisis of generational renewal in Basque farming, which is taken up empirically in the subsequent analytical chapters.

2.3.1 Generational reproduction

All humans need care, but young children, chronically ill and elderly people especially rely on care to survive. For some, care refers only to specific activities that attend to the biological and affective needs of other humans. The boundaries between which care work is paid or unpaid,

informal or formal are also blurred. For example, a person paid to clean the house may also speak with and physically attend to the elderly person who is at home while the house is being cleaned. Finally, care work can take place in different sites or be managed by different entities. Building on previous analyses of different conceptions of welfare that go beyond the state, building on Esping-Andersen's idea of a 'welfare triangle', Razavi proposes the concept of the 'care diamond': 'The institutions involved in the provision of care may be conceptualized in a stylized fashion as a care diamond, to include the family/household, markets, the public sector and the not-for profit sector that would include voluntary and community provision' (Razavi 2007, 21).

Razavi's 'care diamond' is a useful way to visualize the constellation of modes and sites where social reproduction happens and how particular focus on one or more of these modes characterizes a specific care regime. It is true that the role of the state via social policy is central to understanding care work in post WWII Europe, but care happens in many places (Kofman and Raghuram 2015, 67). What is interesting about the care diamond is not only its static form, but also the ways in which the weight of care work shifts, and is distributed and redistributed between points of the diamond over time. For example, in the early 20th century in Europe as the CAP was in an embryonic phase, the mass rural urban migration happening put into stark contrast the life of urban workers meeting the state-managed point of the diamond, receiving social security benefits for the first time, while rural farmers rarely lived the concept of a vacation day, under the pressure of subsistence and the almost entirely autonomous village-based system of social reproduction, which that required. As waves of rural to urban migrants literally shifted the weight of social reproduction to urban centres where state institutions began positioning themselves to support more and more of this work through social policy. Later in the shift towards commodified social reproductive relations, populations (care workers and neo-peasants) move from urban to rural areas but are foreign to the traditional kinship structures in those places.

In other words, the evolution of the care diamond over time helps us see how social reproductive relations shift from one care regime to the next in geographically uneven ways not only between North and South

but also between rural and urban. In the push and pull of redistribution over time, the logic of who is worthy of care shifts and conditions the nature of intergenerational relations. For example, social reproductive relations are channelled through the language of social policy and provision of services to those individuals deemed legitimate, while family and household managed care work is governed by the logic of kinship structures. NGO and religious care work are understood as everything from paternalistic altruism to autonomous collective action. And commodified care is not surprisingly driven by a market logic. Beyond analytical differences, these distinctions in the dynamics of care shape who lives and who dies. At the same time, the distribution of care across the care diamond also determines the way that older and younger generations relate to each other. If the responsibility of care falls entirely to the family, the pressure for example on the children of ageing farmers to stay on the land and care for their elders will likely be much greater than if other support systems exist. In this constant negotiation some care needs may fall through the cracks and not be met by any one of the points of the diamond (Gough and Wood 2004 cited in (Kofman and Raghuram 2015, 69) creating ‘care deficits’ (Fraser 2017). ‘In that case, the logic of economic production overrides that of social reproduction, destabilizing the very social processes on which capital depends—compromising the social capacities, both domestic and public, that are needed to sustain accumulation over the long term. Destroying its own conditions of possibility, capital’s accumulation dynamic effectively eats its own tail’ (Fraser 2017, Kindle Locations 640–641). In sum, the dynamics of care and intergenerational relations are key facets of generational reproduction which I use to structure my analysis in the following chapters.

2.3.2 Collective reproduction

An important dimension of social reproduction is the learning and practicing of social and cultural norms, and the participation in constructing collective imaginaries. This element of social reproduction is especially pronounced in contexts of actively cultivated national identities. In this case reproduction includes ‘the development and transmission of knowledge, social values, and cultural practices and the construction of individual and collective identities’ (Erel 2018, 174). In Bourdieu’s language the fruits of this labour might be seen as ‘cultural capital’ (1977). According to Katz, ‘Apart from the need to secure the means of existence,

the production and reproduction of the labour force calls forth a range of cultural forms and practices that are also geographically and historically specific, including those associated with knowledge and learning, social justice and its apparatus, and the media' (Katz 2001, 711). Collective reproduction is an especially important dimension of nationalist politics and identity formation. Olivieri argues that the construction of national discourse and meaning is a contested process negotiated by multiple actors. '[T]he efficiency of these actors lies in their ability to generate or exploit symbols to which people develop strong attachments – a key element of developing a viable social identity' (Olivieri 2015, 1614). In short, the reproduction of the nation rests on the construction of a shared collective identity. This process deploys cultural symbols in gender performance and the cultivation of ethnicity and belonging especially as it relates to migration — all of which requires social reproductive labour to be sustained.

Erel points out that 'Much of the work of social and cultural reproduction of the nation is undertaken by women' (2018, 174). One of the gender constructs common within Basque nationalist thought is that of a matriarchal society (Barandiaran 1972; 1973; 1974; 1979; 1981 and Caro Baroja 1969; 1971; 1974; 1977. See del Valle 1985). According to Basque anthropologist Teresa del Valle, the male-dominated field of anthropology helped construct this myth, which in fact has no basis in reality. In her ground breaking research, based on extensive field work with a team of female anthropologists who studied women's realities in urban, rural coastal and inland areas of the Basque Country, there is a discrepancy between 'the power attributed to women and the reality it presents. The notion of power responds to an idealization of women included in the nationalist idea that emphasizes the role of the mother and her centrality in an idealized concept of family'³ (del Valle 1999, 40). The legitimacy of the rural peasant woman as a symbol of true Basqueness (del Valle 1999, 40) is pitted against the reality that women's agrarian labour has been historically invisibilized, and understood as family help for the 'real' male farm owner. Indeed, 'cultural representations of the nation are saturated with gendered meanings and conversely ideas about proper gender performances are themselves part and parcel of struggles around national identities' (Erel 2018, 174).

Despite the gender divisions reified by the process of collective reproduction, for some, born into an abundance of cultural capital, the burden of learning these shared ideas is hardly noticed as it is passed from one generation to the next through stories, mythology, recipes, language, shared history, family names, physical appearance, mannerisms, humour, etc. For others, the codes and keys that grant entry into this collective identity must be learned, and/or norms must be challenged in order to broaden ideas about who belongs. ‘The active construction and reconstruction of sub-state nationalism, in a world of globalization and migration, can be a difficult balancing act between maintaining national identity and accepting cultural diversity. Sub-state nationalism can be both exclusionary and inclusionary of other identity discourses’ (Olivieri 2015, 1611).

Beyond national meanings associated with migration and belonging, ethnic affinity also plays a key role in some brands of nationalism. ‘The most popular taxonomy of nationalism is a normative binary dichotomy, most often formulated as that between “civic” and “ethnic” nationalism’ (see Skuban cited in Maxwell 2010, 867). ‘An ethnic nationalist project is one that emphasizes immutable characteristics, namely race, to define the boundaries of the community rather than legal-rational principles as in so-called civic nations’ (Jeram 2013, 1771). By this logic, ethnic nationalisms are more prone to resist cultural diversity. Basque nationalism has been characterized as ethnically based by scholars like Medrano (1995) and Conversi 1997. However, Jeram contends that this binary framework cannot be used as a predictor of national sentiment towards diversity and migration and the opposite has occurred in the Basque Country where a desire to oppose the anti-immigrant discourse of Spanish nationalists was stronger than the desire to protect a pure ethnic Basque identity (Jeram 2013, 1771–2).

Kofman and Raghuram argue that favourable immigration laws may not ultimately limit other processes of marginalization that migrants experience.

They may pass through the turnstiles of immigration borders precisely because of the gendered nature of the work that they do, but once they enter, they are usually seen as objects suffering multiple discriminations. Hence, categories such as race, class and gender can't

be seen as nationally bounded but as inflected by nationality and immigration status and by the complexities of the transnational manifestations of each category (2015, 163).

I suggest, that the work of collective reproduction is a constant negotiation and active contestation informing the way people understand who belongs and who doesn't.

2.3.3 Systemic reproduction

Systemic reproduction is about understanding the function of social reproductive work in reproducing capitalism (or whatever system is the focus of the analysis). Social reproduction was initially theorized as essentially a subsidy to capitalist production, providing unpaid labour in the home, which made the generation of surplus value in the productive economy possible. However, radical feminists like Federici and Mezzadri, criticize some social reproduction theorists, asserting that while they aim to visibilize the role of social reproductive work in capitalism, they maintain a dichotomous understanding of its relationship to productive, or value-producing labour. Indeed, early Marxist theorizing about social reproduction has historically framed reproductive and productive labour as a binary, as two separate spheres of waged and unwaged labour. Feminist economists have been driven by the aim of visibilizing the unseen labour of women. '[P]roviding a representation of the economy as "if women counted"' (Waring 1988) has been the driving force behind a good part of feminist scholarship and engagement in policy work on care and related statistical work in time use surveys' (Razavi 2015, 424).

As early as 1983 Lise Vogel advocated for a Marxist unitary theory of women's oppression, but this current of social reproduction theory has only recently gained momentum and moved past the view of production and reproduction as separate spheres towards one that visibilizes all labour and understands both production and reproduction as value producing interconnected and fluid parts of a systemic whole in the current capitalist system (Ferguson and McNally 2013, Ferguson 2020). Feminist geographers paying attention to the material and spatial context in which both reproductive, or 'life's work' (Mitchell *et al.* 2003) and productive work takes place, suggest that these two worlds are in fact quite

intertwined. “The new flexible subjects of late capitalism “are the office”; their spheres of domesticity “are the factory” [...] the domain of work and the domains of home and leisure are indistinguishable from each other—and for many this now forms the contemporary “habitus”” (Mitchell *et al.* 2003, 417). Marx foregrounded this view in *Capital*: ‘When viewed, therefore, as a connected whole, and as flowing on with incessant renewal, every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction’ (Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1, Chapter 23, cited in Ruiz 2018, 107).

Pérez Orozco further complicates the relationship between social reproduction and production in her theorizing of the notion of care as a structural, socio-economic question, which urges us to ask if the system itself prioritizes life (Pérez Orozco 2014, 89). To theorize this tension, she pushes the tools of feminist economic analysis to move beyond what she calls integrationist perspectives, which frame reproductive and productive labour as part of the same capitalist system. Instead, she advocates for a ‘rupturist’ approach, which turns the logic of the system itself on its head. Rather than making the mechanisms of capital accumulation and the ways that social reproduction contribute to that, the focus of study, she argues that understanding how life is sustained should be the primary and final analytical objective (Pérez Orozco 2014, 89). Certainly, this rupturist approach helps maintain focus on the aspirational direction of change if we are to overcome the devaluing and invisibilizing of social reproduction that has characterized capitalist relations historically. However, as Ferguson provocatively asks, ‘To what degree does this approach lead to a politics whereby the predominate political goal is to create an *alternative* to capitalist forms of production without theorizing the necessity of also directly resisting and undermining (through strikes or other forms of confrontation) capital’s dynamics of accumulation and dispossession?’ (personal communication, 2021). Indeed, for collectives like Etxaldeko Emakumeak which seek to incorporate a rupturist approach into their activism, the ways in which such politics opens up or closes down the possibilities for alliances with other workers remains an open and important question (see chapter 6).

These insights also highlight both the relevance and lack of clarity about how food production and the rural world fits into this picture of

care and social reproduction. First the work of food production requires a labour force that must be cared for and socially reproduced. Second, the provision of food is itself a central part of social reproduction which has, for much of history, been unpaid in the form of subsistence farming (Razavi 2007, 3). Pérez Orozco offers a nuanced analysis by way of an example. She provocatively notes that no one would call employment at an electrical plant care work, while some might say that the chore of going to collect wood in a place where there is no electricity *is* in fact care work. ‘What’s the difference if, in the end, the two jobs make the food hot?’²⁴ (Pérez Orozco 2014a, 90). The same line of questioning could compare the work of a day labourer on a large-scale monocrop tomato farm to the grandmother who tends the backyard garden of her family’s home. Both activities ensure the material basis for food provisioning.

There is perhaps nowhere else where the blurring of productive and reproductive labour has been taken as a given more consistently throughout history than on the farm, and yet social reproduction theorists have paid little attention to agrarian realities. Further Mitchell et al. as well as Mezzadri (2019) point out that Marxist ‘ideas about reproduction relate specifically to the social relations between capitalists and laborers at the point of production,’ (Mitchell *et al.* 2003, 420) leaving relatively undertheorized the masses of people around the world engaged in informal and non-wage labour to survive — for example subsistence farmers. By bringing together Barca’s notion of the forces of reproduction with Bhattacharya’s formulation of expanded class struggle, the relationship, both structurally and politically, between the worker at the electrical power plant and the grandmother who goes to collect firewood comes into view. Rather than dwelling on the things that divide the two, like the wage one earns that the other doesn’t, social reproduction theory helps us flesh out the role they each play in reproducing the system. And in so doing, this reveals the potential alliances and relationships which may empower struggles to transform the system.

Although it does not frequently use the language of social reproduction, the field of agrarian studies offers some valuable insights that can contribute to addressing this urban bias. Subsistence food production systems have historically troubled the distinction between productive and reproductive labour. A mix of paid and unpaid labour have

been central features of agricultural systems around the world for centuries. Subsistence logic prioritizes the social reproduction of the farm household before generating surplus value. James Scott's seminal work, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* based on the context of Southeast Asia, explores this logic, arguing that peasants operate according to the logic of the moral economy rather than a capitalist logic. For Scott the moral economy of the peasant is not necessarily governed by principles of social justice. 'Rather, they imply only that living is attained often at the cost of a loss of status and autonomy' (Scott 1977, 5). Importantly Scott highlights that the moral economy framework helps visualize the complex web of interdependence that makes up agrarian social relations. It is this web that Palomera and Vetta describe as 'fields.' They,

contend that the structural inequalities generated by particular forms of capital accumulation – mediated by particular kinds of state regulation – are always metabolized through particular fields constituted by dynamic combinations of norms, meanings and practices. It is these fields that we call moral economies. They can reproduce or strengthen patterns of capital accumulation that regulate social structure, but they can also alter and even short circuit them (2016, 414–15).

In his characterization of pre-capitalist modes of peasant production, Eric Wolf's 1966 work avoids establishing clear dichotomies between the reproductive and the productive sphere. However, he characterizes peasant production as a system of subsistence, essentially a system where, production serves the function of ensuring reproduction, rather than the other way around, like early social reproduction scholars who viewed capitalist reproductive relations as a subsidy to production. As capitalism has penetrated peasant societies, the logic of production and the need to earn money becomes dominant, and the primary role of social reproduction is to create wage workers. The four basic questions of political economy as outlined by Bernstein (2010) offer a clear foundation upon which to construct analyses of how the kinds of shifts that undermine the subsistence logic and trigger shifts in social reproductive relations which give new meaning to capital and agrarian production.

First, 'Who owns what?' This question, 'concerns the social relations of different property regimes: how the means of production and

reproduction are distributed. “Ownership” and “property” have had different meanings in different kinds of society at different moments in history’ (2010, 22–23). Seen in light of the social reproduction literature, this question helps get at the ways in which *land* access is intertwined with care obligations within farm families. Historically the social norms that governed intergenerational relations in peasant households commonly operated according to a patriarchal logic wherein the first-born son was considered the legitimate heir to the family farm house and land. However, this form of land access came with the obligation of caring for the elder generations as they aged. ‘In short, access to land is ultimately a question of social reproduction of agrarian cultures whose self-definition centres on food production’ (McMichael 2009, 300). Shifting intergenerational care responsibilities creates space for new ways of organizing control over land and natural resources.

Second, ‘Who does what?’ This question is about ‘the social divisions of *labour* [...] and the different classes in agrarian societies and in capitalist societies’ (2010, 23, emphasis added). While in many scholarly works, the realm of social reproductive work is not included, by putting these two literatures in conversation, the full range of unproductive, indirectly and directly productive work that ensures generational renewal in farming can be visibilized. For example, historically the women were responsible for the bulk of care work. As the children of farmers leave rural areas, the duties of care must be dealt with in new ways, increasingly by non-family members, now paid in money rather than land. Who takes up these duties? How does modifying the distribution of social reproductive labour change who does what in agrarian production?

Third, ‘Who gets what?’ directs the researcher to patterns in the ‘social division of the “fruits of labour” [...] As with ownership and property (above), that term does not just refer to income in the sense it has acquired in capitalism, namely individual or corporate money income’ (2010, 23). In the context of agricultural production and reproduction, the distribution of income, equity and investment in land and infrastructure, but also in care work, is a key tension when navigating the politics between generations. Perhaps most importantly, as the logic of farm production shifts to earning money, the crops which are cultivated and the forms of *food provisioning* families rely on are dramatically altered. Social norms

like the first-born son as the legitimate heir are no longer the dominant means by which family farm assets are distributed. Food provisioning is increasingly commodified. In what ways are farm incomes distributed differently in order to accommodate these changes? What productive relations of gender, generation, class, or race are created in these changing dynamics of social reproduction?

Finally, ‘What do they do with it?’ This last question is about the ‘social relations of consumption, reproduction and accumulation’ (2010, 23). This point urges one to trace how the logic of a particular model of agrarian production reinvests (or not) the surplus value that is created in the sustainability of its own material basis. In other words, is it life sustaining? Where does surplus value accumulate in the system. As food, agricultural inputs, care etc. are commodified, access to money becomes essential for survival. Thus, *debt and credit* provided by those actors who have accumulated capital, is fuelled by the need to cover care deficits. It also establishes a system of debt relations that shape and reify class differences.

Taken together these three dimensions of social reproduction (generational, collective, and systemic) call into question the boundaries of the concept itself. As Ferguson asks, ‘how expansive is social reproductive labour – or how expansive should it be?’⁵ One of the consequences of historically invisibilizing social reproductive labour is that when we think of what labour is, we often draw on the ways we identify productive labour to define it: clearly defined activities or tasks taking place during a specific period of time for a specific goal. With these three dimensions, I would like to push back against such a simple and productively based notion of social reproductive labour. Of the three, perhaps generational reproduction, grounded in care work, can be most easily and neatly compared to production, in that it often is comprised of specific activities with aims other than production (though indirectly contributing to it), and which can be observed during specific times. Collective reproduction, in contrast permeates and shapes nearly every activity and interaction. It is the work of reproducing ways of seeing, thinking and understanding the social relations around us. Certainly, this can be done through distinct actions like ritual or educational activities. However, the analytical utility of this dimension of social reproduction is precisely to remind us of the

expansiveness of the concept. It brings explanatory power to the intangible yet profoundly impactful processes of collective identity formation. It is a process which can easily be invisibilized if we focus entirely on categorizing which activities are productive and which are not. It is a process which is woven through our inner monologues and background thoughts while we are busy doing other things. Rather than rendering the concept of social reproduction diffuse, the notion of collective reproduction dimension helps us appreciate the work being done in the realm of collective culture, identity and ideas which is also part of social reproduction. Finally, the systemic dimension encourages us to situate concrete activities, specific work tasks and ways of thinking within broader structural dynamics of capitalist social relations. As Ferguson observes, this ‘promotes a dialectical analytic that “thinks across” the particular and the totality.’⁶

2.4 Understanding the current conjuncture: contestation and justice

Following Perez Orozco, rather than obsessing about which types of food production can be considered care work that contributes to social reproduction and which not, shifting the analytical focus to understanding how and in what ways do particular ways of organizing food systems shape and are shaped by life sustaining activities offers a more complex analysis. This brings the capital-life tension into focus and helps demonstrate that different social reproductive relations can tend towards crisis as in a capitalist system, while others can support life. These tendencies are not fixed, rather they are actively contested. A crisis of generational renewal represents a crisis in the capacity to sustain agrarian life, and an opportunity for reorganizing the relationship between social reproduction and production.

In order to understand the claims and struggles of new and potential farmers in the current period, Fraser’s three part (representation, recognition, and redistribution) understanding of justice as parity of participation is particularly useful. For her, ‘Overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction’ (Fraser 2013, 193). This approach helps analyse the barriers faced by the

potential next generation of farmers. Since Spain's entry in the European Union, the impact of the CAP has meant that generational reproduction is intimately intertwined with the politics of inclusion and exclusion in the agrarian welfare state. This dominant role of the state in this regard renders the politics of representation especially relevant to who farms in the future. This 'political dimension of justice' is taken up in chapter 4, deploying Fraser's two level notion of misrepresentation: ordinary political misrepresentation and misframing (Fraser 2013, 196). However, looking at questions of representation in relation to other questions of recognition and redistribution helps demonstrate that the issue of generational renewal is much bigger and deeper than a policy challenge, and requires attention to cultural and social norms as well as structural inequalities inherent to capitalism.

Also specific to this particular moment in the Basque Country is a process of shifting demographics in rural areas. Out-migration of the children of farmers coincides with immigration of people from urban areas, other parts of Europe or outside of the EU, all of whom have historically been constructed as outsiders in the process of rural Basque collective reproduction. This means that the politics of recognition which taps into culture and identity formation determining who belongs, and who might be seen as part of a future generation of farmers, are challenged and evolving. In this negotiation, 'people can also be prevented from interacting on terms of parity by institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value that deny them the requisite standing; in that case they suffer from status inequality or misrecognition' (Fraser 2013, 193). Chapter 5 uses the lens of recognition to unpack the implications for generational renewal in farming of collective reproduction in the Basque Country.

Finally paying attention to the politics of redistribution sheds light on how 'people can be impeded from full participation by economic structures that deny them the resources they need in order to interact with others as peers; in that case they suffer from distributive injustice or maldistribution' (Fraser 2013, 193). In chapter 6 I push this analytical tool further to interrogate the politics of redistribution, not only in economic terms of surplus value, but also in terms of the distribution of what the system itself values. New generations of farmers are increasingly rallying behind the radical vision of food sovereignty that proposes to put food

for people over profits as the guiding principle of food systems (La Vía Campesina 1996, Desmarais 2007, Patel 2009, Calvário 2017b). In other words, it is about food systems dedicated to sustaining life instead of maximizing yields and capital accumulation. Among the Basque farmers actively participating in collective organizing around food sovereignty, calls for ‘agroecofeminism’ have emerged, thus bringing together a critique of the role of social reproductive work in agrarian capitalism with questions of justice. Women farmers advocate for visibilizing and redistributing social reproductive work in farming, for dismantling the economic barriers to entry for organic farmers and for revaluing the role of small-scale farmers as food providers in their communities.

Redistribution, recognition and representation are mutually constitutive processes. Taken together these institutionalized patterns of injustice have contributed to a crisis of social reproduction in rural areas, one of the symptoms of which, as I argue, is a crisis of generational renewal.

Notes

- ¹ *Caserío* is the name in Spanish for the traditional Basque farmhouse, symbol of peasant farming.
- ² Original text: ‘Los caseríos se cierran y permanecen abandonados, el ámbito rural se despuebla, la juventud prefiere los empleos industriales y la vida urbana... Los pocos caseros que permanecen en el caserío no saben cuál puede ser su solución de futuro.’
- ³ Original text: ‘el poder que se le atribuye a la mujer y la realidad que ésta presenta. La noción de poder responde a una idealización de la mujer incluida en el ideario nacionalista que recalca el role de la mujer madre y su centralidad en un concepto de familia idealizado’.
- ⁴ Original text: “¿Cuál es la diferencia si, al final, los dos trabajos logran que la comida esté caliente?”
- ⁵ I thank Prof. Ferguson for the insightful question raised in response to an earlier draft of this thesis.
- ⁶ Again, I am grateful to Prof. Ferguson for this succinct formulation provided as part of her comments on an earlier draft of this thesis.

3

From pre-industrial to industrial regimes of agrarian social reproduction

3.1 The multigenerational pre-industrial peasant farm

In the pre-industrial era in the rural Basque Country, social reproduction was governed by the norms of extended family hierarchies and inheritance patterns inscribed in the marriage contract, which was in essence an economic arrangement between two families and between two generations. It was the retirement plan. It was the land access plan. It was the farm succession plan and the payout plan for the disinherited siblings. The anchor of it all: the *caserío* (the term used to refer to the traditional Basque farmhouse) According to Caro Baroja, it is the basic unit of production and social reproduction' (cited in Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 12).

The dimensions of social reproduction in pre-industrial peasant society in Bizkaia were conditioned by the harsh material realities of the time, instilling in most families a logic of survival. Given the difficult geographical conditions, peasants relieved stress on the family resources by seeking off-farm jobs or, taking advantage of Basques' privileged position in the colonial enterprise and emigrating to the Americas. However, for those who remained, one's identity was structured by hyperlocal family, religious and class relations governed by a small landowning rural elite. The subsistence imperative of peasants served the interests of large noble estates still benefiting from the feudal architecture of previous centuries, as well as the emergent industrial rural bourgeoisie that controlled the extensive network of wood fired iron foundries. Over time this system of relations of social reproduction was unravelled by changing capital and class relations associated with a money economy, and

processes of urban industrialization which also had significant implications for generational, collective and systemic reproduction.

In this chapter, although I draw on select historical elements prior to 1700, I focus on the 18th century onwards. It is during this period that the decline of a pre-industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction is most evident. The abolition of the Seigniories in 1841 crystalized a new set of property and class relations. New forms of credit and the expansion of the money economy created new incentives for wage labour among peasants. This, combined with the subsequent introduction of the Bessemer process for mass production of steel, propelled industrial development along the Nervion River flowing out to the port of Bilbao and dramatically reshaped land, labour and productive relations throughout Bizkaia. Social reproduction dramatically reorganized in order to make such a massive transformation possible. This particular moment in the Basque Country represents a transition period, where the power of noble men (*Hidalgos*) drawn from feudal-like structures was unravelling and the emergence of a new industrial capitalist system becomes evident.¹

3.1.1 Generational reproduction of Basque peasants

Intergenerational relations

The governing logic throughout Bizkaia among the *caseríos* in the pre-industrial period was the patrilocal, indivisible extended family model passed on according to the right of primogeniture. The norm (though ultimately the decision of the parents) was for the eldest son to inherit the farm and move his wife into the *caserío* with his parents. As the brothers and sisters of the heir to the family farm married, they moved out of the *caserío* leaving the two couples of the older and younger generation, along with their children and any single siblings or aunts or uncles.

The central document that put all of this into contractual language was the 'donatio propter nuptias' which stipulated the terms and management of assets in the marriage of the heir to the farm. Signed in the context of marriage, it was in fact an economic contract between generations and between families (Arbaiza Vilallonga 1996, 40–1). Included in this document are the house and land assets to be passed on to the heir as well

as the means necessary to continue running the farm (tools, livestock, or money to buy them), plus the furnishings, clothing and any family jewellery.

This system established clear intergenerational duties. In exchange for the house and land, the heir commits to manage the farm and to care for the older generation as they age (Arbaiza Vilallonga 1996, 42–3). Although the majority of couples were married by age 30, it was common for the older generation not to hand over control of the farm and *caserío* management to the young couple until they had passed away (Arbaiza Vilallonga 1996, 39). Plus, the decision about the farm successor was seen as revocable. Thus, the young spouse moved into her in-laws home to live in a probationary period until their death (often decades) only after which point did the young couple begin to manage the farm and the household decisions (Arbaiza Vilallonga 1996, 52).

The transfer of a *caserío* was not only a contract between generations, it was also an economic arrangement between two families. In exchange for the farm assets the family marrying into the inheritance was expected to offer a ‘dowry’ of comparable value in the form of money. This money was then distributed among the rest of the siblings who didn’t inherit the farm, so that they could go pay for a dowry and inheritance into a *caserío* of similar standing. Because the dowry was usually expected in money currency (rare for many peasant households), the marriage of a child often conditioned the family’s dependence on debt to cover the costs (Arbaiza Vilallonga 1996, 43–4). Thus, multigenerational family structures and norms were not only economic arrangements, which ensured farm succession and class security for disinherited children. These patterns ensured generational reproduction by building the care of the elderly and access to home and income for the younger generation into the marital contract.

Biological reproduction

Typical peasant families in the Basque country were multi-generational. Catholicism was ubiquitous and established strong social norms prohibiting extramarital relations between men and women. Marriage however was a costly affair, thus the average age of marriage was relatively

older for both men and women than in other parts of Spain. Birth control was also not accessible, and discouraged by the local religious authorities. In many rural towns, the local hospital and/or a mobile doctor employed by the municipality offered some care support for pregnant women, the ill and the poor (Lange 1996, 162). However, in general the realm of care work from birth to death in rural households was seen as women's work within the family during this period (Hernández and Imaz 2010, 56).

However, the harsh subsistence conditions meant that many peasants were barely surviving and one bad harvest could mean ruin. Many families were forced to send their children away, to the home of a wealthier family member, or in search of work. Others simply went to neighbouring towns or cities where their labour was needed. But many disinherited Basque men emigrated to the Americas first within the ranks of the Spanish colonial structure, and later seeking jobs in newly independent states throughout the region. They left rural poverty with the dream of returning one day with enough money to support their families. For many this plan remained a fantasy, but on the whole Basques from both rural and urban origins made massive amounts of money in the colonial business (detailed below) and the role of remittances as an important means of supporting the basic social reproductive needs of rural communities should not be understated. The capital flows returning from the Americas really reached a crescendo and contributed to kick starting industrialization at the end of the 19th century, and thus is elaborated further in the second half of this chapter.

In some cases when the family was unable to meet the needs of generational reproduction, there is evidence in towns like the one I lived in that local government provided support to those in need (Lange 1996, 645–6). But, by the end of the 18th century the rural iron industry was in crisis due to a switch to urban industrial production and coal fuel instead of vegetable charcoal derived from the extensive oak forests covering the rural landscape and sustaining rural economies. This put increasing pressure on municipal budgets, and the adoption of plans to dramatically reduce public spending, thus exacerbating care deficits emerging in the transition to an urban-based industrial production model in Bizkaia (Lange 1996, 657).

3.1.2 Collective reproduction: foral law and colonial privilege, family, and faith

The rules that governed and enforced the social and generational norms and established the architecture of collective identity came from a complex patchwork of institutions, namely: Foral law and colonial privilege, the family, and the catholic church.

Foral law (los fueros) and colonial privilege

According to Monreal Zia the Old law of Bizkaia (*el fuero viejo*), redacted in 1452, documents the long tradition of Basque legal customs and is one of Europe's most important medieval legal codes (2005, 14). Contrary to other seigniories in the Kingdom of Castile who gradually adopted Castilian legal customs, upon incorporation into the Crown in 1175 AD, Bizkaia fiercely defended and further developed its own legal system (Monreal Zia 2005, 32).

The sacred oak tree in Gernika was the centre of governance, under which, in theory all Bizkaian males would gather when called by the sound of horns from five of the region's mountain peaks. There, this early form of direct democracy would convene to make public policy and the judiciary, independent from the church or the crown would try those considered criminals. In practice this access to democratic ritual and the institutions of Foral law was extended only to landholding men. Women and most peasants did not participate. However noble women did have the right to own property, though in practice this was not the norm (Monreal Zia 2005, 16). In many ways the Fueros came to represent that which was special and uniquely Basque in the context of the Castilian Kingdom. 'Indeed, it is fair to say that the Old Law is the foundational text of a people's identity, as well as the continuing claim by some Basques to political protagonism either within or without the Spain and France of the twenty-first century' (Monreal Zia 2005, 18). A reflection of the period no doubt, but still worth noting, the primary rights holder and representative of Basqueness was the white male. Women while included in the collective were given subordinate status in the law.

The notion of who was included in the Basque collective was also steeped in the colonial racial values and prejudice of the time, which

prohibited Jews, Moors and non-noble outsiders from being granted Bizkaian residency. “The requirement of accrediting one’s “purity of blood” as a condition for Bizkaian status would characterize, until the twentieth century, the world view of the Bizkaians, as well as the native inhabitants of all the Basque territories’ (Monreal Zia 2005, 146–7).

In 1526 the old law was reformed, reinforcing the authority of the *Fuero Viejo* (Monreal Zia 2005, 139), and began to undermine the feudal power of the noble *Hidalgos* by declaring all Bizkaians noble and of equal standing. This noble status did not undo entrenched systems of power relations still bolstered by the *Hidalgo*’s concentration of control over the lands that poor peasants lived and worked on. However, it was also recognized by the Kingdom of Castile and would give Basques access to high-level positions in the military, the church and colonial administration throughout the Kingdom and the Americas. It is perhaps no surprise then, that many of the key figures in Spanish colonial and post-colonial history were Basque: from Simon Bolivar, to a number of Argentine presidents, all the way north to some of the first explorers seeking to colonize what is today the state of California (Douglass and Bilbao 1975, 192). As an important hub of shipbuilding and seafaring on the Iberian peninsula as early as the 15th century, they built and sailed the bulk of ships that established Spanish colonies and maintained trade (and even transatlantic mail) with Europe. An established community of Basque sailors in Sevilla participated in colonial voyages along the African coast to Morocco as well as Guinea and Sierra Leon (García Fuentes 2003, 34).

When colonial ships reached the ‘New World’, it was of course already home to what Denevan estimates to be about 53.9 million people in 1492. And the arrival of Europeans represents the beginning of what would be centuries of violence, massacre and pillaging of natural resources throughout the Americas in the name of colonial expansion, which after 150 years had decimated some 90 per cent of the native population leaving around 5.6 million people by 1650 (Denevan 1992, xxix). Over this same period approximately 450,000 colonial settlers arrived from different regions of Spain, including around 2,000 (3,8 per cent) Basques (García Fuentes 2003, 30). However Basque participation was even greater among the sailors who manned the ships which facilitated this colonial expansion. According to Fuentes some 50 per cent of the between 7 and 9 thousand

men that sailed the Spanish colonial fleet were Basque, and made up the majority of the crew members of the war ships (García Fuentes 2003, 35). The collective imaginary of what this part of Basque history represents is celebrated as part of Basque legendary bravery at sea and in the discovery of the New World, the commemoration of which is so woven into the daily life through street names and statues in towns and cities that one might not even register its historical significance.

Basque participation in colonialism is not only a story of glorified, seafaring war heroes and explorers. It is perhaps even more a story of negotiated privilege and political power which facilitated capital accumulation for Basque elites in multiple sectors. In fact, the crown gave exclusive rights to Basque traders of iron products as well as to Basque-made ships, prohibiting all other producers from contributing to the fleet bound for the Americas. This special agreement served 'to catapult the Basque Country, in general, and its businessmen, in particular, into international spheres, as these industries were exclusively dedicated to export and enjoyed, thanks to the official protectionism of the Crown, the benefits of the peninsular and American markets'² (García Fuentes 1991, 9). Basque owned businesses were also prominent in the trade of wine, oil and other food stuffs coming from Spain, as well as in sugar production in the Americas (Douglass and Bilbao 1975). They were active in the banking and insurance sector. And finally by founding enterprises like the Real Compañía de la Habana, and la Compañía de Cádiz, Basques were involved in the incredibly lucrative slave trade from the 16th century until the end of the 19th century (García Fuentes 2003, 44). These privileged business positions in the colonial enterprise, García Fuentes argues, are thanks to the long list of Basque last names among the high-level senior officials, ranging from those extremely close to the King like Esteban de Ibarra in 1595 as the secretary of war, to representation on important commissions like the Royal Supreme Commission of the Indies, and governing and administrative positions throughout the Americas (García Fuentes 2003, 39). I emphasize this position of privilege that the Basques occupied in the colonial project, even compared to other Seignories under the Spanish crown because the relationship between Basque identity and colonialism is proving to be a polemic point in the current period. As we will see in the following chapters, processes of collective reproduction, in response to the repressive Franco dictatorship

during the 20th century, have repositioned the Basque relationship to colonialism as one of a colonized people, and (among the political left) in solidarity with other colonized peoples.

The Church

The legal system established in the *Fueros* was notably secular and autonomy from the power of the Church was actively cultivated. Indeed, just as the imposition of Castilian governance was resisted in Bizkaia, the *Fuero Viejo* was used as a kind of shield to block the influence of external ecclesiastical authority (referred to as the ‘enemies of Bizkaia’ (Article 218)), (Monreal Zia 2005, 98) over local churches. To institutionalize this autonomy, the ownership of Bizkaian *monasterios*, or private churches (*iglesias propias*) was split between the Lord who owned half and the *Hidalgos* who owned the other half (Monreal Zia 2005, 97). This position of power allowed the *Hidalgos* and the Lord to cloak the hierarchical social order they sat at the top of in religious terms, situating them as among the most directly connected to the divine among the children of God (Achón Insausti 2006, 229). Some churches were managed by an executive clergy who then controlled the church properties and income from the tithes, while others were controlled by these local elites who held parish rights (*derechos de patronazgo*) to the properties and income as their own (Lange 1996, 143, Pitarque de la Torre 2002, 64, Monreal Zia 2005, 88). In the latter format, the collective group of patrons reserved the right to nominate the priest, fuelling the tension with the Roman Catholic Church over the ecclesiastic jurisdiction of the church buildings and properties throughout Bizkaia.

In the words of Elena Catalán Martínez, this system deprived the church of part of the income from the tithes and turned the Basque clergy into ‘an appendix of the nobility, powerless and most often unable to carry out his pastoral mission’³ (Catalán Martínez 1995, 567). Throughout the Middle Ages, the *Seignior* of Bizkaia was made up of multiple noble family estates competing for control. Acquiring parish rights was a key channel through which local Basque power could be exercised (Dacosta Martínez 1999, 46). The right to the income from the tithe, which was typically paid in grain, could be rented and even sub-rented, creating a hierarchical system of profit and control on the backs of peasant producers (Pitarque de la Torre 2002, 63). Dacosta Martínez’s detailed

historical survey of the *derechos de patronazgo* acquired by the major Bizkaian noble estates throughout the pre-industrial period reveals that these houses would seek a stake in multiple churches covering large geographic areas stretching from inland forests to coastal sea ports, thus facilitating the export of the iron produced (Dacosta Martínez 1999, 45).

Beyond the income from the tithe collected by the clergy from the local peasants and churchgoers, the bulk of the income that went to the Church came from the sale of wood from its vast forest land assets for vegetable charcoal to fuel the local iron industry. Other income came from some livestock, and donations from wealthy families (Lange 1996, 137–8). The church also had some fixed assets like houses and buildings, but a key focus of wealth management was maintained by extending credit to local residents when they faced sudden expenses like those associated with funerals or weddings (Lange 1996, 142).

Familia troncal

The concept of the *Familia troncal*, described as '[t]he soul of Bizkaia's civil law' (Celaya Ibarra 2012, 9) is translated in a variety of ways into English. Given the scope and cultural importance of this legal framework in Bizkaia, it is hard for any of the translations to convey the full meaning. Referred to as 'truncal immovable family patrimony', and 'community property' by Monreal Zia (2005) or 'genealogical succession' by Celaya Ibarra (2012), *la troncalidad* is the unique Basque legal bond between land and family established in order to ensure that the connection is never broken (Celaya Ibarra 2012, 12). There are forms of *troncalidad* in Aragon and Navarra to the east of the Basque Country, however it is not found in the Spanish civil code and none of its other expressions have the force and institutional scope as in the Bizkaian fuero (Celaya Ibarra 2012, 9). For Goikoetxea Oleaga, *troncalidad* strengthens and unites the monogamous family, upon which Basque society is based (2005, 375).

In both the old and new Foral law, inheritance laws establish two types of property: truncal immovable patrimony and moveable property. While moveable property can be left to any heir, the principle of *troncalidad* obliges truncal immovable patrimony to be inherited by a member of one's family⁴ (Monreal Zia 2005, 129). The principle of *troncalidad* applied to

nobles and peasants alike, shaping the succession patterns of peasants who existed on the lord of Bizkaia's land over many generations (Goikoetxea Oleaga 2005, 366). This system of *troncalidad* reflects the need to protect the survival of the family unit whose subsistence was based on their land assets as early as the 14th century, but it has remained central in all subsequent versions of Bizkaian foral law (Goikoetxea Oleaga 2005, 364).

The Lords of Bizkaia and the Catholic kings also had an interest in maintaining the stability of peasant families, since on the backs of their labour, a steady stream of tax income flowed into the royal purse. If allowed or encouraged to divide the family assets among multiple heirs, given the geographic realities of the Basque Country, the successive subdivision of already small parcels of land would quickly result in a patchwork of properties too small for a family to subsist on. Peasants would be forced to abandon their lands and the kings and lords would lose income. In the words of the royal decree of 1487 the priority was to ensure that 'our peasant farm lots are whole with hearths burning at all times, never depopulating nor laying to waste, and failing to pay'⁵ (Celaya Ibarra 2012, 10). Then in the 16th century New Foral Law: 'no one possessing a farm which pays taxes to his Royal Majesties can sell, transfer, trade, nor change any part or parcel associated with said farm; so that it always remains whole and healthy in order to pay his Majesty'⁶ (Celaya Ibarra 2012, 10).

Among the rural elite, this practice of indivisible inheritance was referred to as a system of *mayorazgo*, which could be established legally, and was common practice as a way of exerting their class position. Status was measured by one's ability to protect and expand the family estate/house (*Casa*), or 'domestic logic' linking family to land as a means to power (Achón Insausti 2006, 237). The still intact feudal system of land relations allowed them to extract surplus (*censo*) from the peasants that worked their land. Campbell Black translates this as an annuity, or ground rent. Garrabou *et al.* refers to this system of land relations as emphyteutic (2001, 95), something akin to lease holding. In this feudal structure, the *censo enfiteutico* was the right of the Lords of Bizkaia to 'require of another a certain canon or pension annually, on account of having transferred to that person forever certain real estate, but reserving the fee in the land' (Campbell Black 1910, 181). This *censo* was typically paid in grain, money,

or labour. Other income streams, included tolls for passing through one's property, and shares of the church profits derived from ownership of parish rights and income from forest lands. Achón Insausti argues that this domestic logic helped frame the community of residents as part of one big house, administered by the Hidalgos and protected by the Catholic Monarchy. In this way, the interests of the elite and the family assets of the Hidalgos were symbolically recast as collective patrimony, in a land of universal nobility and the basis of local customs (Achón Insausti 2006, 238). This egalitarian spirit, Achón Insausti argues was much more a cultivated ideology than a material reality (2006, 239).

According to Monreal Zia, the application of this inheritance practice of maintaining the farm whole and intact to pass on to the successor was applied by the Lords of Bizkaia in the adjacent territories of Encartaciones and Durangesado as a way of creating 'a kind of institutional unity among them. In this fashion the denomination of Bizkaia, which referred originally only to the Tierra Llana of the Seignior, was gradually generalized to all three territories' (Monreal Zia 2005, 24). Here the centrality of *la familia troncal* in the construction of a collective Basque identity and connection to their land and territory is evident.

3.1.3 Systemic reproduction: lords and peasants in a period of regime change

Examining the dynamics of systemic reproduction requires a broad perspective to look not only at how peasant economic systems are reproduced, but also the function of those specific peasant imperatives in upholding a general system of pre-industrial socio-economic relations. Indeed, the class structure of the pre-industrial the era was one that ensured the reproduction of the Seigniorial lords, not of peasants. As Brenner describes, 'throughout the medieval and into the early modern period, the existence and reproduction of the feudal ruling classes depended upon "extra-economic" ("political") arrangements by which the requisite surplus ("economic") was extracted from the peasant producers.' (1982, 32).

If there is one thread that runs through nearly all of the historical literature about rural Bizkaia in the pre-industrial period it is the

vulnerability of life itself for most peasants. Thus, nearly all activities of the Basque peasantry during this period were primarily oriented towards sustaining life as the overarching goal. However, to do this, many farms depended on off-farm income, or pluriactivity. In fact Ainz Ibarrondo conjectures that it may be the case that given the acidic soil and low yields, even owning the land, a completely self-sufficient Basque *caserío* never really dominated, instead developing in parallel and co-dependence with the early iron industry (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 46). In the language of the subsistence perspective, the goods produced from working one's land did not generate enough to cover social reproductive needs of a given household. But because these productive relations did not operate in a completely money-based economy, and were still limited by the class and social property relations of the time, the logic of survival was paramount for all members of the household.

With the decline of the rural iron foundries and the increase in money wages and new credit relations, the survival of agrarian production was ensured by a reorganization of social reproduction. During the pre-industrial period in the Basque country as the seeds of capitalist relations were emergent in rural areas, and we can see an increasing breakdown of a subsistence logic as a money-based economy expanded. The final blow to the pre-industrial power structure controlled by the rural noble elite, however came from the series of liberal reforms throughout the 19th century. These reforms privatized the commons, and sought to mobilize land sales, freeing rural properties from the indivisible constraints of the *mayorazgos* of the nobility. The pre-industrial system was also undermined by the decline in the decentralized mode of rural iron production, which was brought on by a shift to urban factories based on coal rather than wood and the consolidation of the Basque model of industrial capitalism that drew rural workers from all over Spain to meet the labour demands.

Amidst these transformations, for most peasants, growing enough food to feed a numerous family required enormous effort as it was. On top of this was the additional burden of paying tax on their land to the Lord, or rent as a tenant farmer, the tithe paid to the church, and the costs of weddings and funerals in the family for inclusion in the social collective and for any additional food stuffs, medical care, or household items.

Peasants employed a number of strategies to meet these needs which shaped the pre-industrial agrarian social reproductive regime: 1.) strategic use of labour and family demographic balance; 2.) diversified land access strategies in the context of *mayorazgos* and communal property relations; 3.) food provisioning and agricultural innovation; and 4.) debt and credit. Although in practice these dynamics overlapped, unpacking each in a contextually specific manner allows for a more detailed identification of the central mechanisms of systemic reproduction, and its entry into crisis, thus giving way to the emergence of a different agrarian social reproductive regime which enabled industrialization.

Strategic use of family labour

The division of work within the family tended to allocate domestic labour (food preparation, tending a small garden patch for household consumption, child and elder care) to the women of the house. Children began assisting with household labour at a young age. And because of the uneven topography, most of the working of the land and hauling of wood or dirt had to be done by hand with the sheer force of sweat and muscle. Managing to maintain the balance between growing enough food and having enough hands to work was difficult to control, especially given the lack of contraceptive measures in this period. Thus, strategic use of family labour was key to survival. In the case of scarce land resources, this was achieved by sending family members in search of off-farm income and in the case of overly abundant land resources, by hiring servant/farm labour. And depending on the family size and make up, sometimes both. The members of the family who inherited the farm in many cases depended upon the employment of those who were disinherited to make ends meet. According to Arbaiza Vilallonga, it is impossible to understand the *familia troncal* based on agrarian production without recognizing its interdependence with other forms of off-farm labour that served as an escape valve for surplus rural population (1996, 50–1). Indeed, inside of the black box of the family we find a complex set of gender and class differentiations that govern the distribution of work and ensure the reproduction of the *caserío*.

It was common for some members of the family to find employment off of the farm in the rural iron industry where the labour requirements were massive. Cutting and hauling wood, turning it into vegetable charcoal

and hauling mineral, were tasks that depended upon seasonal migration from Guipuzkoa to Bizkaia to fill the demand. However, the seasonality of ‘working the vein’ (meaning the iron deposit) coincided with the busiest period for farming, from spring through summer, when the rains subsided allowing the forest roads to be passable. That said, the typical charcoal hauler or ox-cart driver was a peasant living on a tiny parcel of land not sufficient to live only from his production. This meant that even in summer months, no matter how difficult it was to juggle the work, the off-farm income was essential (Lange 1996, 437). This fact may have influenced the division of farm labour within households, providing reason for women to take up more agricultural work, even heavy labour (Uriarte Ayo 1988, 99 cited in Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 82). As Lange describes, the important role of rural iron foundries was to provide many occasional and temporary employment opportunities rather than a handful of fulltime stable jobs (1996, 435).

Both men and women were also commonly sent to work as domestic labourers or servants (*criadas* or *criados* in Spanish), to rural and urban households. While in many cases this marked a clear class difference between the sending families in need of off-farm income and the receiving families whose economic status afforded them the luxury of hired cleaners, cooks, drivers, landscapers, or care workers. In pre-industrial times, being a young rural to urban immigrant domestic worker characterized the female experience in particular (Arbaiza Vilallonga 1996, 49). From as young as 5 or 6 years of age, rural girls from both land-owning farms and homes struggling to meet minimum food consumption needs were sent to work as servants in both rural and urban residences in exchange for food and shelter. In many houses the birth of a new child meant the departure of the eldest as a *criada* (Azkue Antzia 2000, 369). Gracia Cárcamo notes that despite a discourse of ‘our servants are like family’, deep class divides remained, driving relations of exploitation (1995, 114).

In the case of male farm hands (*criados de labor*), many rural employers, or ‘poor masters’ came from similar social backgrounds as the workers they hired. Formal hierarchies were not always evident from the outside, and it was not uncommon for *criados* to be given the clothes of their masters to go to church or other public events. *Criados de labor* were not

only responsible for agricultural tasks, and tending to the livestock. They also worked for their farmer boss hauling mineral and fuel in the rural iron industry (Gracia Cárcamo 1995, 116). Though studies on the issue are limited Gracia Cárcamo conjectures that during the 16th and 17th century payment was primarily in-kind in the form of food, clothing and accommodation. Later in the 18th century evidence of paid annual wages and in turn conflicts over unpaid wages emerge in the legal archives. This transition to money payment signified a shift from servitude to employment, which some rural employers resisted, even into the early 20th century (Gracia Cárcamo 1995, 120–1).

Despite the uneven class relations indeed present even in the context of rural *criados de labor* hired by ‘poor masters’, ‘the condition of servant or labourer was perceived as an accidental situation or as a stage in one's working life,’ (Garrabou *et al.* 2001, 95). In fact it was a stage many rural peasants passed through as they transitioned to urban workers (De Dios Fernández 2016, 18) — something increasingly common as the pre-industrial agrarian regime of social reproduction unravelled, giving way to a new set of relations oriented towards enabling more urban-based industrial production.

Modernization of what was in effect a rustic and labour intensive mode of producing iron, was therefore strongly resisted by the rural elite benefiting from that pre-industrial system (Lange 1996, 440). The decentralized, vegetable charcoal-based model of production endured for a long time on the international market, despite the emergence of new technologies. The abundance of forests together with iron deposits and their proximity to the port of Bilbao, made the system relatively competitive and immune to modernization, but this resistance to technological development only lasted so long before the pressure to centralize in urban coal-based factories spelled the death knell for rural iron producers dotted throughout the small towns of Bizkaia. The introduction of the Bessemer process, which enabled the relatively cheap elaboration of steel powered by coal instead of wood accelerated the urbanization of production that was already underway. And with it a system of off-farm labour relations that supplemented the subsistence reproduction of the peasants in rural areas was geographically stretched and changed, requiring off-farm workers to be away from the *caserío* for

longer periods of time, leaving the work of subsistence to a smaller often female portion of the family.

Food provisioning and agricultural innovation

In addition to a dependence on off-farm labour, Bizkaian peasants in this period depended on food imports. In the 17th century still, Bizkaian peasants were only producing about a quarter of the food needed to feed the local population (Lange 1996, 180). These very real challenges to meeting basic caloric needs among peasant families were also a key driver of emigration to the Americas (Lange 1996, 180). Although the rural areas were not as well connected, lacking good roads and infrastructure, some traded food goods made it to village sellers. This combined with the acidic soil and very rainy weather, meant that many peasant households relied on this trade for access to fish, whale blubber, oil, meat, salt, tobacco, aguardiente, candles and wine. The sale of these goods was taxed and regulated by municipal authorities, who effectively had a monopoly on their distribution and set their prices (Lange 1996, 408). In rural areas, these goods were a supplement to subsistence food production, and indeed quite limited due to the relative scarcity of money in the village economy. One of the primary inroads for money currency was via the iron foundries which had commercial relations beyond the village. Although not all wages were paid in money, Lange conjectures that the payment for some services or work at the foundry was thus an important manner in which peasants got access to cash (Lange 1996, 434).

The introduction of corn in the 17th century, triggered the so-called ‘corn revolution’ rendering much of the population in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa less dependent on grain from Alava and Navarra. It fit nicely in rotation with wheat production, occupying grain fields from spring until early fall, leaving the winter period for wheat. Production increased dramatically, also thanks to the increased use of lime applied to soil (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 52–3). The corn revolution also shifted the ownership structure of farms throughout the valley. In the first half of the 18th century, a sudden burst of sales of wood for fences marking individual parcels, suggests a shift towards a more individual notion of property (Lange 1996, 227–8). Not only that, but the ratio of renters to owners also changed. First, corn intensified production, making it so that more could be produced on less land. Thus, some peasants rented the sections of their

land they no longer needed or were unable to farm. Second, increasing levels of debt forced some peasants to sell their family property converting them into tenant farmers (Lange 1996, 660–1). In general, there is a shift in importance from size of land to fulfil home consumption needs towards the amount of farm income generated from marketized relations. As roads and crop yields improved towards the end of the 18th century, travel to nearby markets was more feasible, thus contributing to the expansion of the money economy in rural areas (Lange 1996, 28).

These changes gradually reduced the self-sufficiency of peasant households (to the extent that it ever fully existed), and though it relieved some of the pressure on the consumption needs of the population in the context of difficult agricultural conditions, in so doing, it increasingly tied their survival to industrial labour and access to markets and money.

Land Access and property relations

The term *caserío* refers to the farmhouse, but also the lands that it uses to sustain its agricultural production. This typically included some cropland, grazing land, family gravesites, as well as the rights to common forestlands controlled by the municipalities. According to Ainz Ibarrondo, an important number of peasants were able to acquire their own property by way of public concessions of the commons during the medieval period (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 40). In this way noble estates functioning according to feudal social relations co-existed with small-scale property-owning peasants. For those who did not own their own land, the most common form of tenancy was *emphyteusis*, something akin to a long term/indefinite lease, paid yearly to a noble estate owner. Given the profitability of lumber, it was common to exclude access to the forest associated with a given *caserío* when rented, so as to increase revenues for the land owner. This rendered tenant farmers all the more dependent on the commons as a source of chestnuts, grazing land for animals, which in turn provided animal traction, and fertilizer to the farm, plus extra income if they could haul wood for the iron and steel industry (Lange 1996, 273). Those who had animals and those who needed wood paid municipal governments for access (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 89). Municipal governments would allow privately owned plantations on communal land, however the scale of the investment this required and the time it took to reap any returns meant that only wealthier members of the community

could take advantage of these opportunities. And indeed these privately owned plantations (primarily by the Church and iron foundry owners) supplied the bulk of wood for vegetable charcoal — in 1814 some 85 per cent of charcoal produced in Bizkaia came from private forest plantations (Uriarte Ayo 1988 cited in Ainz Ibarondo 2001, 90)

A turning point in the transition to a system of transferable private property came as a result of the series of liberal reforms from 1805 – 1841. These reforms sought to abolish the system of Seigniories and *mayorazgo*, which were seen as inhibiting land markets. Ultimately the feudal form of seigniorial jurisdiction was abolished and with it the right to charge tolls, and taxes on activities within the *mayorazgo*. However, rather than redistributing the land to those peasants who worked it, noble estates simply became large holdings of private property (Rueda Hernanz 2015, 48).

These liberal reforms in the early 19th century also fuelled a massive wave of privatization of common lands throughout Bizkaia. This process culminated in the Spanish 1855 law of expropriation, which formally took communal lands as public holdings, so they could then be sold to increase state revenues. Well before, between 1808 and 1814, many municipal governments in the Basque provinces saw the sale of the commons as the most viable strategy to raise the funds needed to maintain the Royal army that they were forced to feed and provide for during the Napoleonic wars. However as the rural iron industry entered into decline, and with it an important part of the municipal income, rather than raising the price of wood, local authorities took on higher and higher levels of debt (Lange 1996, 617). Certainly the additional burden of hosting the royal army in 1812 did not help matters, but the budget crisis had already led to the bulk of the privatization of municipal land in 1811 (Lange 1996, 627).

Rather than distributing individual property among the peasantry as the Liberal ideology of the time envisioned, only those with existing wealth were able to take advantage of the commons coming up for sale. As commons were sold off, existing socio-economic inequalities further crystalized in landed assets. The majority of rural peasants didn't have the means to buy new land as it came onto the market, so it concentrated into

the hands of wealthy families. After this period less than 20 per cent of the forestlands (mostly the highlands) in Bizkaia and Guipuzkoa remained communal (Alberdi Collantes 2003, 9). However, this concentration, in spatial terms was a patchwork of *caseríos* scattered sometimes throughout multiple municipalities, thus diffusing the sense of large-scale land ownership — what Del Moral Ruiz called ‘disperse latifundio’ (cited in Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 72). Acquiring more land allowed this rural bourgeoisie to enable the transformation of woodlands into farmland to be rented for cash and provide credit as the rural financial system shifted to a money economy. To profit from this new landscape it was no longer necessary to live in the valley, contributing to a migration of both surplus workers and wealthy elites to urban areas (Lange 1996, 677).

Debt and credit

The practice of lending has existed in many forms throughout the pre-industrial period in rural Bizkaia, and according to Foral law, debt was passed down from generation to generation. During the pre-industrial period the modes of giving and receiving credit were diverse,⁷ but credit relations most typically were carried out between people who knew each other, or in some cases between family members. And the emerging money economy was circumscribed by dense networks of barter and work exchange, which were currencies easier to come by among peasants. Partial payment for the rent of a *caserío* might be offered by carrying out certain jobs, and even the typical labour contract at an iron foundry was in fact a mix of credit and barter. At times, payment was in-kind or labour was used to pay off previous debts (Lange 1996, 445–6).

As the model of more market-oriented agriculture expanded in parallel with the decline of the rural iron industry, the loss of rural job opportunities meant that peasants turned to credit to cover care deficits for which they needed cash. The interests on outstanding debts also had to be paid in cash, further fuelling the expansion of market-oriented production and undermining the social reproductive imperative of peasant households (Lange 1996, 500). This increase in debt coincides with an important shift in credit relations, which accelerated the transition into the industrial period and eroded the foundation of subsistence-based peasant reproduction. At the end of the 18th century the introduction of the *censo de obligación* with a limited time frame for payment plus the establishment

of a compiled registry of mortgage loans reduced the risk of lending from the perspective of the creditors. These changes meant that if the owner of a small farm failed to repay his/her debts in time, the creditor could order the seizure and auction of the property backing the loan. Not only did this incentivize more lending, it also increased the amount of land for sale on the market (Lange 1996, 530–1). With the increased transferability of land, came a more pronounced class differentiation and concentration of land resources, farm losses due to debt or economic desperation, and greater dependence on increasingly urban employment.

As explained, the sale of municipal land also increased during this period as the local government took on more and more debt, rather than raising taxes on a rural iron industry in decline. The Basque Country has always been characterized by a relatively low level of taxation compared to the rest of the Spanish State. In the preindustrial period the primary logic of the Spanish tax authority was to finance war and pay additional military expense with debt. A key reason for the need to resort to debt was the extremely uneven taxation system, which allowed some people to remain exempt (Bilbao Bilbao 1991, 44). The consequences of favouring increased public debt over taxation of the rich fuelled the privatization of the commons and undermined peasant social reproduction. Here is a clear example of how the logic of systemic reproduction was one that sacrificed peasant subsistence in the interest of the rural elite. Ultimately this became untenable and rural iron and forestry production systems collapsed accelerating the transition into the industrial period.

3.2 The Basque industrial century: nationalism and Franco's authoritarian welfare state

After the decline of the Seigniories, the regime of agrarian social reproduction and the political landscape shifted. Basque autonomy was increasingly dependent upon the relationship with the liberal and modernizing Spanish state, rather than the Crown. This period is marked by the deliberate cultivation of a unified and nationalist politics of negotiation among the three Basque provinces (Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, and Araba) in relation to the central Spanish government. The Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) was founded in 1895 and the process of building and promoting a national Basque identity drew on agrarian symbols of the

Basque peasantry as the traditional way of life of a people in connection with their territory.

At the same time, the processes of urbanization and industrialization were dramatic, drawing thousands of rural workers, no longer able to survive as the commons had been privatized and the decentralized rural iron sector decimated, who flooded into Bilbao and the industrial banks of the Nervion river. Demand for labour was so great that workers came from all over the Spanish State, which provided a convenient immigrant 'other' against which to construct an ideal of pure Basqueness. The social and economic shift during this period was profound, driving residents out of rural areas and undermining the agrarian social reproductive relations based on the familia troncal (Zarraga Sangroniz 2016, 31).

This industrial development in urban areas was facilitated by a process of state building wherein public institutions began to attend to care deficits and care needs among the population, with the development of things like social security and pension plans. These social services primarily targeted urban centres, deepening divides between the rural, associated with the traditional foral system of the past, and the urban, symbol of modernity and progress. The Francoist social order that replaced it, can be seen as an authoritarian welfare regime, which used the distribution and withholding of social reproductive services as a political tool for repression and coercion.

3.2.1 Generational reproduction: conditional care and authoritarian welfare

During this period the reproduction of the peasant farm was largely undermined by industrialization, generational renewal of farmers was increasingly difficult according to the logic of the previous social reproductive regime, and the farmers who remained were expected to specialize. However, during this period, a decline in the number of farmers was not seen as a crisis of generational renewal since the rural surplus labour was needed to migrate to cities to fill the massive demand for labour in the booming industrial sector, or to the Americas. Many rural towns received a boost in infrastructure, investments in schools, and health care facilities at the beginning of the industrial period from

remittances from those who had migrated to the Americas. Those who returned with newly made wealth were called *Indianos*, and in addition to the philanthropic donations to their hometown, built luxurious colonial style houses and often planted a palm tree in the front yard, signifying that he had made it, 'he did the Americas' (Figueroa and Rojo 2009, 6).

Beyond local rural infrastructure improvements, capital expropriated from the Americas was also invested in the process of industrialization, which brought with it new public support for social reproductive needs. The building of the welfare state, created new safety nets that neither rural nor urban populations had ever had access to before. In this sense, "The welfare state emerges as part of the "logic of industrialisation" and 'develops in response to the needs of advanced capitalism' (Cousins 2005, 19). For Fraser, this regime of social reproductive relations is 'Premised on large-scale industrial production and domestic consumerism in the core, underpinned by ongoing colonial and postcolonial expropriation in the periphery, this regime internalized social reproduction through state and corporate provision of social welfare' (2017, Kindle Locations 655–657).

In the Spanish State the rollout of welfare policies began with labour laws meant to protect workers facing grim conditions in the mines. An 1873 law prohibited children under 10 from working in factories and night shifts, as well as mandating the construction of schools in some factories. In 1900 another law prevented farm and industrial workers from being fired without cause and women and children were not allowed to work inside the mines. Mine owners were responsible for providing economic assistance in the event of work related injuries (Apalategi 2006, 110). These were just some of the many labour laws and social policies that proliferated at the turn of the century, leading to the creation of the Institute of Social Reforms in 1903. These new laws included provisions for: rest on Sundays, a labour inspection service in 1906, the right to strike granted in 1909, the regularization of labour contracts in 1911, the eight hour work day, and the development of the first system of social security and forced retirement by the Spanish government 1919 (Apalategi 2006, 111). However agrarian workers were largely left out of these provisions (Lanero Táboas 2007, 150), thus the way social reproduction was organized created incentives for rural to urban migration.

Beyond these earlier patchwork efforts, a more coordinated attempt to build a welfare state took place during the Franco dictatorship, which took power after the civil war in 1936 and lasted 40 years. According to Jumilla, the regime that Franco built can be classified as a ‘pre-democratic authoritarian welfare state,’ which used its institutions to enforce a particular social order and punish those seen as a threat (Jumilla 2007, 4). A neotraditional conservative catholic social order based on the patriarchal family was promoted as the basis of Francoist society. In this system, women were ‘liberated’ from wage work and cast as mothers and wives, relegated to the domestic sphere, and dependent upon the male breadwinner. Access to many social services was obtained via one’s husband. And Spanish nationalism didn’t tolerate the aspirations of autonomy or independence coming from the Basque Country (Jumilla 2007, 5). Basque institutions like the Diputación Foral of Bizkaia were hollowed out by purges, which forced all employees to reapply for their positions, automatically suspect if they had been employed during the Second Republic (Ipiña Bidaurrezaga 2014, 514). However social policy was also used to root out political dissidence and ‘as a tool of political and ideological control’ (Brydan 2019, 8). For example, health visitors organized by the Falange’s Women’s Section served as a vehicle for checking on the political and religious tendencies of new mothers and ‘The spread of infectious diseases was blamed on moral failings within Republican zones during the war’ (Brydan 2019, 8).

Before the Franco dictatorship, during the second republic, the first attempts were made to extend social protections to the rural world, but this legislation only included farmworkers, not peasants (Lanero Táboas 2007, 150–1). However it wasn’t until the end of the 40s — and really with force in the 1950s when farmers saw the promotion of a wave of subsidies and insurance schemes geared towards them (Lanero Táboas 2007, 150). Franco converted existing structures set up to facilitate the modernization of Basque agriculture into channels through which support to farmers was dispersed. The Real Sociedad Bascongada de Amigos del País, promoted the use of corn and other agricultural innovations introduced from neighbouring European countries as early as 1763 in the name of the development and progress of the Basque nation (Arroyo and Tellería 2009, 29). This led to the development of the Cámaras Agrarias (Agrarian

Chambers) in 1890 seen as structures in which farmers could organize and see themselves as a collective in this modernization process, together with industrial workers. They also served as a way for the Basque government to relate to and translate expectations for specific behaviour to the rural world (Arroyo and Tellería 2009, 32). Under Franco these institutions were integrated into the mandatory vertical syndicate structure of the government and would become a key institutional channel by which social supports were distributed to farmers. At the same time it would provide mechanisms of control over agrarian activities, including the coordination of rural police (Arroyo and Tellería 2009, 72). Existing local brotherhoods and cooperatives were then accountable to the provincial *Camaras Agrarias* (Arroyo and Tellería 2009, 97).

In 1943 an initial special agrarian regime of social security was established, which, although vague in its language, included self-employed agrarian workers (that is, peasants). This language wasn't clarified until 1949–50, when the legal category of self-employed agrarian worker was defined (Lanero Táboas 2007, 152). In this context, access to these benefits and recognition as part of this legal category, was contingent upon membership (and paying dues) in the *Camaras Agrarias*. 1943 was also the year that family subsidies and pensions for rural workers were approved, some four years after their introduction in urban areas. According to Lanero Táboas, the family subsidy legislation was deployed as a mechanism of fomenting a particular demographic and gender politics envisioned for Francoist Spain. By providing a stimulus for large families, the model of 'organic conception' was supported as well as a family model in which the wife did not have to seek employment, and instead upheld a model of 'feminine reclusion in the domestic sphere' (Lanero Táboas 2007, 154).

In 1959 the 'Mutualidad Nacional de Previsión Agraria' (MNPA) was created to manage social security throughout rural Spain. This institutional development introduced two types of benefits, both still contingent upon paying the quota to the syndicate structure. One was obligatory for all paying syndicate members. And the other was dependent upon the MNPA's assessment of needs. Here Lanero Táboas argues, one of the central features of the Franco welfare regime is clear: social security was not actually a right, rather a concession or gift from 'the regime, the

dictator or in the local community context, the corresponding official on duty'. Thus, these 'rights'/concessions, for example to access health care, could be taken away as a form of political punishment (Lanero Táboas 2007, 158). In sum, in the Basque context, the social reproductive fixes that emerged during the industrial regime were uneven, helping to move workers towards urban areas, effectively sacrificing the survival of a portion of existing farms to enable industrial development. Access to this new organization of social reproduction was also contingent on conforming to patriarchal structures economically ordered by the family wage for men and their dependent wives, whose labour was invisibilized. Plus, the repressive dictatorial nature of the Franco regime meant support for social reproduction was also dependent upon political submission, granted first to industrial workers, and later only to rural workers, who paid into and adhered to the guidelines of the *Camaras Agrarias* vertical syndicate structure.

3.2.2 Collective reproduction: cultivating Basque nationalism

Basque agriculture and nationalist symbols

Defence of the Foral system was a key theme throughout the pre-industrial period; however, this effort unified the three Basque provinces and took on renewed significance throughout the 19th century as the tension between Liberalism and Carlism erupted in the Carlist wars. After the *Fueros* were abolished at the end of the second Carlist war in 1876, the Foral regime came to be romanticized by the Carlist leaning rural elite and the clergy as a way of idealizing what was lost to garner support to fight to recover it. The growing nationalist movement then drew on this rural nostalgia to garner support for its cause. This use of the rural world as a political tool, according to Elorza has in few occasions seen such intense and lasting use as in the Basque Country (1977, 361).

As Pérez-Agote's study on the reproduction of Basque nationalism demonstrates, the nation is brought to life via institutional architecture and territorial boundaries, but equally important is the cultivation of a collective identity. As Anderson suggests it is an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983). '[T]he nation is something phenomenological, something that belongs, fundamentally, to the consciousness of social

actors' (Pérez-Agote 2006, xvii). In the Basque case, the rural world was idealized through legends, mythology, and idealization of rural life (Elorza 1977, 363–4). Or in the words of Caballero, Basque-ness was celebrated as rooted in the simple, hardworking farm life, governed by a strong patriarch, unchanged over centuries, preserved in a pure virgin state (cited in Elorza 1977, 362). In this way, the rural Basque identity is held up as the image of purity, patriarchy, and religious morality, in opposition to any forces, be they liberal state building or immigration of foreign workers, which might dilute this purity, whose origin can be found among the *baserritarra*⁸ with their love of the mountainous coastal territory where the *fueros* rule (Elorza 1977, 364).

At the same time the conditions for social reproduction of peasant livelihoods had become untenable for many, in the midst of booming urban industrial development. Thus, as their rural existence crumbled peasants watched the nationalist political elite weave idealized notions of it through the political collective imaginary as the core of traditional Basque values that must be defended. This contradiction at the core of early nationalist politics, was exacerbated by the fact that such ideas emerged primarily in urban areas, yet projected an imagined collective identity onto the agrarian world (Elorza 1977, 355, Pérez-Agote 1984, 60).

Sabino Arana and the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV)

The PNV was founded on a racist romantic rural ideology claiming the need to defend the purity of the Basque race in 1895 by Sabino Arana, who leveraged the political moment of defeat among the rural bourgeoisie and new waves of immigrants from outside of the Basque country to industrial centres along the Nervion river. The worker mobilizations that came with this period of momentous change were composed of not only foreign but also largely atheist workers, thus the Basque bourgeoisie rallied behind the defence of religion and the *fueros* against the socialist threat that was seen as invading Bizkaia (Apalategi 2006, 114).

Framing the new influx of workers from rural areas of other regions of the Spanish State as a threat to Basque culture and ways of life and politics (its most pure form found in rural municipalities, less contaminated by immigrants), Arana anchored the nationalist project to an ideal of Basque

ethnicity, tied to shared lineage and land (Pérez-Agote 1984, 60). This notion of a Basque race is therefore a genealogical construct, which Arana popularized, but which began with the legal debates captured by the lawyer Andrés Poza in the 16th century. In these debates Bizkaia was presented as a community of noblemen, whose family heritage justified their rights to the land of the territory ('the collective uterus of noble people') protected by the legal construct of the familia troncal (Portillo Valdés 1998, 432–3). Building on the legal precedent of universal Basque nobility, it was the religious scholar Laramendi in the 18th century who explicitly made reference to the noble blood of the 'Basque race' (Aranzadi 2001, 896). In the words of Father Laramendi, 'Neither Jews, Moors, other races, mulato nor black people are allowed to dwell here'⁹ (cited in Aranzadi 2001, 896). The continuity is evident in the words of Campión in 1901 describing the invasion of foreigners in Bizkaia that threatened the purity of the race. 'Ethnic detritus, a hybrid mass of bastardized Celts, decadent Latinos and corrupted Moors, still intend, gentlemen, to cause us greater harm, poisoning our souls with a crude ideal, typical of envious slaves'¹⁰ (Campión 1901 cited in Elorza 1977, 373).

Even though the liberal reforms of the 19th century abolished the Seignior property structure, the noble family upon which this racialized national identity rests was crystalized in the collective imaginary as a catholic heteropatriarchal unit, which governed land relations and power dynamics within the family, as described in the first half of this chapter. Hernández and Imaz highlight the role of mythology and symbolism in upholding gendered family roles as the foundation of Basque nationalism. According to Del Valle et al.,

In nationalist writing and theorizing, women are systematically associated with images of mother, Earth, the Virgin, and the Motherland. Thus, we see ama (mother), Ama birjiña (the Virgin), Ama Aberria (the Motherland), and Ama Lur (the Earth). Women were thus identified with the figure of the mother, with everything that was pure and elevated— and in this way given a superhuman status. On another level, women were considered to be fundamentally important to perpetuating the race, to transmitting the language, and to maintaining the family (Del Valle 1985, 229, translated in Hernández and Imaz 2010, 57).

In short, the threat of outsiders that early Basque nationalists stoked fears about clearly tapped into the widespread racism of the time, and leveraged this sentiment to protect idealized notions of a heteropatriarchal and highly unequal rural society. However, during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera which took leadership in Spain from 1923–1931, the nature of the threats to Basque culture became much more dangerous and deliberate. An initial version of Spanish nationalism was aggressively exerted, and repression against Basque nationalists was widespread. Many were jailed, or went into exile, political centres were shut down and writing in Euskera was prohibited. This repression generated massive support for Basque nationalism and fuelled anti-monarchist sentiment among the socialist workers movements.

Thus when the Second Republic was voted into power in 1931, the Basque country was split between the cities where anti-monarchist workers were concentrated and the PNV which dominated in the rest of the territory (Apalategi 2006, 115). Upon the establishment of the Second Republic in the Spanish State, the PNV's presence in the Spanish parliament grew, and the key focus of the struggle for autonomy was the Statute of Autonomy for Euskadi. The Autonomous government of Euskadi was created in 1936 and a politics of pragmatic reformism that would characterize the PNV for decades to come were consolidated. As Apalategi explains, the core of the PNV approach was not about breaking the class alliance between Basque and Spanish elites in defence of Basque racial purity and the rural world, rather negotiating for reforms within the Capitalist system which would allow for the greatest amount of autonomy and profit for Basque enterprise (Apalategi 2006, 116). However, after the civil war the Franco dictatorship brought back a sense of brutal repression which consolidated Basque nationalist sentiment, and collective identity as a nation colonized by the Spanish regime.

Radical Basque nationalism and ETA

Although much of Basque society was moved by the nationalist sentiment of the PNV, especially in the context of a shared enemy in the Franco regime, internal political divisions were hard to overlook. The anti-socialist, patriarchal, bourgeoisie interests of the party did not resonate with more politically leftist sectors of society. In 1952 a group of nationalist students formed a study group Ekin to engage with the history

of Basque nationalism. Later they merged with EGI (Euzko Gaztedi Indarra), the PNV youth group, composing the early formations of the Radical leftist nationalists, referred to as the *Izquierda Abertzale* (the patriotic left in Basque). This challenged what was seen as an overly accommodating political stance towards Franco taken by the PNV in the 1950s, and eventually led to the formation ETA (Euzkadi Ta Azkatasuna), meaning Basque homeland and freedom, in 1958. ETA's political project emerged as a socialist nationalist vision, and like the PNV, it was inspired by Sabino Arana's notion of Euskadi as a nation occupied by Francoist forces. Their objective was independence and the central strategy, violent activism (Leonisio Calvo 2012, 379). However, distinct from Sabino Arana, at the first assembly in 1962 ETA defined itself as a 'Basque revolutionary national liberation movement, created in patriotic resistance' (Jáuregui, 2000, 206 cited in Leonisio Calvo 2012, 379), which rejects racism and any kind of dictatorial regime (Letamendia 1975, cited in Leonisio Calvo 2012, 379).

The leftist critique and demands for systemic socio-economic transformation would grow over time. This social revolutionary stance was especially ignited after ETA's first attack against a Francoist train passing through the Basque Country. Though the attack failed, Franco's response drove many of ETA's militants that had been involved into exile in France, where they became steeped in the anti-colonial and Marxist politics of the French left at the time, thus adding to the political plurality that ETA encompassed in its early years (Leonisio Calvo 2012, 379). As the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist analysis deepened among ETA activists, they officially broke with the PNV in 1964, criticizing it as bourgeoisie (Leonisio Calvo 2012, 380).

Gender politics have also evolved within the *izquierda abertzale*.

ETA here reflects the direct heritage of Sabinian nationalism, with respect to the role of women. The first explicit mention of women appears in the 'Letter to Basque Intellectuals' (1964-65), which states: 'As for the position of women in Basque society, we believe that they should enjoy the same rights and possibilities as men in all sectors of political, social, economic and cultural life. However, aware of their special role at home as a wife and mother, society must pay due attention in order to ensure these tasks are fulfilled. One of the

measures to be undertaken would be the granting of a salary to women with children as a legitimate compensation for their work and education of future Basque citizens and their consequent contribution to the formation of society'¹¹ (del Valle 1985, 235).

Clearly still very much linking women to the domestic sphere, a second version of this letter was published and this section had been removed, suggesting that it was indeed a controversial issue within ETA.

From this political diversity further divisions and splinter groups proliferated, concentrating around two key debates. First, the use of violence as a means for achieving political objectives has been the source of endless debates among the *izquierda abertzale*, especially in the context of the arming of ETA, seen by one side of the debate as a terrorist organization and by the other as a national liberation front. The second point of contention has been over how to prioritize alliances and political agendas: favouring leftist politics or nationalist struggles for independence (Leonisio Calvo 2012, 377). This has significant implications for the conditions of inclusion into the Basque collective — in reference to the nationalism literature, this debate is about whether Basque nationalism is fundamentally ethnic or civic/class-based in nature. Or in Apalategi's words, to what extent can nationalism align with proletarian internationalism? (Apalategi 2006, 23). The fact that this tension has been so central to the politics of the *izquierda abertzale* suggests that leftist Basque nationalists have attempted to move beyond the ethnic vs civic binary, planting the seeds of a politics of nationalist internationalism, which can be observed in practice in the current period (see chapter 5). According to Zelik, ETA's violence has unfortunately obscured the very impressive model of collective self-organization that radical left independentists have cultivated. Thus, the flip side of a fiercely defended collective identity, is the existence of powerful collective muscle able to push for social transformation (Zelik 2017).

3.2.3 Systemic reproduction: rural exodus, colonial cash and industrial boom time

Although the decline of the rural iron industry and the pull of urban industrial jobs began the process of depopulation of the countryside at the

end of the 19th century, by the 1940s peasant farmers still made up the majority of the population, struggling to survive harsh conditions. However, the transformations that were encouraged in rural areas and institutionalized during the industrial period reinforced the farm as a business model, rendering the social context in which it operates ‘irrelevant’. At the same time, the increasing role of the state in care work primarily available to urban workers, tended to shift the focus of social policy to urban populations. In Ainz Ibarondo’s words, the *caserío* has survived because it has served a particular function for the society in which it exists. In the industrial period its primary function was to supply labour to the modernizing iron and steel industry as well as some food products via local and regional markets for increasingly urbanized consumers (Ainz Ibarondo 2001, 330). This shift in importance can be seen in the relative contributions to the money economy of industry vs. farming. Between 1940 and 1960 the contribution of industry to the Basque Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew from 47.5 per cent to 56.2 per cent while the contribution of agriculture fell from 15 per cent to 9 per cent over the same period (González Portilla y Garamendia, 1988, cited in Ainz Ibarondo 2001, 170).

In the industrial period we see a rural exodus. In the policy frame of the era only the strong, modern family farms, able to shift into a different system of production were encouraged to remain. The rest didn’t even have to sell, they could plant pine on their land and go work in the city. This thinning of rural populations was seen as a difficult, but ultimately necessary process of natural selection, or in Douglass’s words, ‘overall reduction in the mean size of peasant domestic groups is a likely and “healthy” consequence of increased efficiency’ (Douglass 1971, 1109).

Food markets and specialization: pine and dairy

By the mid 20th century, we see a steady decline in crops grown for home consumption and self-sufficiency, so central to the previous pre-industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction. Specifically, legumes, potatoes and grains, and the biannual rotation of wheat and corn was replaced by feed crops for livestock and horticulture grown on specialized parcels meant for sale. This suggests a shift in the way social reproductive needs were met. Food provisioning was no longer ensured by home gardens, rather off-farm markets (Ainz Ibarondo 2001, 188). In short, this period

witnessed the shift from a reproductive imperative among rural households, to a productive imperative to access money to invest in technological improvements and buy goods to support reproductive needs.

As modern industrialization of the iron and steel industry moved forward, and borders between the Basque Country and the rest of the Spanish State became more fluid, Basque peasants lost their comparative advantage in grain production such as wheat. The vision promoted for Basque agriculture based on its geographical specificities was to specialize in cow meat and milk production. The *Camaras Agrarias* mentioned above provided farmers with fiscal benefits and access to educational and productive materials from the government (Arroyo and Tellería 2009, 41). These educational services led to the creation of model farms demonstrating the kind of agrarian productivity that farmers should aspire to, in each province, which later became the agrarian schools founded by the Basque Government (Arroyo and Tellería 2009, 31).

In the first few decades of the 20th century the state of Basque oak and chestnut forests was grim. Veering towards total deforestation, as incentive to replant had withered with the introduction of coal fuel for industry, to add insult to injury the remaining forests were hit by a wave of diseases. It was at this point that forest land owners shifted to pine plantations. *Pino radiata* had been introduced to the Basque Country as early as 1840, but demand exploded during WWI. And by the mid 20th century some 90 per cent of wood from Basque forests was pine (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 121–2). Under Franco's isolationist regime, prices for wood remained high. Wood was needed for railway construction, posts for cables and boards for construction, but above all else cellulose for paper. All of these uses relied on small trunk sizes allowing for faster production cycles and rapid growth species like *pino radiata*. Between pine, grazing lands and food production, limited available land meant that food crops like wheat and corn (no longer competitive with growers in other parts of the Spanish State) disappeared (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 108).

The oil price crisis in the 1970s hit Basque farmers slightly later in 1974 but when it did, farm input prices surged while the price of milk stayed

the same. Industrial jobs also suffered. This marks the beginning of a period in which the logic of the system where agrarian social reproduction primarily contributes labour to industry and specializes in pine and dairy production, enters into crisis. Plus, the inflation of 1977 accelerated the closure of dairy farms which was previously a steady trend, but advancing slowly. In the post-industrial period (see chapters 4–6) entry into the European Common Market, would provide a reproductive fix, ramping up agrarian welfare programs via CAP subsidies. However, specialization was no longer enough, dairy farmers were faced with a dilemma: get bigger or get out. Many were incapable of making the jump. Between 1962 and 1982 dairy farms between 2 and 50 ha decreased by 45 per cent (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 278).

Labour: farmers to factory workers

During the industrial period, the reproduction of rural workers provided a steady stream of labour to the growing industrial sector. This happened in three key ways. First, the children of *caseríos* abandoned the farm to go work in the factories. Indeed, this was the primary function of agrarian social reproduction during this period. Industrialization began to take off in the last third of the 19th century, accelerating with the technological developments for steel production that the Bessemer process offered, which was introduced in 1855 (Zarraga Sangroniz 2016, 21). But it wasn't until after the second Carlist War had come to an end from 1876 onwards, that the impacts of this technological development were fully felt. The Bessemer process requires iron that is low in phosphorous, which made the Basque Triano-Somorostro deposit ideal. This transformed the left bank of the Nervion River from Bilbao to Sestao into the hub of investment and production fuelling the growing iron and steel sector which was sustained until 1975, marking the Basque 'industrial century' (Zarraga Sangroniz 2016, 22). By 1891 three major iron foundries (Marqués de Mudela, and the Sociedad Anónima de Metalurgia y Construcciones Vizcaya, both in Sestao, as well as Altos Hornos de Bilbao in Barakaldo) were set up, employing some 5000 workers, plus another 2000–4000 employed in the neighbouring shipyards, Astilleros del Nervion (Zarraga Sangroniz 2016, 28).

However the perception of this phenomenon as a problem rather than a "healthy" consequence of increased efficiency' (Douglass 1971, 1109),

began to emerge in the 1970s when the press widely publicized the fact that only one in three *caseríos* in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa had an heir to the farm (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 279). For many the pressure of being the heir to the family farm, and the obligation to keep it running in a system so oriented towards industry, and open to all of the family felt like it limited one's independence (Goñi, 1976, p. 400 cited in Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 280). Ainz Ibarrondo also points out, that the rate of social reproduction by marriage, was lower among farmers who were more likely to be single than men in other sectors, suggesting a challenge to 'matrimonial recruitment' among farm heirs (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 280).

Farmers sought hybrid arrangements which allowed them to keep their land and work for off-farm wages. This set up, what some scholars refer to as partial differentiation, and ultimately allows 'peasants to work on their land as well as being wage workers, so subsistence agriculture subsidises labour power' (de-Janvry 1981); Lenin ([1899] 1960); and Kautsky ([1899] 1988), cited in Sugden 2013, 522). In the case of the Basque Country, heads of rural households found industrial jobs, but instead of giving up farmlands, they planted pine, which required less presence in rural areas and provided some income. In other cases, small farm owners mixed partial dedication to farming with industrial labour (Etxezarreta 1977, 102–3, Mauleón 1994, 341). The feasibility of this however depended on proximity and transportation to and from urban centres to facilitate workers' commutes and access to urban consumer markets for sale of goods. And limited labour on the farm added more incentives to mechanize production or seek off-farm inputs of feed (Etxezarreta 1977, 111).

However, the notion that small *caseríos* survived by embracing part-time farming is in fact misleading and invisibilizes women's labour. A more accurate description is that small *caseríos* survived this period by sending the farm owner off-farm to bring in a wage from an industrial job, leaving the bulk of the farm work to the women — who were certainly not working part time. Instead, in addition to the domestic labour they have always done, they were full time ensuring the survival of the farm. In this sense, historically the survival of small *caseríos* during this period was made possible in large part by women's unseen labour. And the strong

modern family farmer ideal actually rests on the backs of these women's invisibilized, not only social reproductive, but also productive farm labour.

Another way that the transformations happening in rural areas contributed to upholding the broader system of social relations is illustrated by the way off-farm, especially domestic service jobs evolved during the industrial period. Mining areas that attracted workers employed predominantly men, causing a gender imbalance among the population in those areas, with an above average number of single young men. In contrast, Bilbao and Getxo were home to especially high numbers of young single women, working as servants and domestic workers (Zarraga Sangroniz 2016, 30). 'Bilbao had the highest proportion of female domestic servants of any Spanish city: 1 out of every 11 inhabitants in 1887' (Hernández and Alonso 1997, 85). And after the civil war, in the context of the Franco regime, which limited women's remunerated labour opportunities, domestic service was one of the few feminized sectors that saw a growth in jobs. More than half of women working in the Spanish State between 1940 and 1950 were employed as domestic workers in wealthy homes (De Dios Fernández 2016, 11). The feminization and resulting precarization of domestic wage labour was a consequence of female rural to urban migration during the industrial period (De Dios Fernández 2016, 19). And the practice of sending young girls to work as servants or domestic workers in wealthier or nearby homes of relatives remained common practice until well into the mid 20th century (Azkue Antzia 2000, 370–1).

Under Franco, social and political meaning and class relations were projected onto domestic service, which provided an opportunity for the re-education of rural women from dissident peripheries throughout the Spanish State. In this way it was not only a way for poor women from rural areas to relieve pressure on the limited resources generated from the family farm. Indeed some 200,000 people died of hunger in the period following the Spanish civil war (De Dios Fernández 2016, 59). The social reproductive labour of poor rural women which wealthy urban families benefitted from also reinforced a two tier society of those who are served and those who serve (De Dios Fernández 2016, 11). De Dios Fernández argues that Franco encouraged domestic service as a way of promoting the political and cultural authority of his regime. 'Domestic service was a

form of re-education for poor communist leaning young women' (De Dios Fernández 2016, 95). Religious collectives like Las Hermanas Inmaculadas del Servicio Doméstico, served as brokers for wealthy families seeking domestic workers. And in rural areas the church encouraged young women to seek out such services as the safest way to find work (De Dios Fernández 2016, 76–7). In this way, the Franco regime ensured that it was understood that the fallen women, the political dissidents, the daughters of the anti-Spanish sectors of society that lost the war, would serve in the homes of the winners. And this social status, and political tendency was thus linked to rural poverty and subordination (De Dios Fernández 2016, 100).

Land: shifting uses and invisible concentration

Economic development and industrialization increased prices paid for goods and need for money on the farm. These processes also brought new buyers and possible uses for rural land, as well as the new boom in pine plantations, thus property values increased. Pine expanded rapidly because of expanding markets for pallets and paper pulp, but also because once the neighbouring parcel is covered in trees, the shade limits agricultural production nearby and encourages the planting of more pine (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 183).

A public forestry service was established in Bizkaia in 1914, which carried out research, managed nurseries and reforested the woodlands with pine (Uriarte Ayo 2008, 6). And the second half of the 20th century witnessed a rapid expansion of pine forests. The 1950s and '60s was really when pine spread across the Basque Atlantic mountains like an 'oil stain', largely because it was at this point that caseríos joined the rush towards the 'green gold'. By 2001 when Ainz Ibarrondo wrote her thesis some five-sixths of the arable land was covered in plantations, up from one-third in 1950 (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 210). This was feasible because demand for industrial jobs was high providing an income while waiting for the 25 year investment to pay off (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 215).

Land tenure and location was also a key determinant of which farmers abandoned the sector during this period. The vast majority of farmers on rented land, far from off-farm jobs, abandoned the sector. It was primarily

for those who owned land that planting pine was a profitable option. By the 1970s the *caseríos* that remained were largely worked by their owners, with an average of 5 ha of farm land, and 3-10 ha of forest, in total rarely exceeding 20 ha. For full time dedication to modern dairy farming this amount of farmland fell short of the minimum threshold for a viable farm enterprise claimed to be 30 ha by Lurgintza in 1977 (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 255). However, as mentioned, it was not an option for most farms to purchase more land to reach this ideal threshold because land prices reflected the value of pine plantations or urbanization, which was well above the return one could get from farming. Plus land sales were rare since in the event of abandonment of farming land owners were advised to plant pine rather than rent or sell (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 255–6). As smaller farms closed, larger ones took over their land. However, all of these changing land use patterns are typically based on handshake agreements, rather than sales, and the smaller farms maintain a small garden, thus in appearance, everything looks the same, even though a steady process of concentration of land control has taken place (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 295–6).

All of these changes have shifted the centrality of family land out of the centre of social reproductive strategies in rural areas. As families incorporated social security benefits and pensions into their social reproductive strategies, the need for access to those supports shifted historically entrenched and gendered relationships to farm ownership. Some of those benefits were accessed via off-farm wage labour, but women's informal work on the farm left them vulnerable and dependent on others for access to care.

Debt and credit: the Basque banking sector and colonial capital

Bizkaia was a hub of industrial activities in the Iberian peninsula, which meant that investment, both foreign (English, German, Belgian, and French) and domestic flowed into Bilbao at the beginning of the industrial period, and a consolidated capitalist banking sector was established earlier than other parts of the Spanish State (Zarraga Sangroniz 2016, 29). In 1901 both the Bank of Vizcaya and the Miners Credit Union were founded. That same year the Bank of Bilbao, founded in 1856 merged with the Commerce Bank. In this period Basque provincial banks opened offices abroad in London and Paris. And Basque insurance companies like Aurora

and La Polar consolidated the financial architecture of industrial Bizkaia (Zarraga Sangroniz 2016, 29).

Much of the capital that flowed into Bizkaia, investing in industrial expansion, banking, and real estate development in cities to house the surge in urban working populations came from the *Indianos*, having made money from colonial enterprises in the Americas. According to the British consul in Bilbao in 1888, the abundance of financial resources coming from Latin America (primarily Mexico, Argentina and Cuba), brought by figures like Enrique and Daniel Aresti, the Mumeta brothers, Ramón de la Sota, Eduardo Aznar, Miguel de Epalza, or Antonio Basagoiti, made the need for foreign aid in setting up new industrial businesses relatively minimal, and facilitated the consolidation of the Basque banking sector led by a cohort of retired colonists (Valdaliso 1993, 164–5). Valdaliso examines the 20 profiles of *Indianos* who appear in the Bilbao municipal registry in 1904, and finds that the majority grew up in rural Bizkaia (Valdaliso 1993, 166). The benefits these men extracted from colonial exploits fuelled the Basque industrial revolution, but they also positioned themselves within the burgeoning industries in which they invested, thus establishing a system which allowed them to continue accumulating capital upon their return. In this sense, ‘the industrialization process was self-fed to the extent that investments by engineers, lawyers, brokers, employees and sailors come from their profits as ‘employees’ in the emerging sectors in the province’¹² (Valdaliso 1993, 170).

During the industrial period many of the social supports to ensure generational reproduction, as well as extension services for farmers and union organizations which would contribute to the collective reproduction of a Basque farmer identity as a class of rural workers were institutionalized. The *Cámaras Agrarias* provided the institutional channel of exchange and influence between farmers and consolidating state structures, as described above. These entities also established the infrastructure for the flow of credit, which served as yet another mechanism by which the state incentivized a particular model of agrarian production. For this connection, the *Camaras Agrarias* were given fiscal benefits and credit advantages (Arroyo and Tellería 2009, 73).

As the state took over responsibilities for providing welfare services, and care deficits emerged, the well-established Basque financial sector stepped in to provide credit as a reproductive fix. This also served to shepherd farmers towards a particular model of production (specialized and modernized) in which some peasant households would be sacrificed in the name of efficiency and progress.

Notes

- ¹ ‘The characteristics of feudalism as alluded to by Marx (1932) when discussing the European context, include first, control over the means of production by a small land-owning class with political and ideological as well as economic power over a peasant majority. A second attribute includes the appropriation of surplus (usually in kind) through extra-economic means, backed up by the political power of landlords. R. S. Sharma’s (1985) definition of feudalism in the historical Indian context refers to a similar agrarian system whereby the peasantry is subjugated to overlords that use their extra-economic power to extract surplus and maintain control over landed property. A third characteristic of feudalism, which will also be incorporated into this paper, is the use of surplus for consumption rather than productive reinvestment. Marx (1932) asserts that the feudal lord consumes the product of the land rather than investing it as capital to maximise productivity. Even if the surplus is sold, generating “value,” it is used for the “superfluous product” or “luxury consumption,” as Marx notes in *Grundrisse* (1973, 469).’ (Sugden 2013, 522)
- ² Original text: ‘para catapultar al País Vasco, en general, y a sus hombres de negocio, en particular, hacia ámbitos internacionales, pues estas industrias nacieron con finalidad exclusivamente exportadora y gozaron, gracias al proteccionismo oficial de la Corona, de los beneficios de los mercados peninsular y americano.’
- ³ Original text: ‘un apéndice de la nobleza, carente de poder y la mayoría de las veces incapacitados para ejercer su misión pastoral.’
- ⁴ According to the Old law legitimate descendants include: ‘offspring, grandchildren, and “natural” children of either a single mother or “the man’s woman.” The children of unsanctioned unions received only a token inheritance, “something of recognition.” They were excluded entirely from succession to the immovable property, unless they were legitimized by royal order (Article 105). Such was not the case, however, regarding movable property—over which the

donor exercised complete freedom of election (Article 105)' (Monreal Zia 2005, 130).

- ⁵ Original text: 'los dichos nuestros solares labradoriegos en todo tiempo estén enteros y fogueras vivas y no se despueblen ni yermen para pagar el dicho pedido'.
- ⁶ Original text: 'Que tenían por Fuero, uso y costumbre y establecían por ley que ninguno que posee y tuviere o poseyere, alguna de las dichas casa y caserías. que deben el dicho censo a Sus Majestades, no puedan ni vender ni enajenar ni trocar, ni cambiar ninguna parte ni heredad alguna de la tal casa y casería; y que siempre esté entera y sana para pagar a su Majestad.'
- ⁷ The main types of debt, also referred to as censos or annuities, were as follows:
 1. *Censo redimible* (redeemable annuity), the most common form of credit, was a loan with interest, but no time limit. The person taking on the debt would provide his/her property as a guarantee in the case of failure to repay. This meant that few renters had access to credit until the second half of the 18th century when new forms of credit emerged, which did not need to be backed by property (Lange 1996, 508).
 2. *Censo de foguera* – second most common, but phased out in 1760, and transformed into the *censo de nueva imposición*. This type of credit was based on the foguera, which derived from the word for hearth or fire, and was essentially a kind of title associated with the registry of homes. The ownership of this title gave its holder access to parish rights, and thus the income (in grain) from the tithe, which came with them as well as the other rights that come along (that is, participating in the selection of the clergy, etc.) (Lange 1996, 508). In this case, the owner of property would give the use of the rights associated with the foguera to the lender in exchange for credit.
 3. *Censo de nueva imposición* – when the censo de foguera was phased out, because Carlos III prohibited the mortgaging of future income, this newly imposed censo was the new type of credit to replace these previously held debts. However, according to Lange, it represented a rhetorical shift, but little changed in practice (Lange 1996, 510).
 4. *Censo de inmueble* – this type of credit gives the lender access to a piece of land or building until the credit is repaid. There is no time limit or interest. However this type of credit often meant the loss of land for peasants, since managing to accumulate enough money to repay debts was incredible difficult for most (Lange 1996, 510).
 5. *Censo de obligación* – similar to what we currently think of as a loan, but this was the only type of credit with a fixed time frame for repayment. There was no need to back this loan with property as a guarantee, and thus its introduction in the mid 18th century expanded debt and credit relations

beyond property holders to renters as well.

⁸ Traditional Basque peasant in Euskera

⁹ Original text: 'No son admitidos para vecinos ni moradores, ni para residencia permanente, ni judíos, ni moros, ni los que tienen alguna raza de ellos, ni mulatos ni negros'.

¹⁰ Original text: 'Y de igual suerte que atenían a la pureza de nuestra raza y a la integridad de nuestra fisonomía castiza con sus oleadas de detritus étnico, masa híbrida de celtas bastardeados, de latinos decadentes y de moros corrompidos, todavía pretenden, señores, causarnos un daño mayor, envenenándonos las almas con un grosero ideal, propio de envidiosos esclavos'.

¹¹ Original text: 'ETA refleja aquí la herencia directa del nacionalismo sabiniano, respecto a la idea de la mujer. La primera mención explícita de la mujer, se da en la 'Carta a los intelectuales vascos' (1964-65), donde se afirma: "En cuando a la posición de la mujer en la sociedad vasca, consideramos que debe gozar de idénticos derechos y posibilidades que el hombre en todos los sectores de la vida política, social, económica y cultural. No obstante, conscientes de la especial función que le incumbe en el hogar como esposa y madre, deberá la sociedad prestar la debida atención y facilitar su cumplimiento. Una de las medidas a emprender sería la concesión de un salario a la mujer con hijos en tanto que legítima compensación por su trabajo y educación de los futuros ciudadanos vascos y su consiguiente aportación a la formación de la sociedad.'"

¹² Original text: '[E]l proceso de industrialización se autoalimenta en la medida que las inversiones de ingenieros, abogados, corredores, empleados y marinos, proceden de sus ganancias como "asalariados" en los sectores que están surgiendo en la provincia'.

4

Generational reproduction and agrarian welfare

4.1 Outgoing farmers

Mikel is a dairy farmer in Bizkaia past retirement age. Over the course of his working life, he witnessed the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the Basque Country, and the alignment of local institutions with EU policies. He followed all the recommendations of extension agents to scale up, take on debt to invest in new machinery, and intensify his production. Now he regrets it all.

The debts he took on as recommended by the Diputación Foral de Bizkaia (the provincial government) combined with the low agrarian pensions and the costs of care for both himself and his mother-in-law means that he needs another source of income in order to retire. ‘My problem is debt. And with 700 euros [from the agrarian pension] it doesn’t pencil out. We’ve got Grandma, who’s 96 years old. And the heating has to be on high [...] That’s 10 litres of diesel a day. Thirty days is €300 euros per month.’¹

With the introduction of the milk quota system as part of the CAP, he understood that his quota was his retirement plan. When he was ready, he would sell it and ensure that his family would be taken care of after he stopped working. The quota system was abolished in 2015. And overnight, his retirement plan vanished.

There was a time when the government offered an early retirement plan, I was 53 years old and I didn't dare take it. I could have retired with a bonus of about 15,000 euros, but then what would I live on in the following years? What a bad decision. Later there were no more retirement plans and then they took away our quota.²

His doctors tell him he must stop working, but he feels like his only option is to keep going in order to pay off his debts. The years of stress and hard work have taken a toll. After producing milk for the majority of his adult life, his health is deteriorating and doctors recommend that he retire.

I have to drink skim milk. You don't know how hard that is for me. I just have a lot of issues. I developed diabetes. This is because of the stress, I was told. I was dealing with everything at once. And during that time, I wasn't sleeping. On Sundays I scattered slurry, and on weekdays one thing or another. I have a lot of diseases. A doctor told me I can't drink cow's milk. What do you mean, I can't? No, soy milk. I put it in my mouth and said no. I won't drink this. I've been dealing with this a long time, so I cook the milk three times to remove the cream. They say it's not fat free, but at least it's pure [...]No one will take my glass of milk away from me.³

Even with the wages from his wife's teacher salary, his agrarian pension would not be enough to cover the cost of paying down his debts and caring for his wife's ageing mother. So, he hires a part-time farm worker to assist with heavier tasks on the farm and pushes onwards. 'I can't do any heavy labour. But I put in the hours. I went to bed at 1:30 last night because one of my cows gave birth, and you have to be there to do those things. Then at 6 in the morning up again. You have to stay in front of the business.'⁴ Things like this make it ideal to live on site. And as much as he would like to see a young person take over his farm, his son isn't interested. If it were someone else, he's not sure how it would work. 'For me, it's not nice to have neighbours living right here. I'm not weird, I'm sociable, but...'

4.2 Incoming farmers

By the time I moved to town in January 2017, local politics had been swept up in what was referred to as the Bildu tsunami. Nationalist left political parties have been incredibly successful in the Basque country, provoking the Spanish State to invoke the law on Political Parties in 2003 and ban their operation. After years of illegalization, waning public support for political violence and debates within the *izquierda abertzale* had questioned the military strategy and led to the Gernika agreement in 2010 wherein a coalition of legal and illegal political parties which would

eventually form EH Bildu (Euskal Herria Bildu) along with trade unions and civil society groups called on ETA to end violence and enter into negotiations with the Spanish government (Bourne 2018, 52). This opened the door to a ceasefire agreement in 2011 and the legal formation of the EH Bildu coalition along with another nationalist left party, Sortu. This meant that the energy of the *izquierda abertzale* was redirected into institutional politics and won landslide victories across the Basque Country in the municipal elections of 2011. One of those wins took place in the town where I lived and the new government set to work developing a new rural development plan, including a municipal land bank. After consulting with farmers' Union EHNE-Bizkaia about what was needed, this initiative attempted to revive the agricultural sector in a town with an ageing farmer population while also creating employment. Selection criteria for accessing the land included: project viability, sustainability, agroecology, inclusion of gender perspectives, job creation and community vision. In two years, four projects were approved, but ultimately two were established and signed 10-year leases. A small apartment in town was made available to one of the farmers and in the same publicly owned building a space was ceded to the other project where they proposed to set up a collective food preservation and canning space.

Then in the 2015 elections, the PNV took back control of the municipal government, after winning local elections by just seven votes. Besides the frustrations and tensions this close race fanned, the rural development programme, seen as the crown jewel of EH Bildu's agenda, was suspended by the PNV government. My housemates, Nuria and Iñaki, two of the farmers who had received land and set up the food preservation space were stressed and looking for some legal counsel regarding 'their conflict with the municipal government.' They went on to tell me, that the local authorities have been threatening them. December was a very hard month. Tears, fear, lots of stress. The original architect of the municipal plan to develop the land bank and incorporate more agrarian support mechanisms was refusing to speak to them because she didn't want to be perceived as playing politics. But they had gotten word that the current PNV government was trying to reinterpret the plan, to justify turning their farmland into a park and their food conservation space into a museum. When applying for a subsidy to build a new greenhouse and buy a tractor, they were told that the greenhouse would not be permissible under this

new interpretation of the plan. One councilman from PNV told them that they would need to evaluate the viability of staying on the land, and threatened that they might not be there in two or three years. They have a 10-year contract with the municipality, and only three years had passed.

These verbal threats were also accompanied by, what the farmers saw as ‘irregularities’ in the behaviour of the municipal authorities. Last autumn they discovered the locks had been changed without notice to access the food preservation space via the meeting room, which the local authorities had previously said they wanted to use for touristic purposes, and so the farmers’ access was cut off. Requests for justification of this action from the local government went unanswered for months. All of this, plus other irregularities which they didn’t go into has led them to consider a lawsuit, since they believe the municipality is in breach of contract.

A councilman from the opposition party that originally developed the plan said they would pay the legal fees if they decided to pursue the lawsuit. Iñaki is hesitant about accepting such an offer, since he fears turning this into a conflict about party politics, even though he says, that’s what it already is for the local governing party officials. But in a town of 1000 people he doesn’t want it to be perceived that way, since for him, that’s not what it’s about. He is with the opposition party by default, because there is no other option in town, and for him it is simply about people trying to live from agriculture in the town.

The other farmer, Emmanuel, who received land from the land bank has faced similar ‘irregularities’, which he also attributes to conflicting interests created by CAP subsidies. The land bank was set up with concessions from the local association of families who control the assets of the Church Patronage, one of largest land holders in the valley. The land that Emmanuel got was previously being used by another farmer to graze his cattle on and to receive CAP subsidies, all via an informal agreement, which was suspended when the land bank was initiated. ‘Why do you think a farmer who has 100 ha in [town], which he doesn't own but still gets to use, would be upset about someone like me getting 7000m²? CAP aid is linked to land, and the more land he has, the more

subsidies. Someone like me needs 7000m² to start a farm? That means taking it away from someone else.⁵

In the midst of the tensions Emmanuel sees himself as ‘collateral damage’. His communications to the municipal government go unanswered. His rental bill came with sales tax (IVA) added when it shouldn’t have, he has been subjected to rules that no one else is.

I'm the only one in [town] who's been asked to legalize their fences. If you go for a walk you're going to see the same thing I have done everywhere, and in the whole history of [the town] no one had been asked to legalize this. Except for me. That's just one example. Plus, I hear what everyone is saying in the neighbourhood and I see how they try to turn the neighbours against me.⁶

As the infrastructure of support necessary to survive as a farmer has shifted from inside the family structure to inside the agrarian welfare state structure, so too have the tensions and struggles over the dynamics of land transfer, and generational reproduction. Intergenerational relations are increasingly mediated by public programmes like land banks, and tensions about distribution of care are less and less frequently between the heir to the farm and their siblings, and more and more often between farmers over access to CAP subsidies. Plus, these disputes are further coloured, or even eclipsed by political divisions that go far beyond issues of generational renewal in farming, yet which turn new entrants into ‘collateral damage’, undermining the long-term viability of their farm operations. In the words of Iñaki:

I have serious doubts that we will continue farming that land. I don't think there will be a renewal of the contract by the city council. Unfortunately, this process has made me think about buying a property. I had never thought about it. Because I was confident that a rental project could be feasible. I liked the idea of renting via a public programme. I thought it was an advantage and now I think it is a disadvantage. I realize that in order to really invest in a long-term project you need security that you won't have with rent. Basically, my perspective has changed: having the city council in the middle no longer seems like a guarantee, rather like a disadvantage.⁷

4.3 The agrarian welfare state and the politics of representation

The *agrarian welfare state* transfers the logic of social policy mechanisms to agriculture, and can be understood as part of a state-managed agrarian social reproductive regime. The idea of the agrarian welfare state reveals the changing nature of state-society relations that farmers must navigate in order to access the supports which that system provides. This gets at one of the core theoretical debates around the nature of state-society relations in social change. On the one hand Marxist scholars have historically drawn on a society-centred approach, which views the state as a vehicle for class domination. Here agency is the main driver of social change (cited in Skocpol 1979, 3). The Weberian perspective takes state policy makers as the key unit of analysis and sees the state as an entity separate from total class domination able to develop and carry out reforms autonomously and de-emphasizes the role of social actors in driving change. This research seeks to find a middle ground in order to understand the interplay between the structural features of given regimes of agrarian social reproduction especially as care has been institutionalized via the agrarian welfare state, and the social actors who must navigate those spaces in order to sustain life and generational renewal in farming. Thus, ‘illuminat[ing] how political struggles “are mediated by the institutional setting in which [they] take place”’ (Steinmo *et al.* 1992, 2).

A central feature of agrarian welfare, the income supports and extension services deployed during this period dramatically shape who becomes and remains a farmer and how they farm, thus playing a central role in shaping generational reproduction. Building on the initial efforts to encourage agrarian specialization during the Basque industrial century, the agrarian welfare state was consolidated during the post-industrial period. This is accomplished first via direct policies aimed at encouraging a small group of farmers keen to scale up production, while encouraging early retirement for the rest. Then as the crises inherent to this scaled up model of production began to emerge, agricultural subsidies played a more and more important role as welfare for farmers, who found it increasingly difficult to survive without these state supports as is the case for Mikel.

Granberg describes the shift from the autonomous management of social reproduction by peasants to state-managed social policies in the

Finnish context, 'In the earlier period, the peasantry could still find social safety from their traditional social networks within the family and the village community. Dissolution of the old peasant society led to a new kind of dependence on governmental activities' (Granberg 1999, 313). In Granberg's analysis, social policy 'is at the core of the welfare state' and agricultural policy on the periphery. Nonetheless, 'similar principles and a similar rationality were adopted in the creation of both the core and the periphery of the welfare state' (Granberg 1999, 312). Here Sheingate's notion of the agricultural welfare state is instructive. The term, in his work is applied to the US context, but also serves to describe post-industrial rural Bizkaia. First, it suggests that agricultural and social policy developed during the same period and with similar aims of protecting a particular group or sector that is seen as vulnerable. Second, the mechanisms of policy delivery are similar, primarily relying on 'a sector-specific form of social insurance' or income support. And third, they are both often subject to cuts and public scrutiny about government intervention, especially during times of economic crisis (Sheingate 2003, 3).

Knudsen helps connect this framework to the European context, rejecting the interpretation of 'scholars who set the research agenda, particularly those working in the English language,' who frame the CAP as essentially a trade policy that forged the bonds of the common market. Instead, she argues, 'European integration history is something more than merely trade, economics, and bargaining by rational actors' (Knudsen 2009, 7). For her, the European CAP, which represents the largest budget item in the EU, should be seen as a form of social policy itself — or in essence: welfare for farmers. European post WWII agricultural policies 'were public policies with defined social objectives, and they should be interpreted in the realm of welfare state developments' (Knudsen 2009, 9). Indeed, 'One element that binds modern Western European welfare states together conceptually is that income-security programs are central' (Knudsen 2009, 12).

From the founding of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, with the Treaty of Rome, she finds evidence of this in its objectives: 'to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, in particular by increasing the individual earnings of persons engaged in agriculture' (Knudsen 2009, 10). Although it has evolved over the years,

the fundamental principle that agriculture is a special sector that must be protected has remained unchanged. In the latest reform, the European Commission states its aim is to help farmers guarantee a long-term supply of quality food, make the agricultural sector more sustainable and maintain diversity of production in the European countryside, as well as its traditions and agricultural practices.⁸

The CAP has historically deployed three primary types of protection mechanisms to provide aid to farmers: 1) Price supports; 2) External protection measures; and 3) Direct subsidies and payments. Over the years, CAP expenditure has been losing its relative importance in the European budget. And the initial emphasis on market regulations like price supports, quotas, and external protection measures like export subsidies has been shifting towards a focus on direct payments to farmers and funds for rural development. Today, the CAP is mainly structured in two pillars of financing. Broadly speaking, the first pillar, the majority of total CAP funding, consists of direct aid to producers through a series of voluntary and mandatory measures, together with measures designed to coordinate and foster the common market. The second pillar consists of funds for rural development, with the intention of ensuring competitiveness and sustainable management in rural areas. Pillar two is co-financed by the Member States through national or subnational public institutions.

The special protection that has been given to European farmers has not come cheaply, but its influence on national and subnational level agrarian policy among EU member states can't be overestimated. In 1979, the CAP represented 72 per cent of the EU budget (Romero 2002, 42), although its relative weight in the budget has decreased: in 2018 it constituted 37.6 per cent of the Union budget (58.1 billion euros) (European Parliament 2020). Not all Member States receive the same amount of money from the CAP, nor the same distribution of funds for of each support mechanism. Of all EU member states, Spain is the second largest recipient of European funds, after France. In 2017, Spain received some €5,063,917,000 in direct aid, distributed among 729,603 beneficiaries. The distribution of these subsidies is extremely uneven. In terms of size, the bottom 71.37 per cent of beneficiaries share 14.94 per cent of the total funds in amounts of less than €5,000/year. In contrast,

the top 1.88 per cent of beneficiaries share 26.18 per cent of the total subsidies in amounts of more than €50,000/year (European Agricultural Guarantee Fund 2017).

Despite the uneven ways in which farmers benefit from it, CAP funding has become essential to survival for almost all farmers. As one organic dairy farmer puts it, 'It's not that we earn that much, but it [subsidies] could be 15% or more of our income.' At the Spanish State level, on average, between 25 per cent and 28 per cent of the declared agricultural income comes from the CAP (Maté 2017). In the Basque Country, this dependence is a little less, with 18.2 per cent of the agricultural income coming from the CAP (de Salinas y Ocio 2016, 22). Since agricultural wages are generally lower than other sectors, these subsidies are a lifesaver for many farm families. In the words of one dairy farmer interviewed: 'If it weren't for the CAP...without subsidies, all of this would be over [...] to survive without subsidies is...impossible.'

Beyond the symptom of crisis and change in the relations of agrarian social reproduction that these care deficits indicate, Pérez Orozco argues that the institutionalization of care can generate, not only dependence, but mechanisms of influence, when access to care is conditional (Pérez Orozco 2014, 93). As Mikel's story demonstrates, the CAP infrastructure of supports, access to credit and extension services encouraged farmers to adopt a particular model of production. 'This trend is closely associated with the growing use of external inputs and with new and more expensive technologies – trends that were the direct result of the modernization project' (Ploeg *et al.* 2000, 395).

Thus, building on Knudsen, as well as Fraser's historical analysis and Razavi's care diamond, I suggest that to understand how state-managed capitalism in Europe has shaped care work in rural areas, the CAP must be seen as central not just to agricultural production, but crucially to agrarian social reproduction. The implication in real lived terms is that learning how to navigate and benefit from the institutional landscape of the agrarian welfare state becomes increasingly crucial to farmers' survival. However, the opportunities and ease of participation in these spaces are by no means equal for all. Therefore, the politics of representation are central to understanding the emergence of barriers, and struggles for

survival amidst care deficits like those faced by Mikel, Nuria, Iñaki and Emmanuel, which undermine processes of generational renewal.

Fraser breaks down how misrepresentation happens. First, ‘Insofar as political decision rules wrongly deny some of the included the chance to participate fully, as peers, the injustice is what I call ordinary-political misrepresentation’ (2013, 196). Second,

the injustice arises when the community’s boundaries are drawn in such a way as to wrongly exclude some people from the chance to participate at all in its authorized contests over justice. In such cases, misrepresentation takes a deeper form, which I shall call misframing [...] Constituting both members and nonmembers in a single stroke, this decision effectively excludes the latter from the universe of those entitled to consideration within the community in matters of distribution, recognition, and ordinary-political representation (2013, 196–7).

In this formulation one could ask of the way in which agrarian welfare is distributed: ‘Do the boundaries of the political community wrongly exclude some who are actually entitled to representation? Do the community’s decision rules accord equal voice in public deliberations and fair representation in public decision-making to all members?’ (Fraser 2013, 196). And how do the boundaries of the political community shape whose labour is understood as part of the real agrarian economy and thus merits agrarian welfare and whose is invisibilized, backgrounded or made to feel inferior?

According to Knudsen, welfare support comes in two main modalities: universalist and particularist. ‘Price guarantees and export subsidies in agriculture belong to this latter category, and the agricultural sector had already manifested itself as especially qualified for state protection’ (Knudsen 2009, 43). In this sense, the agrarian welfare state, as any other particularist provisions, relies on defining the boundaries of particular groups. Thus, the politics of representation are central, constantly framing who is eligible for care. In the context of the Basque Country, I argue first, that it is precisely the groups most likely to bring new energy into the farm sector and ensure generational renewal — women, immigrant and

agroecological farmers — that are least seen as legitimate recipients of agrarian welfare by the institutions responsible for distributing support. Second, the consolidation of an agrarian welfare state means that public institutions increasingly occupy the role of mediator of intergenerational relations. On one hand this provides needed entry points into agrarian life for new entrants without family ties to the farm sector. On the other hand, new farmers find themselves caught in the middle of the whims and tensions of local politics which often go well beyond questions of farm succession, and can even complicate rather than contribute to generational renewal.

4.3.1 Spanish and Basque welfare state making

The construction of a welfare state in Spain was heavily impacted by the 40-year dictatorship, which used social policy as a form of ideological and political control. In chapter 3 I describe this as authoritarian welfare, distinct from the welfare state that emerges after Franco. After his dictatorship social policy was largely devolved to the jurisdiction of the provinces in the Basque case, and according to Lucas-García and Bayón-Calvo, marks the emergence of a Spanish Welfare state that begins to resemble its European neighbours (Lucas-García and Bayón-Calvo 2017, 166). During this period, the foundations were laid for what is the current social security regime and the incorporation into the EU in 1986 gradually consolidated the institutional architecture of the Spanish Welfare State (Lucas-García and Bayón-Calvo 2017, 166–7). However, given Spain's late welfare development compared to other European countries, the establishment of its foundational redistributive state-managed capitalist elements (social services, subsidies, pensions, and universal access to health and education) overlap chronologically in the 1980s with the arrival of neoliberal ideas promoting privatization. 'Thus, the Welfare State has not fully developed because when the conditions conducive to its expansion appear, it is affected by structural changes that hinder its evolution.' (Lucas-García and Bayón-Calvo 2017, 167).⁹

After Franco's death and the transition to democracy in Spain, the fascist regime had been so deeply associated with suppression of regional aspirations for autonomy like those of the Basques, that its collapse opened up new opportunities, where even centralist political parties like the social democratic, Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) did not

want to be associated with such fascist politics and were open to negotiating. Thus emerged the statute of Autonomy (Estatuto de Autonomía de Gernika de 1979), which transferred governance powers to Basque institutions. A key victory for the PNV negotiators was the recovery of control over taxation, which was devolved to the provincial level and with this agreement gave Bizkaia a revenue stream from which a portion is later paid to the Spanish government. Although the pensions and unemployment benefits are integrated into the Spanish national social security system, the health, education, employment and police systems are devolved to the Basque Country. Captured in the ‘Concierto Económico’ approved as Law 12/1981, May 13, this put in place a system where taxes are collected and managed at the provincial level, along with the development and implementation of social and agrarian policies. The 1980s was therefore a period of state building in Bizkaia, on one hand building new institutions (like the tax agency) completely from scratch, and on the other hand, situating itself within existing institutional architecture. These existing structures that conditioned Basque institutions came from a recovered history of Foral law, the Spanish State and, importantly, the EEC that eventually became the EU, which welcomed Spain in 1986. In general, control of its own tax base has enabled an increased public spending per capita in the Basque country some 60 per cent above the average throughout the rest of the Spanish State (Fantova 2014, 250).

In the realms of both social and agrarian policies, cash subsidies/income supports have been central features in the Basque institutional landscape, built during this post-industrial, post-Franco period. The Basque Country pioneered the establishment of a minimum basic income scheme in Spain. ‘Structured public policies for fighting poverty in the Basque Country were first introduced through the First Comprehensive Plan for Fighting Against Poverty in the Basque Country [1988], which was drafted following the first Survey of Poverty and Social Inequality [1986]’ (Fantova 2014, 252). Up until this point families and religious institutions like *Cáritas* had been the primary providers of social services and economic assistance to the poor. But the newly devolved tax income facilitated the public institutionalization of care, via three key components: 1.) An income support to cover basic needs, 2.) economic support for emergency expenses; and 3.) job placement assistance

(Uribarri Hernández 2012, 76–7), thus restructuring the ‘care diamond’ (Razavi 2015).

According to Rodríguez Cabrero (2004, cited in Lucas-García and Bayón-Calvo 2017, 167–8) one of the political consequences of the late development of universalized social services and subsidies, as compared to other European countries is an uneven distribution. The impulse of the Spanish government to expand public spending on things like unemployment in the 1980s was quickly curbed in the 1990s, by pressure to cut back state spending. The subsequent policies under Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero in the 2000s can be understood as patchwork attempts to fill the care deficits felt by specific groups as a result of unequal/unfinished universalization of welfare policies. These reproductive fixes targeted youth (rent support to foment youth autonomy), dependent people (Ley de Promoción de la Autonomía Personal y Atención a las personas en situación de dependencia y a las familias), and women (the Ley de igualdad sought to promote labour market insertion and childcare).

4.4 CAP subsidies as agrarian welfare: a failed reproductive fix

Similar to the key components of Basque social policy described above, agrarian policy in the Basque country has been implemented by the provincial governments, heavily influenced by common European policy agendas, and focused on providing income support to farmers. Joining the EEC in 1986, the European agrarian welfare policy architecture was inherited years after the framing of its initial social objectives that see farming as a sector in need of protection. However, this protection targeted the farmers who were willing and able to scale up their production. The rest were expected to leave the sector. In this way, EU policy, implemented by Basque institutions intentionally selected the next generation of farmers, by setting a particular frame around Basque farming, those willing to take on debt to scale up found themselves represented and entitled to benefits, and the rest were shown the door. However, this approach has backfired revealing agrarian capitalism’s crisis tendency. Whereas access to industrial jobs provided employment for unemployed rural workers, and additional income for farm families to cover care needs throughout the industrial century, the loss of those jobs

in the mid 1980s turned generational selection into a crisis of generational renewal. After a decade of transition to democracy, entry into the EU in 1986 marks the beginning of the post-industrial period where the agrarian welfare state significantly shapes the logic of not just agrarian social reproduction, but also agrarian production.

Similar to the chronological overlap of distributive welfare policies and privatization described by Lucas-García and Bayón-Calvo above, in the agrarian sector, Spain's entry into the EU brought direct CAP subsidies to farmers. However, at the same time the CAP was becoming increasingly aligned with the neoliberal free trade vision of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), later the World Trade Organization (WTO). At the start, after WWII, the main concern of the CAP was to increase food production in Europe. The CAP was very effective at reaching these goals, so much so that it began to create new problems. In the 1970s and early 80s, the cost of the CAP skyrocketed and overproduction generated the now famous butter mountains and milk lakes. This was a turning point at which production control mechanisms like the milk quotas that Mikel describes were implemented in 1984.¹⁰ The 1992 MacSharry Reform began a process of embracing market liberalization, introducing direct aid mechanisms, and shifting away from market regulation. It is no coincidence that this turn coincides with the negotiations of the GATT, which later resulted in the WTO. In a context in which Europe received a lot of pressure because of its protectionist measures, the MacSharry reform can be seen as a response to this pressure to liberalize markets, which ultimately made the GATT agreement possible (Swinbank 2005, 9). At the same time internal factors also contributed to this push. The enlargement of the EU introduced the possibility that the European market would not be able to absorb all the agricultural production of its new members. The EU's interest in tapping new markets in other parts of the world which would be able to absorb European overproduction, further motivated policy makers to reduce the market regulation mechanisms that were seen as distorting the terms of trade (Josling 2008, 69) — and thus began the liberalization of agricultural markets.

The Fischler reform of 2003 represents one of the most significant changes in the history of the CAP. With so-called 'decoupling', aid was no longer based on what was produced, instead a 'Single Farm Payment'

(SFP) was introduced which corresponds to entitlements that are associated with hectares of land. Although there are many nuances and it is a complex system, the general effect of this reform is that the aid no longer depends on how much is produced, but on how much land one has. The impact: the number of people farming has decreased, while the average size of agricultural land holdings has increased. In the decade between the agricultural censuses of 1999 and 2009, in the Basque Country for example, the average farm size increased by 18 per cent (EUSTAT 2010).

Similar to Zapatero's targeted social policies of the 2000s, we see a patchwork of efforts (that is, the Young Farmer Programme and land banks) emerge in an attempt to address the growing crisis of generational reproduction exacerbated by this liberalization. However, these institutional band-aids fail to reframe which farmers are worthy of such support, thus keeping new entrants on the periphery of the sector, feeling misrepresented and alienated by their interactions with the liberalized agrarian welfare state.

Parallel to these structural changes in the agrarian sector, crisis in the industrial sector destroyed the off-farm jobs so many rural households had depended upon for generational reproduction in the industrial period. 'In 1985, Spain reached a 22 per cent rate of unemployment, the highest of all the OECD countries. In the Basque Country, the employment loss was even bigger and between 1975 and 1987, 154 600 jobs were lost, 75 per cent of those in manufacturing industry (García, 1988). Shipbuilding was another of the strongly affected sectors with a loss of 42.1 per cent of jobs between 1982 and 1986' (Gómez, 1998b, cited in González 2005, 96). This was further compounded by the subsequent crisis among farmers who did scale up, but then found themselves facing insurmountable care deficits, like Mikel. The role of the agrarian welfare state during this post-industrial period, then can be understood as an attempted reproductive fix that is straining under the weight of growing care deficits that outgoing and incoming farmers face. This creates the conditions for the emergence of political subjectivities which demand a re-centring of care and life in the way productive relations are organized (discussed in chapter 6).

4.4.1 Ageing farmers in crisis

Upon entry into the EU, the Spanish dairy sector, concentrated along the northern Cantabrian coast from Galicia to the Basque Country, did not meet national demand. However in response to overproduction in northern Europe, the policy aims of the CAP were oriented towards public control of milk markets via the quota system Mikel mentions (Mauleón Gómez 1998, 67). Despite the very different productive realities among European farmers, by the 1990s, the extension services available to farmers via Basque institutions, in collaboration with European policy, were rapidly shepherding dairy farmers towards investing in more machinery, more animals, and larger-scale operations, to be able to compete with northern European farmers. This was complimented with access to the system of CAP subsidies, which provide an income support for farmers. For those who were not prepared to make the jump, both national and provincial institutions offered ‘abandonment plans’, that paid dairy farmers for their milk quota, which was then put into a national reserve. Farmers then gave up their right to produce milk. To qualify you had to produce less than 30,000 kgs or if you produce more, you had to demonstrate serious barriers to continuing the activity (animal health, old age, no successor, etc.). By 1996 29 per cent of the Spanish milk quota had been ceded to the national reserve via these plans (Mauleón Gómez 1998, 73). In 1994 the rights to some 18 per cent of the milk production available to sell to industry in the Basque country changed hands via abandonment plans. Among the farms given priority to get new quotas were those who had participated in the programme of support for investment, and adding more quota was seen as a way to manage the increase in debt. Debt for investment was publicly subsidized through ‘*planes de ayuda*’ in which the Basque provincial authorities made available private loans for farm investments via collaboration with banks. This quota was then made available at no cost to continuing dairy farmers who wanted to increase the scale of their production. In other words, the state paid small farmers to leave the sector and gifted their quotas to larger farmers (Mauleón Gómez 1998, 74), thus deliberately filtering which kinds of farms make up the next generation, in a kind of generational selection. It was this payment that Mikel regrets not taking advantage of when he had the chance, even though it wouldn’t have provided him with enough resources to cover his social reproductive needs, it was a better option than what he faces now.

They took us to France to see some very large farms, all expenses paid trips and everything. They encouraged us to build a barn, a paddock, a milking parlour. So, I decided to go for it, with the support they offered. But I regret everything. For the barn, at that point they were no longer giving grants, only loans. It was really easy to get loans though, because there was this agreement between the Provincial Government and the bank. What really sunk us was the crisis 10 years ago. It destroyed me. Then four or five years ago, they started saying that we should pasture the animals more and adapt to the constraints of the land that we have. But the investment was already done and the bank breathing down my neck.

In this situation living on his pension alone is not enough. ‘The poverty line in Spain in 2016 was 8,209 euros per person, that is, 684 euros per month, only 4% below that of an agricultural pension’ (¿Los jubilados agrarios cobran menos que el resto de jubilados en España? 2018). The signing of the Toledo Pact in 1995 initiated a process of Spanish pension reforms. With pressure from the European Commission, the heart of the reform was a ‘drastic’ cut to pensions. Zubiri argues, ‘They will cut whatever is necessary to balance the current system without recognizing any rights workers have acquired for the years they have paid into the system’ (2016, 167).

The implications of these cuts are already evident. After a year of mobilizing by pensioners,

the movement, which extended from Bilbao to the rest of Spain to protest the cuts in Social Security benefits, has shown its power this Saturday [January 19, 2019] in the afternoon in the capital of Bizkaia, where a year ago 30,000 people [including retired farmers] according to official sources, filled the streets, despite the cold winter rain, from the Gran Vía to the City Hall, demanding decent pensions (Rioja Andueza 2019).

Not only is there a parallel logic found in the development of social policy and agrarian welfare, the reductions in state spending in both arenas coincide chronologically in a way that exacerbates care deficits for ageing farmers.

The generational selection of the 1990s took a significant toll on dairy farming. The 1989 agrarian census registered a total of 5,465 cow dairy farms, and by 1999 that number had dropped to 1,743 (EUSTAT). Consistent through all of these dramatic changes in the rural economy however is farmers' growing dependence on income support payments from the CAP. Especially since the elimination of the milk quota from the CAP in 2015, dairy farmers across the board in the Spanish state have taken a hit, now facing intense competition from larger northern European farms. Only two organic cow dairies are left in Bizkaia, but among conventional farmers as well there is a palpable sadness that hangs in the air as they confess that they are sure 'none of this will be here in 10 years.' In sum, the economic incentives created by CAP subsidies and early retirement plans succeeded in encouraging a particular type of farm production model, and undermining those who don't fit that image. Fraser's frame-setting concept helps see the CAP as a way of 'Constituting both members and non-members in a single stroke, this decision effectively excludes the latter from the universe of those entitled to consideration within the community in matters of distribution, recognition, and ordinary-political representation' (Fraser 2013, 196–7). The agrarian welfare state can therefore be seen as an attempt to provide a reproductive fix to keep a particular model of production afloat. However, the dependency it has nurtured combined with underfunded agrarian pensions, has created a bottleneck. Indeed, as Matthews argued, generational renewal is not just a question of ensuring entry points for new farmers, it is equally crucial to facilitate decent exits for the outgoing generation.

4.5 Misrepresentation of new entrants

The failure of agrarian welfare as a reproductive fix has shifted the public and policy perception of the lack of generational renewal, which has increasingly come to be seen as a problem (Larrauri 2013). In response, policymakers from the EU level to rural municipalities have developed a range of programmes to encourage generational renewal (See for example: Bika 2007b, Bizilur and Etxalde 2015, Hamilton *et al.* 2015, Zagata and Sutherland 2015, Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, Brent 2018), for the most part targeting young farmers. Despite these targeted policy efforts to ensure generational reproduction, numbers have continued to decline. In fact the Basque country is the autonomous region in the Spanish state that has lost

the highest percentage of farmers from 2003 to 2013 (30 per cent, compared to 5 per cent in Catalonia) (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, 24). However, despite challenges faced by farmers like Mikel, it is the older farmers who are leaving the sector in greater numbers in the Basque Country where the percent of farmers under 35 actually increased by 9 per cent (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, 25). This indicates that in general generational reproduction is not happening with enough frequency as to ensure that the future generation of farmers is as big or bigger than their predecessors, thus the total amount of farmers is still in decline. However, this shift in age distribution implies that there is some renewed young energy entering into the Basque farm sector.

Within this trend, there is a notably increasing presence of ‘new entrants’. That is, the next generation of farmers and ranchers in the Basque Country is less and less made up of the daughters and sons of multigenerational Basque farming families. This perception is widespread among Basque farmers, and mentioned frequently by EHNE-Bizkaia representatives. Indeed since 1997 the farmers union has been encouraging and supporting new entrants coming from urban areas (Aldai Arrillaga 2017, 188). According to the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) Focus Group research by 20 experts in 16 European countries in 2015, the concept of ‘new entrant’ describes the trend of people who do not come into farming via family ties. In some cases, this can mean new but not young, including people older than 40 who have worked in other sectors before agriculture.

However, the institutions of the agrarian welfare state have responded unevenly and slowly in their efforts to shift and enable the support for farmers that are bringing new energy to agriculture. Although new entrants do not make up the majority of young farmers, they merit special attention. They make up an important part of the forces of reproduction in post-industrial rural contexts in the global North. I argue that the institutions that deliver the services of the agrarian welfare state to farmers are the least accessible to the population of farmers that has demonstrated the greatest capacity for generational reproduction, even amidst care deficits and institutional misrepresentation. Thus, this section examines the ways in which the politics of representation play out between these

‘new peasants’ (van der Ploeg 2008, Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, Calvário 2017b) and the institutions of the agrarian welfare state.

Interviews suggest that accessing agrarian education and rural development services are in practice key points of friction experienced by new entrants. It is in these routine state-society interactions that the politics of representation play out. By promoting a particular conventional model of production, and later attaching state support to that model, those farmers who are not represented by that vision are shut out, ignored or not taken seriously. Thus, their needs and role in the process of generational reproduction are not reflected in agrarian policies. The work of making particular frames real is carried out in the day-to-day, physical encounters and social relations that take place within the institutional architecture of the agrarian welfare state. Within this dense landscape of offices and agencies, educators and extension agents have become key ambassadors of the CAP agenda and thus mediators of farmers’ participation in and access to agrarian welfare. As in the case of social services and income supports, the staff and political agendas expressed via the extension agencies, county agrarian offices, and grant managers, act as the gate keepers and the slow but steady implementers of the representative frame. Plus, given the increase in farmers coming from non-agrarian backgrounds, access to learning about agriculture from a young age within the family is less common. This implies that there is a growing population, who rely on these external channels of training and knowledge transfer.

4.5.1 Education and training: agroecology for generational renewal

In addition to the impact on the social fabric of rural areas, the transformation of the farm sector encouraged by the CAP has had significant negative consequences for the environment. As Clar *et al.* describe in the Spanish context, modern agriculture guzzles energy, emits greenhouse gases and contaminates, and pollutes and increases the salinity of water ways and aquifers (2018, 330–1). Meanwhile extensive and growing research on European and global food systems suggests that organic and/or agroecological farming oriented towards local markets is not only more ecologically sustainable, it is also proven to be more resilient in the face of crisis (Espluga Trenc *et al.*, 2019; Hachmyer, 2021; IAASTD,

2009; IPES-Food, 2018) In the words of Guillaume Cros, the Vice President of the Regional Council of the Occitanie-Pyrenees-Mediterranean region:

Agroecology is the answer to the multiple challenges we face: the need to decarbonise our agriculture, reconquer biodiversity, restore soil fertility and enhance the economic and social resilience of our farms to ensure healthy, local and affordable food for everyone. Based on a network of small and middle-size farms, agroecology can also be instrumental in revitalising rural areas across the EU (European Committee of the Regions, 2021).

New entrants are more likely than other new farmers to adopt organic production methods oriented towards local markets (Macias Garcia et al., 2016, pp. 11–12). According to the EIP-AGRI Focus Group research by 20 experts in 16 European countries in 2015, the majority of new entrants are on small to mid-sized parcels of land for both structural reasons of access, but also for ideological motives, which challenge the dominant vision for agriculture that the CAP represents. For those who do not inherit land, the choice to farm smaller parcels in agroecological ways that are less dependent on inputs and large amounts of capital at the start of a farm career also reflects the very real material constraints that they face. In the Basque Country over half of farmers under 35 years old are on parcels of less than 5 has. This concentration of young farmers on smaller pieces of land is only surpassed in Andalucía and Valencia (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, 45).

New entrants tend to rely most heavily on educational programmes, but existing training and education services offered by public institutions alienate farmers who seek to develop smaller scale operations, adopting agroecological principles. The shift away from learning by doing within the family towards a dependence on training, is evident in Basque public EUSTAT data on the Basque Country, where the vast majority of farm owners have historically learned the trade exclusively through agricultural experience (98.4 per cent in 1989 and 85.4 per cent in 2016)¹¹, but there has also been an increase in the number of farm managers who have gone through a course, have university or professional studies or other agricultural training (1.6 per cent in 1989 vs. 14.6 per cent in 2016). CAP subsidies represent perhaps the most visible form of agrarian welfare. However, reflecting the increasing institutionalization of social

reproduction in this post-industrial period, publicly funded educational programmes for farmers are also an essential part of the agrarian social reproduction regime. In those spaces the farm skills and priorities of the CAP are instilled in the next generation of farmers. In the words of Althusser (1971:132), ‘the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order’ (Mitchell *et al.* 2003, 424). It is true that this realm of public supports could also be seen as contributing to collective reproduction (which it no doubt does as well). However, I include it in this chapter as part of the institutional architecture of generational reproduction because of the direct skills training function it serves for new farmers so that they can more easily survive in the agrarian sector.

In the three public agricultural schools of the Basque Country, of the 225 students who graduated between 2003 and 2005, the majority came from urban areas. But of the 10–20 per cent of the total that ends up actually working in agriculture after graduating, the majority are those who continue with a family farm (Alberdi Collantes, 2005, p. 10). In other words, in spite of the great interest in the agrarian world among young people from urban families, the majority do not manage to establish themselves in the farm sector. One dairy farmer interviewed explains: ‘The people who go to the agrarian schools have changed. More and more it’s people who grew up on asphalt, and they are asking for different things. The schools have changed a bit, but they still lack a clear commitment to a specific model. They don’t position themselves.’

Lack of training was a key concern voiced by interviewees, especially women who are represented in greater numbers among new entrants (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016). In fact, the number of rural women (28 per cent) who have completed university degrees is on average higher than that of urban women (25 per cent) and the Basque average among men and women (22 per cent), however only 2 per cent of rural women seek out agricultural studies (EUSTAT 2017, 8). This suggests that the issue is not women’s capacity or interest in education and training, rather agrarian education programmes specifically lack representation by female students. Indeed, of the students at Basque agrarian schools, 75 per cent are male.

Yet another interviewee sees more of a shift and openness to agroecology in the frame of the agrarian schools, who have begun to incorporate what were seen as 'hippy ideas' into curricula. However, for EHNE-Bizkaia existing public educational opportunities have not committed fully enough to agroecology and supporting new entrants. Thus, since their 1997 annual congress, EHNE-Bizkaia began deliberately developing and strengthening support for an alternative model of agriculture. This coincided with the formation of La Vía Campesina on the global stage and locally it meant that the union became a driving force behind efforts to build food sovereignty in the Basque Country. In addition to encouraging urban youth to take up farming, the union developed their own agroecological training programmes. By 2017 they had run 650 courses and trained a total of 92000 students (Aldai Arrillaga, 2017, p. 188). In 2018 alone, the year I took their agroecology course, EHNE-Bizkaia offered 31 courses and workshops to more than 400 participants. Additionally, knowledge exchange between farmers is promoted as a fundamental way to support new entrants, as well as a means of building knowledge in rural areas which is not dependent on the agrarian welfare state. Organizing visits, seminars, collective work days (*Auzolanes*), collaborative projects or informal spaces for socializing are some of the ways in which such exchanges are being encouraged. These educational supports for a low input agroecological model of food production, which increase farmer autonomy, have been central to EHNE-Bizkaia's approach to ensuring generational renewal.

4.5.2 Rural development: museums of the agrarian past or support for the agrarian future?

When I asked Maite Peñacoba, about her background before becoming General Director of Agriculture in the *Diputación Foral* (provincial government) of Bizkaia, her answer surprised me.

I'm an economist, but I don't have an agricultural profile. I managed LEADER 2, more operational issues and European subsidies [...] I got a call from the Deputy who had also worked in Hazi.¹² It was because of political changes that come with elections. It's all a little endogenous. The deputy of agriculture is also from Hazi. We've all been working together for many years.

With no agricultural profile Peñacoba is in charge of the most important agency in the landscape of Bizkaian agrarian welfare. However, I realized she *is* particularly qualified for her position on the basis of her experience managing EU subsidies, which anchor farmer-state relations of agrarian welfare. Moreover, she and her colleagues from Hazi represent a new wave of ideas about rural development. Since the 1990s the ‘rural development’ agenda has gained traction throughout Europe. In 1992, the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, placed the issue of the environment at the centre of public debate. Then, the Berlin agreement in 1999 put forward the Agenda 2000 and the second pillar of the CAP was established to channel funds towards rural development. Pillar 2 of the CAP provides an institutional home for the socio-environmental concerns that arose in the post-Rio era. To a large extent, the issue of organic farming has been treated as one of these concerns and relegated to pillar 2.

As Peñacoba explained, significant institutional changes have been implemented to advance rural development priorities. Agriculture, previously a separate department, has been brought under the institutional jurisdiction of Rural Development. Even though agroecological food production can be understood as the essence of this merger, representing a deeply environmentalist agenda for agriculture, the institutional reorganization has not prioritized it. In the words of one agroecological new entrant farmer ‘I feel that those of us who are producing organic food are not valued. The public institutions don’t help us.’ The reason for merging agriculture under rural development? ‘Image. If you want to restructure, you try to look for sectors with less GDP and combine them,’ Peñacoba answered bluntly.

What has culminated in the institutional reorganization Peñacoba describes reflects a decades-long process of shifting policy priorities in Basque rural areas encouraged by European funding. Namely, the diversification of rural economies during the post-industrial period has emphasized the development of rural tourism. Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Basque Country, representing 6,1 per cent of the GDP, and seen as a sector with ‘great potential to bring economic and cultural wealth’ according to the Basque Department of Tourism, Commerce and Consumption (EITB, 2020). Throughout the Spanish

State, ‘The leisure economy, in combination with the arrival of new heritage discourses, was introduced as a promise of local development and a palliative to rural depopulation and to meet new urban expectations of a new, tourist-friendly rurality’ (Mármol *et al.* 2018, 681 see also López-i-Gelat *et al.*, 2009). However as López Garcia argues, rural tourism with the support of LEADER¹³ funds, has in most cases undermined rather than supported agroecological farmers — those same farmers who also failed (or refused) to scale up as encouraged by the first pillar of the CAP (López Garcia, 2015, p. 28).

In the town where I lived, after the Bildu led municipal government implemented a plan to support new farmers and agrarian life in the valley, the PNV shifted priorities back to focusing on attracting tourism once it regained the majority. As described above, the collective food preservation space that Nuria and Iñaki helped establish during the Bildu term, had access to their meeting space cut off in order to create a museum. And the housing that was made available to farmers nearby was no longer slotted for such use. Iñaki laments, ‘Among other things, the PNV has moved forward with the museum project, which is set up for tourism. Whereas, the initial project was more oriented towards the local population. Same with the residences that had been made available to farmers, they want to orient everything towards tourism.’ In tragic irony, rural development focused on tourism is used to justify threatening to evict new agroecological farmers bringing a future to the agrarian sector in order to build a museum that exhibits the agrarian traditions of the past.

4.5.3 The unequal experience of navigating the agrarian welfare state

The agrarian welfare state is in practice a complex web of public institutions at multiple scales. Access to these spaces is not equally available to all rural residents. Additionally, the historic proximity between some farmers and the state architecture of agricultural welfare policies creates a different basis upon which, legitimacy is felt. Much in the same way that some populations have been historically made to feel that policies that support social reproductive work are a privilege, while for others they are taken for granted. In Bakker’s words, ‘Men, through the labour-force participation, gained entitlements as citizens to social security, whereas women, tied to unpaid labour in the home, became clients of social welfare

agencies. For them, social assistance was not a right but, instead, intrusive, conditional, inadequate, and often punitive' (2003, 75). Bakker's point speaks to the different ways in which individuals experience relations with state-managed agrarian welfare regimes. Race, gender, immigration status and model of production are all factors that shape who gets what kind of care, and how they are treated in state-agrarian relations. New entrants who do not fit neatly into the dominant political agenda for the future of Basque agriculture, must also learn how to navigate a hostile institutional landscape, which rather than offering support to them is creating further barriers to generational renewal.

Women farmers comment that when they work in the farm sector they feel ignored and not taken seriously in institutional spaces, as if they are not primary decision makers in the household. However, their responsibilities to both production and the social reproductive needs of the family, often dependent upon good institutional relations for access to the benefits of the agrarian welfare state, limit their ability to denounce such behaviour. As Nuria explains,

With both political parties they always address [Iñaki]. In all meetings with Gorbeialde [the rural development agency] and such, I am the only woman. And there were moments of great tension. But in the end, I tried to be careful in the process because we are part of this town. And it's important to be a respected part of the community, so our children don't have to listen to people talking bad about us in town.¹⁴

Emmanuel, who is a racialized immigrant farmer describes how he feels categorized as a drain on social services, even when doing paperwork for completely different things.

In fact, this year the renewal [of my residence visa] was striking. The first thing I was asked to do was to obtain a certificate stating whether I have received any basic income payments (RGI) and if so, for how much. Assuming I was cashing in. And when I went to Lanbide [the employment office], I tell the guy listen please give me this certificate that I have never applied for and I will not apply for the basic income payment. And he looks at me funny. And he tells me that certificate doesn't exist. I went to talk to the director and ultimately they gave it to me. But in the immigration law there is nothing that says you have to show you have never received RGI [...] In the end these are

processes that require a lot of time and energy and especially when you read into and understand the intentions behind...that's what crushes me.¹⁵

In 2019 54,850 people received benefits and basic income support, some 60 per cent of which are Spanish nationals (Segovia 2019), however the collective political and social imaginary that provided the backdrop for budget cuts to social spending in 2011 was that public resources were being drained by immigrants who come explicitly with the intention of living off of the system. Spearheaded by the Partido Popular at the time, and upheld by the PNV, this perception of immigrants as draining welfare services, continues to resonate among much of the native-born population. According to a study by the Basque government's Immigration Observatory in 2013, 57.6 per cent (up from 41.6 per cent in 2008) of people interviewed believed that increasing immigration would use up resources for social assistance making it harder to support the native population (Fantova 2014, 254).

In many rural towns, the only trend curbing depopulation is immigration, representing potential new energy and interest in the agrarian world, among other sectors. However, job placement services managed by Lanbide channel migrant workers into low wage hospitality and domestic work. Immigrant women express frustration, being told by Basque institutions that their only job opportunities upon arrival are in low wage care work. '[O]ur career paths and employment interests are not recognized, condemning us to carry out the most precarious work' (Ecuador Etxea 2020).

In sum, agroecological farmers are being displaced and undermined by institutional visions of rural development which fail to protect their interests. Women farmers feel misrepresented as the wife of the CAP subsidy recipient, and deeply engrained structural racism frames racialized people and those who don't have Spanish nationality as drains on social services rather than potential contributors to the future of Basque farming. In all cases missing important opportunities for the agrarian welfare state to support new entrants and generational renewal. It is these forms of misrepresentation and exclusion which inform the way agrarian political subjectivities are emerging and mobilizing.

4.6 Dismantling the land for care trade

The presence of new entrants in the Basque farm sector offers important insights into the changing dynamics of intergenerational relations. Historically the bond between generations was structured by the elders' need for care and the younger's need for land. The industrial period began a process of dismantling of the land for care trade that was at the core of farm succession among peasant households. As a lack of generational renewal has come to be seen as a problem in the post-industrial period, one key barrier to entry for new farmers is access to land. Especially important for new entrants who don't have access to family land, this has inspired a range of programmes, like the one by which Nuria and Iñaki accessed their land, where public institutions attempt to facilitate the transfer of land between generations. In theory the agrarian welfare state has positioned itself to be the mediator of intergenerational relations. In practice however, as becomes clear in the frustrations expressed by Nuria, Iñaki and Emmanuel, once the social relations that govern farm land access are taken out of the family context, as is the case for most new entrants, another complex set of contradictory incentives between generations emerges. The law and custom governing succession patterns in Bizkaia, born out of a need to ensure the generational reproduction of the family farm is now part of what is undermining this reproduction. We can see this influencing the experience of new farmers coming from agrarian backgrounds as well as for those who do not.

The logic embedded in the foral legal system reflects a moment when rural families were facing problems due to excess family labour. Succession patterns were created to ensure the survival of the family farm, understood as a collective asset. During the post-industrial period however, after years of rural depopulation, the problem is how to attract new labour into the agrarian sector, yet the foral law that prohibits non-family members from inheriting rural patrimony, discussed in chapter 3, still exists today (albeit restricted to rural land (Goikoetxea Oleaga 2005, 370)). For this reason, some legal scholars question the appropriateness of this protection of the system of *troncalidad* in today's world (Goikoetxea Oleaga 2005, 374–5).

Even if no one is using the *caserío*, many families are hesitant to sell. Thus, the common Basque expression, *saldua galdua*...to sell is to lose, is

likely linked to the long tradition of fiercely defending the reproduction of the family farm. And like the residual law upholding the system of *troncalidad*, this culturally resonant saying no longer reflects or protects the agrarian realities rural populations face in the post-industrial agrarian social reproductive regime. The consequences in the words of one interviewee: ‘These days people come temporarily, renting. Families don’t settle here. The farmhouses are deteriorating and people just live off of pine plantations.’ And for those who do decide to sell, it is often not via public channels, rather through word of mouth among acquaintances. ‘This is another barrier to new entrants that do not come from the rural environment as it is even harder for them to know which land is for sale’¹⁶ (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, 121). Given the limited number of properties on the market, prices are high and further increased by speculation and pressure to urbanize when near growing cities (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, 122). As one interviewee remarked, ‘Without family in the sector, is it very difficult to get in? Bfff yes. Super expensive. Five hectares sold for a half a million euros this year. If you are starting from zero, either you have a lot of money or no way...’¹⁷ Plus, with changing land uses in rural areas, the agrarian logic that once governed tenure relations is fading. As one dairy farmer explains, ‘The world has changed. The land we use isn’t ours. Before everything was based on verbal agreements, but people have passed away or gotten out of farming and the new generation doesn’t think the same way.’

For those new entrants who rent land from older farmers, the removal of these relationships from the family context can create tensions as both navigate the degree to which this shift requires more formality in tenure agreements. As one young farmer recounts,

With the [owners of the land], we had a family-like relation. At first, I let myself completely trust them. I was super sincere. But I realized that when it came to doing business, they didn't see me as a daughter. And all of a sudden, I felt a little unprotected. When I was working for them, they told me I was hired, and then that actually wasn't the case. If they could get away without paying six months of my social security, they would do it. I felt a little betrayed. But well, now I understand, because business is business. Maybe if I was a man, that wouldn't have happened. Or maybe we're just more sensitive. I don't know...¹⁸

Here we see how even though the politics of land access are increasingly taking place outside of traditional patriarchal family structures, these unequal gender relations still permeate negotiations about farm land and labour. However, the image of a heteropatriarchal farm family living and working the land inherited from the previous generation is not only unfeasible economically for many new farmers, it is also socially alienating, given the decades of depopulation Basque rural areas have experienced. The likelihood of finding farmland with a residence included is slim. Indeed, for new entrants, living in the city and commuting to rural areas to farm during the day is often part of the evolving structure of the farm sector. When asked how she felt about having to commute to her farmland, one farmer responded, ‘Well, I’ve gotten used to it. I spent a year living in a village. At first I thought it was the coolest thing, but I ended up so overwhelmed. I realized that apart from the farm I also need to see people. Otherwise, I’m very likely to isolate myself and it is terrible for my head.’¹⁹

As the farmers who did stay in rural areas find themselves increasingly abandoned by other family members, once the collective backbone of care regimes, extra-familial care work becomes ever more important to survival. On the flip side, as new entrants look for ways to access land outside of traditional family inheritance, they too must adjust how they structure care work. Women have played a central role in agrarian households for centuries, however much of their work traditionally went unpaid and/or invisibilized. The division of work in rural areas remains gendered and increasingly racialized, but the dismantling of the land for care trade has changed how people’s access to care shapes intergenerational relations.

Changing demographics in rural areas in the Basque Country exacerbate the importance of these changes in care regimes. First, the average age in rural areas is higher than other parts of Europe: ‘Of the population of the Basque Country, 21.1 per cent is aged 65 or over. This percentage is higher than in any of the other 28 EU states’ (Fantova 2014, 251). Thus, the need for care is relatively high. In addition to access to care via the agrarian welfare state, the commodification of care work in the form of ‘global care chains’ (Hocshchild 2000) of highly feminized

domestic workers, has contributed to the increased racial diversity among residents in rural areas.

Some 5.8 per cent of the female rural population is made up of women born outside of Spain, compared to the Basque Country-wide average of 6.4 per cent (EUSTAT 2017, 6). However, in Bizkaia this figure increases to 7.19 per cent. In other words, the non-Basque population in Bizkaia represents a greater percentage of the population in rural areas than it does in urban areas. About half of these women come from South America, a quarter from Africa, and the rest from other European countries. On the whole this foreign-born population is younger on average (85 per cent under 54) than rural newcomers coming from other parts of Spain, the majority of whom are over 54, for example. This may not reflect the real presence of women in rural areas however, since interviews suggest that it is increasingly common for new farmers (and care workers) to commute to rural areas, but live in nearby cities, where it is easier to find housing, and where they feel they have stronger social networks.

4.6.1 Money for care

For those who can afford to, many families fill care deficits by hiring domestic workers. In 2012 8 per cent of rural women hired domestic workers to assist them in the house, and in 2016 that figure had gone up to 9 per cent (EUSTAT 2013, 14, 2017, 13). One way to avoid having to leave one's house that interviewees in Jausoro Santa Cruz et al.'s study identified is, 'the figure of the "internal caregiver" (specifically mentioning South American women)²⁰ (2006, 58). As this quote indicates and the literature on the transnationalization of care has extensively conceptualized in many contexts, these jobs are feminized and racialized (Truong 1996). Given the informal and often precarious immigration status of many domestic workers, accurate data is impossible to find. According to a 2011 Basque Government study, some 90,000 domestic workers were employed in 105,000 Basque homes (Gude 2019). Statistics from a 2019 Civersity study are a bit lower, but demonstrate a 14 per cent increase in the number of homes employing domestic workers in the Basque Country from 2009 to 2015 (Civersity Grupo de Investigación 2019, 9). This same study shows the unequal labour conditions among domestic workers, especially notable between those who have Spanish

nationality (earning an average of €8,01/hour) and those who do not, like the South American women identified by ageing rural residents as a way to avoid having to leave one's home (earning an average of €6,09/hour) (Civersity Grupo de Investigación 2019, 39). These unequal labour conditions, effectively transfer care deficits onto domestic workers. In a report for the International Labour Organization (ILO), Díaz Gorfinkiel and Fernández López state that at least 30 per cent of domestic workers are not registered in the social security system (cited in Civersity Grupo de Investigación 2019, 3). Conditions are indeed precarious, especially in rural areas, and for many women in undocumented immigration situations, the institutions of the welfare state are not available to them.

As indicated by Mikel's situation described at the beginning of this chapter, many ageing farmers don't have the financial means to retire and have access to the care they need. Thus, they cling to their land, which provides CAP subsidies and perhaps a small amount of income, in order to cover their care deficits. This slows the transfer of properties between generations and creates a bottleneck for new farmers looking for land.

4.6.2 Formalization of labour for public care

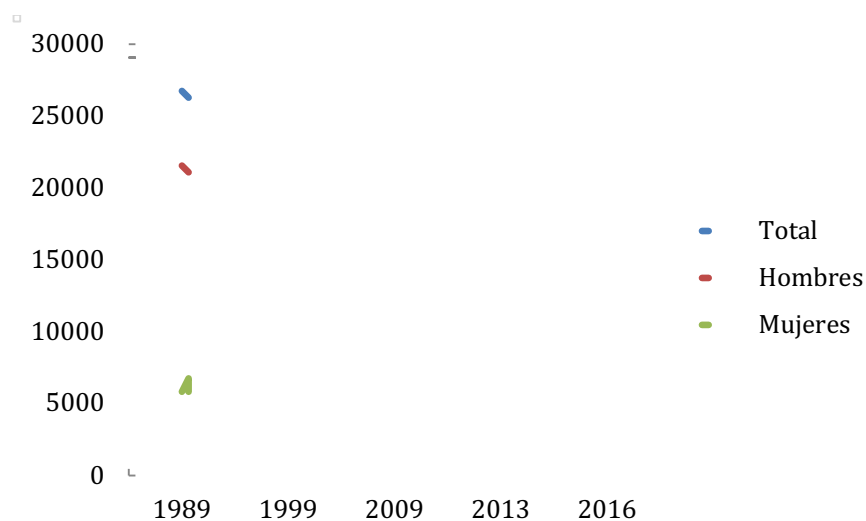
The social protection schemes built into modern welfare systems do not take into consideration the unequal participation among men and women in the productive and reproductive spheres. And thus, those individuals who participate in the labour market are prioritized, while those whose labour is unremunerated, often ensuring the wellbeing of their families and communities, are left unprotected by the welfare state (Lucas-García and Bayón-Calvo 2017, 149). Or as Nancy Fraser suggests, they are rendered dependent upon the male breadwinner for access to the benefits of the welfare state. In the Basque agrarian context this is clearest among older women, who spent the majority of their working life seen as farmers' wives with no formal rights to the farm, or to a pension, etc.

For these women, by the time the dictatorship ended, they found themselves: 'All their lives working and they don't have a single day contributing to their social security. The farm is in her husband's name and if she has a problem with him, she ends up on the street, homeless, without a farm or work, without unemployment benefits; left to beg'²¹ (Arriola *et al.* 2009, 152). Macias Garcia *et al.* note that many older women,

whose labour on the farm has been invisibilized and unpaid for their entire working life, receive their first economic income in the form of a widow's pension.

Despite the tensions and difficulties women experience in the farm sector, in the face of a shrinking number of farms in the Basque Country, the number of women farm owners has remained much more stable than their male counterparts. In 1989 women represented 19,4 per cent of total farm owners in the CAPV and in 2016 this number had risen to 38,2 per cent. While the farm sector has lost more than half of its male farmers in the past three decades, the presence of women farmers has remained relatively consistent, rising slightly on the whole over the same period.

Figure 1.1: Farm owners in the CAPV by gender 1989-2016



Source: [EUSTAT. Censo Agrario de la Comunidad Autónoma de Euskadi. INE: Censo Agrario. Author's own elaboration]

Why have women farmers not disappeared at the same rate as male farmers in the Basque country? In Spain, 'One out of every five farming managers is a woman, often due to the fact that spouses are wage earners off the farm, and so these women have formal ownership of the farms' (Etxezarreta *et al.* 2015, 201). Others formalize their farm labour once they

turn 50 in order to pay into a pension scheme for the minimum of 15 years (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, 97–8). In fact, this could be the explanation for the increase in women farm owners older than 50.

4.6.3 Women work extra hours for care

Notably, younger farm women between 26 and 39 do not tend to hire domestic workers, they assume more productive farm labour and also manage social reproductive work (EUSTAT 2017, 23). This means that women working in the agrarian sector work long hours. Women on average dedicate nine hours per week to care for other people, but 16 per cent of rural residences are home to individuals dependent on care where this figure increases to 19 hours per week (EUSTAT 2017, 5). Rural women on average spend 50 hours per week dedicated to work, including paid, domestic and care work, a number which has increased by one hour since 2012 (EUSTAT 2017, 9). Among working women, 69 per cent of those who work more than 60 hours per week work in the primary sector (EUSTAT 2017, 12).

In Truchero's study of young Basque women who do decide to take over the family business in sheep farming, suggests that the choice between studying and continuing the family farm is no longer mutually exclusive as many families encourage daughters to finish their studies before deciding whether to go into farming (Truchero 2010, 103). Nonetheless in the farm sector, a division of labour along gender lines is evident: leadership positions in organizations, management and operation of machinery, and being the public face towards institutions, tends to be done by men and paperwork, cheese making, harvesting, canning, and care work tends to be done more by the women. And the assumption that farming is best done in the context of a heteropatriarchal family, is still referenced as the best way to manage the massive amount of work it takes to run a farm. As one dairy farmer advises 'For a single person, it's a lot. It has to be a married couple.'²² According to the survey of rural women in the Basque Country, 100 per cent of women living in households connected to the primary sector do agricultural work, 70 per cent of them manage the finances and 61 per cent manage operations. At the same time, only 42 per cent participate in public, union, or cooperative meetings representing the farm (EUSTAT 2017, 23). A likely contributing factor to this lack of representation in public leadership roles is the burden of

domestic and care work, which are also cited as a primary reason why rural women often seek out part-time work rather than full time (EUSTAT 2017, 20).

4.7 Care deficits and state mediated agrarian welfare

This chapter illustrates the increasingly central role of the state in the post-industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction. There is no question that the support provided to farmers via the agrarian welfare state is essential to their survival. However, this institutionalization of care comes at a cost. Access and representation in frame-setting processes requires skilled navigation of institutions. Those primarily carrying the burden of the care deficits and politics of misrepresentation resulting from this process are new entrants, and rural women, both recent immigrants as well as the daughters of multigenerational Basque farm families.

As the land for care trade has unravelled, and land access is emerging as one of the key barriers for new entrants, public land banks present opportunities for entry into the sector. However, as the experience of Nuria, Iñaki and Emmanuel suggests, this can put new farmers in the middle of partisan politics. More generally, farmers' access to the benefits of the agrarian welfare state is also conditioned by the frames set by European policy which have prioritized modernization, specialization and rural development, often to the detriment of small-scale agroecological farmers.

As institutions occupy a larger and larger role in ensuring the care and welfare of farmers and rural populations, some resist non-family-based care systems. In her study of women and health in rural areas of the Basque Country, Jausoro Santa Cruz *et al.* find that older women living in rural Basque country feel that it is the family's responsibility to care for their elders and, 'residences are synonymous with "sadness" and "abandonment", being an option for the elderly whose families evade the responsibility to care for them. Residences are one of the elements that make up the care network of the elderly and represent the outsourcing of care tasks, of placing tasks outside the family and in this sense represent the greatest "threat"²³ (Jausoro Santa Cruz *et al.* 2006, 54). The Basque health care system is considered one of the best among the other autonomous communities in Spain. And existing provision of public

health services in rural areas is important, however still care deficits remain. Although 88 per cent of rural households have access to primary care facilities in their towns, women surveyed by the Basque Government in 2016 in these parts of Bizkaia have highlighted a need for more medicalized ambulances, health centres and social services (EUSTAT 2017, 27). For rural women care deficits in the agrarian welfare institutional architecture can contribute to barriers to women formally entering the agrarian sector. As Macias Garcia *et al.* illustrate, ‘Although, as some say, “motherhood interrupts everything,” mothers do not have access to infrastructure that allows them to alleviate these tasks and lets them engage in agricultural work. As mothers they have certain needs that are rarely met in rural areas. “We need daycare for all of us. And schedules set with farmers in mind for the first three years”²⁴ (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, 132).

Even though the population of rural areas is on average older than urban areas, and in need of care workers, the dependence on immigrant women in these spaces is enabled by a racist immigration system, which in Fraser’s words establishes a hierarchy of workers, rendering some vulnerable to expropriation (Fraser 2016a). As García Sainz argues, ‘by articulating a normative apparatus that defines their personal status as foreign or citizen, they are assigned a specific place within the occupational structure²⁵ (García Sainz *et al.* 2011, 2233). Thus, the dismantling of the land for care trade combined with the misrepresentation of new entrant framers as they navigate the institutions of agrarian welfare brings into view new and historically marginalized political subjects occupying the rural space and contributing to generational renewal in the post-industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction. Highlighting these contributions helps to appreciate the different forms of labour which shape the future generation of Basque farmers. It also helps identify the actors whose everyday and collective struggles contribute to and expanded notion of agrarian class struggle.

Notes

¹ Original text: ‘[E]s que mi problema son las deudas. Y con 700 euros [from the agrarian pension] no voy a ninguna parte. Tenemos a la abuela 96 anos. Y la

calefacción tiene que estar bien puesta [...] se gasta 10 litros de gasóleo al día. 30 días - 300 euros al mes.'

- ² Original text: 'Hubo un momento en que el gobierno puso un plan de jubilación, yo tenía 53 años y no me atreví a cogerlo. ¿Hubiera podido jubilarme con unos 15,000 euros que hubiera cobrado, pero claro como voy a vivir los años siguientes? Que mala decisión. Después no había más planes de jubilación y luego nos han quitado la cuota.'
- ³ Original text: 'Yo tengo que tomar leche desnatada. No sabes lo que me da. Es que tengo muchas cosas. Diabetes, que me cogió. Esto es por el estrés, me dijeron. Me pilló todo a la vez. Y cuando aquello no dormía, los domingos echaba purín, y entre semana una cosa por otra. Tengo muchas enfermedades. Una médica me dijo que no puedo tomar leche de la vaca. ¿Cómo que no? No, leche de soja. Lo metí en la boca y dije no. Esto no lo tomo. He estado bastante tiempo, la leche lo cuezo tres veces para quitarle la nata. Dicen que no es desnatada, pero por lo menos es pura [...] Mi vasito de leche no hay nadie que me lo quite.'
- ⁴ Original text: "Cosas de esfuerzo nada. Las horas me las tiro. A noche fui a la cama a la 1:30. Parió una novilla, pues esas cosas hay que hacerlas y a las 6 de la mañana pues arriba. Hay que estar al frente del negocio"
- ⁵ Original text: '¿Porqué tu crees que un ganadero que tiene 100 ha en [el pueblo] no en propiedad pero que está usando todo, y porqué alguien que tiene 7000m² le enfada? Las ayudas de la PAC están vinculadas a la tierra, y más tierra que tenga, más ayudas de la PAC. Alguien necesita 7000m² para montar una huerta, eso implica quitarlo a otro.'
- ⁶ Original text: 'Yo soy el único en [el pueblo] que le han exigido que legalice las vallas. Si vas por un paseo lo vas a ver en todos lados, y en toda la historia del [pueblo] a nadie la habían pedido esto. Y a mí sí. Es solo un ejemplo y luego lo que va diciendo en la vecindad y lo que se está moviendo, intentando poner los vecinos en contra de ti.'
- ⁷ Original text: 'Tengo serias dudas de que vayamos a seguir en ese terreno. Yo no creo que haya renovación del contrato por parte del ayuntamiento. Lamentablemente me ha hecho pensar en comprar una propiedad. Nunca me lo había planteado. Porque confiaba que se podía sacar adelante un proyecto en alquiler. Me gustó la idea de alquiler con intervención pública. Pensé que era una ventaja y ahora creo que es un inconveniente. Me doy cuenta que realmente para poder invertir en un proyecto a largo plazo necesitas una seguridad que con alquiler no vas a tener. Básicamente ha cambiado mi perspectiva en que tener el ayuntamiento de por medio no me parece una garantía, más como un a desventaja.'
- ⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-for-our-roots/index_es.htm

- ⁹ Original text: ‘Así, el Estado de Bienestar no acaba de desarrollarse completamente porque cuando aparecen las condiciones propicias para su expansión, este se ve afectado por cambios estructurales que dificultan su evolución.’
- ¹⁰ Milk quotas establish maximum production thresholds for cow’s milk (in kilograms) that producers are allowed to sell to milk distributors or sell directly, without paying a fine. Quotas are transferable goods that can be bought and sold.
- ¹¹ Statistics taken from EUSTAT Database, series: N° de explotaciones por estudios realizados de la C.A. de Euskadi por el jefe de explotación y comarca. Accessed 1 November, 2018.
- ¹² The Basque rural, coastal and food sector development agency.
<https://www.hazi.eus/es/>
- ¹³ The term ‘LEADER’ originally came from the French acronym for ‘Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l’Économie Rurale, meaning ‘Links between the rural economy and development actions’. LEADER is a rural development method used in the EU, implemented under the national and regional Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) of each EU Member State, co-financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld_en#_edn1
- ¹⁴ Original text: ‘Con ambos partidos políticos siempre se dirigen a [mi pareja]. En todas las reuniones con Gorbeialde [ADR] y tal, yo era la única mujer. Y había momentos de mucha tensión. Pero al final he intentado cuidar el proceso porque formamos parte de este pueblo. Y que nos respeten como parte, y nuestros hijos no tienen que escuchar gente hablando mal de nosotras en el pueblo.’
- ¹⁵ Original text: ‘De hecho este año la renovación [de mi visa de residencia] fue llamativo. Lo primero que me pidieron es llevar un certificado de Lanbide de si he cobrado y si he cobrado RGI, cuanto ha sido. Asumiendo que estaba cobrando. Y cuando fui a Lanbide, le digo al chico oye por favor me haces este certificado que nunca he solicitado y no voy a solicitar la renta. Y me mira raro. Y me dice ese certificado no tenemos. Fui a hablar con el director y al final me lo dieron. En la ley de extranjería no está que yo tendría que presentar que no estoy cobrando la RGI [...] Lo que sí, son procesos que te gastan mucho y sobre todo cuando tu lees y entiendes las intenciones que hay detrás. Es lo que machaca.’
- ¹⁶ Original text: ‘Con tanta competencia es muy difícil para un joven que se quiera instalar poder comprar tierra. Sobre todo, cuando la mayoría de las tierras agrícolas no se venden por agencias o anuncios sino directamente por conocidos. Este punto es una barrera más para los nuevos perfiles que no proceden del entorno rural ya que les es todavía más difícil saber que tierras están en venta.’

- ¹⁷ Original text: '¿Sin familia en el sector es muy difícil entrar? Bufff si. Súper caro. 5 has a medio millón de euros se vendió este año. Si empiezas de cero o tienes mucha pasta o no...'
- ¹⁸ Original text: 'Con los señores [dueños de la tierra], sí que había un trato familiar y tal. Al inicio yo me deje confiar del todo con ellos. Era súper sincera. Pero me di cuenta que a la hora de hacer negocios, no me veían como hija. Y de repente, me vi un poco desprotegida. Cuando me tuvieron contratada, me dijeron que estaba contratada, y luego no fue así. Si se podían ahorrar 6 meses de seguridad social, se lo habían hecho. Sentí un poco traicionada. Pero bueno, ahora lo entiendo, porque a la hora de los negocios es así. Igual si fuera chico no hubiera pasado eso. O igual somos mas sensibles. No sé.'
- ¹⁹ Original text: 'Pues bien, ya me he acostumbrado. Estuve una temporada viviendo en un caserío. Al inicio pensé que era lo mas guay.. Acabe mas agobiada. Me di cuenta que aparte de la huerta también necesito ver gente. Sino soy muy propensa a aislarme y me viene fatal a la cabeza?.'
- ²⁰ Original text: ayuda a domicilio pública o privada así como la figura de la «cuidadora interna» (mencionando concretamente a las mujeres sudamericanas)
- ²¹ Original text: 'Toda la vida trabajando y no tienen un solo día cotizado en la Seguridad Social. La explotación agrícola o ganadera está a nombre de su marido y en caso de tener algún problema con él, puede quedarse en la calle, sin casa, sin explotación ni trabajo, sin subsidio de paro; es decir, en la práctica mendicidad.'
- ²² Original text: 'Para una persona sola es mucho. Tiene que ser un matrimonio.'
- ²³ Original text: 'las residencias son sinónimo de "tristeza" y "abandono", constituyendo una opción para las personas mayores cuyas familias eluden la responsabilidad de cuidarlas. Las residencias son uno de los elementos que componen la red de cuidado de las personas mayores y suponen el polo de mayor externalización de las tareas de cuidado, de colocar las tareas fuera de la familia y en este sentido representan la mayor "amenaza".'
- ²⁴ Original text: 'Aunque como dicen algunas, "la maternidad corta mucho", no tienen acceso a infraestructuras que les permita aliviar estas tareas y dejarlas dedicarse a las tareas agrícolas. Al ser madres tienen ciertas necesidades que raras veces se cumplen en las áreas rurales. "Que nos pongan guardería para todos. Horarios establecidos para agricultoras durante los tres primeros años.'
- ²⁵ Original text: 'mediante la articulación de un aparato normativo que define su status personal como extranjeras o ciudadanas, se les asigna un lugar concreto dentro de la estructura ocupacional. Por otra parte, a través de los denominados programas de empleo, cuya gestión se externaliza a través de asociaciones privadas, lo institucional interviene decididamente en la regulación del mercado de trabajo.'

5

Collective reproduction and Basque rural identity

5.1 Las mesa decolonial

In November 2019 Basque feminist collectives organized a three-day forum, which brought together some 3000 people who identify as women, coming together to debate, share and set agendas for the feminist movement. This was the fifth gathering of this nature, and the last time such an event had taken place was a decade prior. As we descended on Durango, a town of 28,000 people, known for its medieval witch hunts and beautifully preserved historic town centre, frankly it felt historic. As people streamed into the main hall for the opening panel, I looked around and spotted just two men, one behind a press camera and the other was Iñaki, delivering vegetables for lunch from his nearby agroecological farm. One of the opening speeches was by Amets, a peasant woman, leader of *Etxaldeko Emakumeak*, the women's group of the movement for food sovereignty, whose discourse in Euskera captivated the crowd (a significant portion of which had come from urban areas), and put rural feminism squarely on the agenda. This urban-rural alliance had been brewing for some years, and this moment felt symbolically like a public commitment to collaboration across geographical divides. Clearly the crowd was eager to participate in building this connection. The breakout session dedicated to *agroecofeminism* planned by the same group immediately following was overflowing with interest and had to turn away a line of women that curved around the block.

This feminist forum, also turned out to be an important turning point in Basque feminist politics for a different and more conflictual reason. Indeed, it was not necessarily unprecedented to bring together massive numbers of participants, nor was it novel to draw on the icon of Basque

rural women in deep connection with their territory to mobilize urban populations. What made this encounter so memorable, and fed online debates for weeks after, was the presence of a very small group of people, who according to the perceptions of the majority, are not Basque.

The plenary panel on decolonial feminism brought together a powerful line-up of racialized women plus one Basque woman perceived as white. The speakers came with difficult challenges to what they perceived as an exclusionary white feminist movement. One of the speakers challenged organizers as to why a white woman was included in the panel. She had presented in Basque together with her racialized colleague about their cross-cultural work in Gasteiz. I could feel the unease begin rippling through the crowd. The ubiquitous rule in social movement spaces like this is to ensure the presence of the Basque language as much as possible, and I imagined that for this reason, organizers didn't even think twice about situating a white woman on a plenary panel about decoloniality. But Leocadia Bueriberi, of the Red de Mujeres Racializadas de Euskal Herria, asserted from the stage, 'The office of a union cannot be occupied by the boss. Nor can men lead feminism. White people simply must remain on the sidelines while we are speaking'¹ (cited in Forner 2019). Murmurs, loaded glances between friends, 'why is she so aggressive?' types of comments about the tone of the speaker. Then came the moment for questions from the crowd. The first was a middle-aged white woman who had immigrated to the Basque country from another part of the Spanish State in the 1960s for work, attempting to establish a kind of bond with the speaker based on their shared immigrant experience. The second was a white Basque woman, similarly seeking to express solidarity, but also to clarify any misconceptions, emphasizing the fact that 'we are also a colonized people'. This was too much for Bueriberi, who forcefully responded that the oppression felt by Basques is incomparable to colonialism and that she found such a comparison offensive. Plus, 'Basque companies exploit us not only here, but also in our country of origin'² (cited in Forner 2019).

As the session let out, the crowd exploded with conversation. Pausing for a moment as I exited the pavilion with my friends, we looked around and noticed that every small group and hub of chatter that we could see or hear, appeared to be discussing what just happened. The political

metabolism was in full swing trying to digest the significance of the panel. Later in the evening we got word that Bueriberi was ‘physically assaulted’. A call to enact the movement protocol in public defence of the aggrieved woman went out on social media, with no details about the incident. The word spreading like wild fire among the event participants described how when the speaker exited the stage, she was grabbed forcefully by the arm by an older white Basque woman who hissed, ‘I’ll tell you how things work around here’ before they were interrupted.

Hours of argument, and debate ensued in small groups, throughout the cobblestone streets of Durango. One of my friends whose position immediately after the panel was defensive, upset, and feeling as if it was disrespectful for the speakers to come into this space as ‘guests’ with the attitude that they did, admitted that perhaps she was quick to judge. The thing that really made her change her mind? She found a short video on twitter of Bueriberi speaking fluently in Basque. Is learning the Basque language the key to cultural acceptance? Why did the forging of an alliance between rural women fighting for food sovereignty and urban feminist groups feel so seamless, while a demand for a more intersectional feminism cause such a controversy?

As if in response, following the congress, a group of rural Basque women published an article in Basque titled: ‘Can we decolonize while speaking the colonial language?’ criticizing the organizers of the congress for the failure to defend the Basque language. The authors write,

Language, among other things, gives us a way to see the world. As among other native peoples, it is an indispensable tool to communicate with the earth and maintain balance. What gives names to our mountains, streams, animals and trees shows us the way. It is a perspective that has been maintained particularly in rural areas, which often become covered with urban bricks and cement. It has also become clear in these conferences that, despite our knowledge of the city, urban people do not know us. Historically, rural women have been a particular target of the heteropatriarchal and colonial system for their role in defending land and language. While we’re theorizing from Basque cities, the Basque country is drowning. In this continuous attack on earth and language, our feminism is falling short. Even

though the defence of the land and its original peoples is the defence of life itself³ (Matxiarena *et al.* 2019).

On the final day of the meeting, small groups were formed to identify the priority issues for the feminist movement moving forward. In my randomly selected group of about 20 women, the unanimous clear consensus was the need to address the issue of diversity within the movement and to grapple with the previously unrecognized privileges that have been upholding power imbalances among participants. The critique from the presenter that the decolonial panel had not been respected as a non-mixed space for speakers struck a chord with many of the women present since a defining characteristic of the Basque feminist movement was its organization as a non-mixed space. And indeed, the reflections that erupted from the decolonial panel that November evening were not new to everyone. A historic figure in the movement, Begoña Zabala wrote a self-criticism of the movement over a decade before,

The reason for organizing women only is a tactical issue, i.e. for a given moment and in certain specific circumstances. Most importantly, it is the only way to build a collective subject with its own identity. It was our goal and we succeeded, albeit perhaps with an excessively identitarian result, which has led us to essentialize a little the ‘woman’ subject. This issue, however, has been emerging since the 1990s, forcing us to grapple with the concept of diversity and shifting to talk about different kinds of ‘women’ rather than one ‘woman’ subject. In this way, the commitment to a multicultural movement, which includes many different women, is also helping feminism to create a subject with a less predefined identity⁴ (Zabala 2008, 31).

Zabala’s reflection helps explain why in just two days the collective energy went from defensive anger and white fragility to curiosity and political commitment to changing internal movement dynamics. On one hand it shows that questions of diversity among women in the movement was a topic that had been brewing for some time, and was ready to be dealt with at a larger scale. And on the other hand, Zabala’s style of self-criticism and sincerity reflects a practice within the movement of constant self-evaluation, and political metabolism driving the collective process.

This brief anecdote describes a particularly striking example of a profound tension in Basque politics and social movements (including in rural areas), especially evident in the post-industrial period. It is the confrontation of identitarian politics with increasing racial and cultural diversity. For leftist Basques, whose collective identity has also been constructed as colonized people building class-based and internationalist solidarity with working class and decolonial movements around the globe, navigating this tension is at the core of collective reproduction. However, the implications and shifts in collective identity required when solidarity and decolonial struggles increasingly take root in the Basque country, and within the Basque identity itself, are bringing new challenges to processes of collective identity formation. This chapter attempts to explore the political project of cultivating Basque cultural identity, and how this shapes and is shaped by the politics of recognition. I apply these broader social questions to the rural agrarian world in order to examine what implications this may have on generational renewal in Basque farming.

5.2 Rural Basque identity in transition

Like many other parts of the global North, the 1980s were a time of industrial crisis. For a century, rural populations had either focused on applying an industrial logic and specializing agrarian production or supplying their labour to the booming shop floors and ship yards always in need of workers. At the same time Franco had represented a common fascist enemy against which Basque nationalists of all stripes could unite. Given the central role of industry in the Bizkaian economy, the loss of factory jobs impacted urban and rural areas, and combined with the death of Franco, this post-industrial, post-Franco era brought up deep divisions and questions about Basque rural identity.

Already towards the end of the 1970s, the decline in the number of farms and depopulation of rural areas was beginning to feel like a free fall. One of the reasons why this process is so troubling in the Basque context is because of the symbolic weight of the *caserío* in the national collective imaginary (explained in chapter 3). In Euskera the *Baserri* (the traditional Basque peasant household) is the figure that represents the relationship between the Basques and their territory. ‘The *caserío* and the Basque people seem to be inseparable, constituting the anchor of the Basque

people to their land. However in recent years, a deep concern over the future of this important institution has emerged' (Etxezarreta 1977, 7). Rural areas are seen as the stronghold that kept the Basque language alive withstanding criminalization under Franco, as implied by Matxiarena et al.'s article published after the congress in Durango. In other words, the disappearance of the *Baserritarra* (the Basque peasant) is not only a marker of loss of local food production, it has important implications for the foundations of Basque nationalism in so far as it is rooted in rural identity. In this context the establishment of the Basque statute of autonomy shifted the political landscape, exacerbating the deepening divisions between the dominant governing party (PNV) and leftist independentists. As I will argue in this chapter, the PNV played down class divisions, and celebrated Basque cultural identity, rooted in rural folklore, as the driving force behind its brand of nationalism. In contrast, the *izquierda abertzale* further developed an internationalist and class-based approach to its way of organizing and framing its demands. Though historically connected to the lineage of Basque nationalism founded by Sabino Arana, both significantly opened up the boundaries of Basque collective identity moving away from its racially conscribed origins. As the survival of the *caserío* has been called into question during this post-industrial period, and rural demographics are shifting, Basque nationalists across the political spectrum are forced to reimagine the very foundations of Basque rural identity in the future.

5.2.1 Rural identity

Reimagining rural identity is not an easy thing. And yet the ways that the boundaries of collective rural identity are cultivated can have huge impacts on what those places and landscapes look like and who farms (or not) in the future. Thus, the way farming and rural identities are constructed is not only a way of creating status hierarchies in society generally, it also has direct impacts on generational renewal. In the literature on farm succession patterns, some scholars have 'argued that historically (often intergenerationally) constructed identities tied to the farm as a place and a family tradition generates a sense of belonging to the farm and commitment to farming as a way of life' (e.g., Gray 1998; Burton 2004; Flemsæter and Setten 2009, cited in Fischer and Burton 2014, 419). Fischer and Burton argue that better understanding the relationship between farmer identities and farm structure 'may assist us to grasp how

and why previously established and taken-for-granted value and belief structures and identities conducive to farm succession (the “natural” or “born” farmer) may no longer be successfully reproduced’ (2014, 419). According to Gallar Hernández, one of the main impacts of the hegemonic corporate-led food system is the ‘redefinition of agrarian identities, disassociating them from local culture, which has at the same time reconfigured the connections between people and their territory’ (Gallar Hernández 2011, 34, Espluga Trenc *et al.* 2019, 120).

As similar conditions of industrial crisis shaped rural areas in the UK, British scholars advanced a rich literature throughout the 1990s highlighting the resistance to seeing the ‘other’ in rural areas (Agyeman and Spooner 1997, Cloke and Little 1997a). Chakraborti and Garland argue that urban spaces have been subject to scrutiny and seen as multicultural, but the rural has remained static as it, ‘is seen to capture the very essence of “Englishness” [...and] maintained an enduring and strong association with English national identity’ (Chakraborti and Garland 2004, 384). Such traditional images of rural identity, when rigid and romanticized, can serve as means of invisibilizing and marginalizing certain groups who don’t fit the norm, or as Philo calls ‘othering’ (Philo 1992), and reifying the dominance of ‘mainstream values such as “Englishness”, whiteness, heterosexuality and middle-class occupancy’ (Chakraborti and Garland 2004, 385). Cloke and Little suggest that rurality is socially and culturally constructed, but has very real material implications. ‘[I]f rurality is bound up by nationalistic ideas of (white) Englishness then resultant cultural attitudes about who does and who does not belong in the countryside serve as discriminating mechanisms of exclusion’ (Cloke and Little 1997b, 4). Agyeman and Spooner dig deeper into the racial implications of idyllic renderings of the rural, pointing out that the historic association of nativeness, ethnic purity and national identity with the rural, as opposed to contaminated, infiltrated urban areas, was a European 19th century phenomenon ‘inscribed within the urban-rural dichotomy’ (Bunce 1994; Lowe 1983; Lowe *et al.*, unpublished, cited in Agyeman and Spooner 1997, 190). They warn,

Images of this ‘green and pleasant land’, free from invading aliens, have been used by fascist organisations such as the National Front (Coates 1993) and the British National Party (Jay 1992; Roberts 1992), who have targeted rural areas as some of their top recruiting grounds [...]

This is not to suggest that all those subscribing to a ‘rural idyll’, or a British national culture or identity, have fascist tendencies. This is simply one reading of how an ethnically absolute national culture is inscribed in space; however, it is both powerful and frightening. Such attitudes are extreme yet similar ones are pervasive in rural England. For example, many white ‘liberals’ echo these attitudes (Agyeman and Spooner 1997, 193–4).

Similar academic work on othering and Basque rurality is sparse, though it is commonly noted that rural populations are closed to outsiders, thus decentring the racial dimension of possible exclusion. However, Agyeman and Spooner push back against this type of reasoning, also common in Norfolk, where they have conducted research. ‘Rural cultures are often very elitist, and all newcomers to villages, both white and those of colour, can be made to feel unwelcome; yet some newcomers are made to feel more unwelcome than others’ (Agyeman and Spooner 1997, 196).

Related literature on gender and European farming suggests that discrimination in rural areas not only impacts outsiders. ‘Biological maleness remains a prerequisite for being seen as being capable to do farming, be a “real” farmer and so on’ (e.g., Saugeres 2002; Silvasti 2003; Brandth 2006, cited in Fischer and Burton 2014, 420). Brandth offers a thorough literature review detailing the three main discourses scholars have used to describe the role of women in European agriculture. First and most commonly, ‘within the discourse of the family farm masculinity and femininity are presented as relatively static and homogenous differences, corresponding to what Liepins (1998) has called “tough men” and “caring women”’ (Brandth 2002, 187). As a result of the agricultural specialization and modernization advanced during the industrial period, a second discourse about the masculinization of the rural emerged. Especially in the dairy sector, mechanization of milking redistributed labour within farm households, and represented a ‘male take-over [that] occurred in a number of western countries and was not limited to dairying’ (Brandth 2002, 188). This was followed by an increase in off-farm job opportunities for women, especially in the care sector as European welfare states expanded, fuelling the out-migration of women from rural areas (Brandth 2002, 189). Finally, Brandth identifies a third discourse of detraditionalization and diversity that challenges the previous two by

highlighting the plurality and dynamism of rural women. Here, ‘farm women are (re)negotiated through everyday practices, with explicit attention being paid to identity construction’ (Brandth 2002, 194–5). Despite the small but significant body of work on othering and discrimination in rural identity construction, the dominant male, son of a farmer, ideal type successor is the focus of much of the literature on farm succession. ‘While this type of transfer of land from one generation to the next is important we also need to take into account those pathways which do not fit within this norm’ (Cassidy *et al.* 2019, 224).

As described in chapter 3, Basque nationalist discourse espoused by PNV representatives, policy platforms and publications has and continues to present the agrarian world as the link between the Basque territory and its people, the heart of Basque identity.

The Basque Country would not be understood without its linkage with the primary sector and the rural and coastal environment. The primary sector is of great value for the Basque Country not only because of economic and employment contribution, but because it has a close connection with the country's social identity⁵ (EAJ-PNV 2019, 27).

In one PNV elected officials words, the Basque rural fair represents ‘what we were and what we are’ (Suso 2017). McCrone (1992) suggests that nationalism requires, ‘selective remembering’ to create cultural continuity. In what follows I show how the PNV cultivates the image of the mythical traditional agrarian past in a pragmatic effort to strengthen Basque collective identity to the extent that it advances the party's political project of cultural autonomy. In this way, the rural identity that is portrayed and recognized is romanticized, yet static. Put another way, the agrarian identity that is manifested by dominant political discourse and imagery is a reflection of a traditional Basque *baserritarra*, whose model of production and social reproduction hardly exists anymore. At the same time the actual agrarian policy aims put into place by PNV programmes support a highly capitalized and modernized model of production and reproduction, which is facing a crisis of generational renewal. Understanding full well the cultural implications associated with the loss of the *Baserritarra*, this agrarian policy was bolstered by a coordinated

effort to keep the *caserío* and peasant traditions alive as folkloric symbols celebrated and honoured in festivals, markets and advertisements.

In this context, I argue that while non-heritage newcomer farmers are indeed increasing and generating optimism for some, they are also facing challenges and frictions as they navigate the politics of collective reproduction in rural places. As this literature review suggests, hidden forms of discrimination exacerbated by the dynamics of collective reproduction in rural areas are not necessarily causally related to the presence of strong nationalist movements. However, the Basque case, with its deeply rooted and diverse forms of nationalism makes these dynamics especially vivid and illustrative. Similar to how Agyeman and Spooner describe the experience of blackness in rural areas, rural ‘others’ find themselves in a contradiction, at once invisible to the institutions they rely on to facilitate their entry into farming, and at the same time their presence in rural areas and as new farmers is hyper visible and observed by other rural residents (Agyeman and Spooner 1997, 204). Similarly describing the experience of migrants in the Basque Country the *Marcha Mundial de Mujeres de Euskal Herria* explains, “The media image of migrants (especially “irregular” migration with greater emphasis on women) is polarized between invisibilisation and hypervisibilisation. On the one hand, invisibilised as political subjects with history, voice and rich cultures; and on the other hand, hypervisibilised as subordinated people, dangerous, needy, invasive, lacking in academic or technical training”⁶ (2021, 31–2). This description hints at the important distinction between seeing and recognizing. As previously non-recognized successors take up farming, the literature on recognition helps shed light on why it is so important to shift who is culturally recognized and granted equal status in order to ensure generational renewal.

5.3 The politics of recognition

Taylor and Honneth have outlined what is perhaps the clearest view of the importance of recognition in Hegelian terms (Taylor 1997, Fraser and Honneth 2004). This perspective links the development of self to recognition by others. And this need they suggest is one of the ‘driving forces behind nationalist movements in politics’ as well as ‘multiculturalism’ (Taylor 1997, 25).

The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (Taylor 1997, 25).

Taylor links the importance of recognition to the ‘collapse of social hierarchies, which used to be the basis for honour’ (Taylor 1997, 26–7). In a social order like the pre-industrial one described in chapter 3, one was defined by one’s position in the hierarchical social order of peasants and lords (what Taylor understands as a system of honour), not by the recognition of one’s unique identity by others. The post-industrial democratic period is characterized by an entirely distinct system.

[A]gainst this notion of honour, we have the modern notion of dignity, now used in a universalist and egalitarian sense, where we talk of the inherent ‘dignity of human beings,’ or of citizen dignity. The underlying premise here is that everyone shares in it. It is obvious that this concept of dignity is the only one compatible with a democratic society, and that it was inevitable that the old concept of honour was superseded. But this has also meant that the forms of equal recognition have been essential to democratic culture (Taylor 1997, 27).

He goes on to argue that misrecognition, or failure to recognize is a central vector of oppression in such democratic societies. ‘Not only contemporary feminism but also race relations and discussions of multiculturalism are undergirded by the premise that the withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression’ (Taylor 1997, 36).

Fraser enters into this debate with a critique of what she labels as the ‘identity model’ of approaching recognition, described above, and which I argue below, has been the primary mode of collective reproduction advanced by the PNV. ‘By equating the politics of recognition with identity politics, it encourages both the reification of group identities and the displacement of redistribution’ (Fraser 2000, 110). The first issue of

reification is evident when the recognition of a particular identity becomes the central political demand, which tends to oversimplify and homogenize the identity in question.

Ironically, then, the identity model serves as a vehicle for misrecognition: in reifying group identity, it ends by obscuring the politics of cultural identification, the struggles within the group for the authority—and the power—to represent it. By shielding such struggles from view, this approach masks the power of dominant fractions and reinforces intragroup domination. The identity model thus lends itself all too easily to repressive forms of communitarianism, promoting conformism, intolerance and patriarchalism (Fraser 2000, 112).

Indeed, rural and racial issues came bursting into the fore in Durango in an attempt to prevent Basque feminism from falling into this type of identity politics, that whitewashes and urbanizes the experience of women. It is in these moments when we see how the tensions and contestations in the process of collective reproduction impact the ways that political subjectivities take shape.

Second, in the identity model, ‘The roots of injustice are located in demeaning representations, but these are not seen as socially grounded. For this current, the nub of the problem is free-floating discourses, not institutionalized significations and norms. Hypostatizing culture, they both abstract misrecognition from its institutional matrix and obscure its entwinement with distributive injustice’ (Fraser 2000, 110). The following section, therefore, details these free-floating discourses used to discuss generational renewal as if it is unrelated to distributive claims, as well as the institutionalized discrimination and failures of distributive justice that remain.

Finally, Fraser proposes an alternative ‘status model’ with which to approach the politics of recognition. In this framing, what requires recognition in order to uphold justice is ‘the status of individual group members as full partners in social interaction. Misrecognition, accordingly, does not mean the depreciation and deformation of group identity, but social subordination—in the sense of being prevented from participating

as a peer in social life' (Fraser 2000, 113). In this model undoing misrecognition requires structural change in the social institutions where parity of participation is hindered. Finally, the status model, instead of placing the politics of recognition in conceptual competition with those who advocate for redistributive politics, 'the two dimensions are interimbricated and interact causally with each other' (Fraser 2000, 118).

For the status model, institutionalized patterns of cultural value are not the only obstacles to participatory parity. On the contrary, equal participation is also impeded when some actors lack the necessary resources to interact with others as peers. In such cases, maldistribution constitutes an impediment to parity of participation in social life, and thus a form of social subordination and injustice. Unlike the identity model, then, the status model understands social justice as encompassing two analytically distinct dimensions: a dimension of recognition, which concerns the effects of institutionalized meanings and norms on the relative standing of social actors; and a dimension of distribution, which involves the allocation of disposable resources to social actors (Fraser 2000, 116).

In order to examine the forms of misrecognition that are shaping generational renewal in rural areas, I look at key institutions involved in collective reproduction. Building on this literature then, I argue that the PNV has cultivated collective identity based on Basque culture, but failed to address fundamental issues of redistributive justice. Plus, the conception of Basque identity has been less porous in rural areas, in line with the British literature on idyllic notions of the English countryside. Thus, the PNV's contribution to the collective reproduction of rural Basque farmer identities is static, and fails to recognize many new entrants and potential new entrants. The social institutions through which the politics of recognition play out are spaces where 'interaction is regulated by an institutionalized pattern of cultural value that constitutes some categories of social actors as normative and others as deficient or inferior. [...] In each case, the result is to deny some members of society the status of full partners in interaction, capable of participating on a par with the rest' (Fraser 2000, 114). At the same time, leftist independentists, who have historically prioritized international solidarity work and class-based organizing, are actively working to build the local infrastructure to ensure an inclusive and diverse rural cultural space. These efforts stand in distinct

contrast to the dominant class-free cultural whitewashing of rural areas, but still the tensions that came clearly to the fore in Durango remain unresolved, over how Basque identity positions itself in relation to colonialism, privilege and racial oppression.

The dynamics of collective reproduction of Basque identity reflect a history of a people defending their right to exist, protecting the disappearance of their culture from the influence of external forces — specifically the Spanish crown and later state. The sense of being a threatened minority living in an oppressive state that is not of your choosing, has very real historical basis in the Basque country. As the woman in Durango suggested, many Basques see themselves as a colonized people. However, the type of identity politics that emerge from such a shared collective imaginary has very different implications depending on the power dynamics in which they are carried out. The struggles of minority ethnic groups fighting for their right to exist tend to inspire solidarity among leftists and progressives around the world. On the other hand, similar struggles when deployed by dominant, privileged ethnic groups can feed the white nationalist fervour of the extreme right.

The complicated part in the process of collective reproduction is that Basques are both a threatened people who have been forced to defend their identity and demand demonstrations of respect like the learning of the language, and also a white European culture that planted palm trees and built farmhouses with the profits generated by its privileged position within the Spanish colonial enterprise. To deny either one of these realities is to invisibilize the power relations and deeply intertwined needs for distributive justice that form the backdrop of Basque identity politics.

5.3.1 From ethnic identity to cultural identity: PNV creating space for plurality?

Academic literature on nationalisms has stressed the distinction between civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism (Brubaker, 1992; Greenfeld, 1992). By nature, nationalism defines the boundaries of a nation, but based on what? 'It is precisely in the changing emphasis on political or cultural factors made by the nationalist discourse where scholars have drawn a line between "civic" and "ethnic" nationalism' (Muro and Quiroga 2005, 11).

Basque nationalism is often viewed as ethnic, however, Zabalo stresses that both types of nationalism can co-exist in one place or change over time (Zabalo 2004).

In the political landscape of the Basque Country, there is perhaps no entity that has consistently had greater influence on national political culture than the PNV, which has existed for over 100 years and governed almost without pause since the establishment of democracy. Arana, the founder of the PNV is considered to original visionary of the ethnic nationalist political programme in the Basque country. Perhaps less commonly understood is the way that decades later, after Franco's death, the party redefined its nationalist agenda. Montero describes this phase of the PNV political vision as clearly identitarian nationalist, in line with its historic origins; however, it no longer stressed the ethnic basis of Basqueness. Instead, Basque identity, though still grounded in traditional cultural attributes, was framed as something that could be acquired (Montero 2015, 10). The concept of and ethnically based collective identity became much less frequently deployed by the PNV in this period, instead favouring the notion of Basque culture (Montero 2015, 11). Exactly what the central components of Basque culture that define Basque identity are, is not clearly stated in PNV documents. However, '[D]espite the ambiguity in nationalist discourse its only indubitable characteristics were the specificity and its development by the Basques as a collective – identity, the culture that defines the people, provides the criterion by which the nature of Basqueness is defined'⁷ (Montero 2015, 13).

In other words, rather than focusing on intrinsic individual characteristics as Arana had, the process of collective reproduction was tied to the active participation by all residents in maintaining or acquiring the practices and norms of Basque cultural identity (Montero 2015, 10). This shift created an entry point for non-Basque residents of the Basque Country, previously excluded based on a racialized understanding of local identity, to become part of the collective Basque culture. This opening up of the Basque nationalist project deepened the moral obligation projected onto non-Basque residents, who were expected to respect the identitarian nationalist political agenda, the celebration of the rural ideal and connection to territory, and to learn the Basque language, *Euskera*. In 1992 the PNV explained it as follows: 'The Basques have been an emigrant

people. They have been welcomed everywhere, especially because they respect the lands they travel to. In exchange for that respect, we believe that reciprocity of respect ... to our language, our ways of life and being, is also required” (EBB del PNV, 1992 cited in Montero 2015, 14). Here, any historical incident of unwelcomed Basque arrival in foreign lands (that is, as part of colonial expansion) has been selectively edited out of collective historical memory. Moreover, this assertion of a moral responsibility to learn Basque permeates well beyond PNV constituents, as observed in the way a video of a racialized woman speaking Basque changed how she was perceived, described above.

The shift from a nationalist politics based on ethnicity to one based on shared cultural identity, indeed has opened up Basque nationalism to the participation of non-Basques. However, according to Montero, the PNV assumes that this ‘culturization’ project to broaden support for Basque nationalism would not pose any issues for non-Basque residents, instead the concern was possible resistance among Basques due to ‘ethnocentrism or resentment’ (Montero 2015, 18). As a form of reassuring this potentially resistant part of the Basque population, the 1977 political framing document published by the PNV clarified that the incorporation of foreign cultures would not happen against the will of the Basques and their acceptance would be subject to revision by the people (PNV 1977, 163, cited in Montero 2015, 16). For further clarification, in 1993 the following metaphor was deployed to describe how the PNV envisioned the process of incorporation of non-Basques into local culture: “[J]ust as food introduced into the human body is metabolized by making it part of the body and *expelling the unassimilated*, this small but thriving people assimilate new elements and behaviours, integrate them, without losing their personality, simply modifying it”⁹ (cited in Montero 2015, 16, emphasis added). In short, existing members of the Basque cultural group police the boundaries of who is in and who is out, expelling the non-assimilated. And, the few mentions of pluralism by PNV nationalists highlighted by Montero from the PNV publication: Comunicado de Aberri Eguna. *Ser vasco hoy*, 1992, are in reference to the importance of maintaining unique Basque culture because of its contribution to the ‘pluralism of human societies’, not the co-existence of diverse identities within Basque society (Montero 2015, 12).

This free-floating discourse alludes to a kind of assimilation theory-based conditional recognition, rooted in the notion that one is worthy of rights if one adopts a particular set of cultural characteristics. And the capacity to become part of the receiving culture is dependent upon the 'human capital' of the people migrating. In more concrete terms this means that any unequal integration into labour markets, or failure to assimilate socially, for example is seen as not only a result of lack of education, professional qualification, but also, 'lack of recognition and low transferability of their knowledge and qualifications, low quality of their education systems, lack of competency in the local language, lack of experience in the new labour market, lack of adaptation to new cultural habits and traditions, etc.'¹⁰ (Iglesias *et al.* 2020, 13–4). In other words, emphasizing the adoption of a particular set of cultural values and practices as a way of earning one's place as an equal in the collective imaginary ignores the very real material, symbolic and power differences or prejudices that might complicate this process for certain groups.

When I asked Emmanuel how learning Euskera was going he sighed. Not because, as is a common answer to this question, it is a difficult language. Instead, he was frustrated because he knew that the requirements on his time and energy of getting his farm established were preventing him from learning. He pays for classes in town, which if he passes, he gets a partial subsidy for. In essence, public money for education is granted only to those who use it to *successfully* integrate. And even though he is draining his savings to get his farm off the ground, it's not the money that feels like the biggest challenge,

The hardest thing for me is after eight hours of working to go to class. And especially the frustration of knowing that I can't learn well just by going to class but I really can't spend time on it outside of class hours. That's why I'd rather go repeat something orally that I know I will remember than just filling out a written exercise. I just can't. The other day I was wracking my brain because I can't find any more customers for my CSA box, even though the ones that I have are happy. Why do other farmers manage to find customers and I don't? Obviously because they've looked better, and those are the things I have to spend time on. But I can't, well I can, but it requires sacrificing some things and now my priority is to get this farm going.¹¹

Given his newcomer status and lack of deep social networks compared to other farmers who were born in the Basque Country, Emmanuel has to spend extra time and energy finding customers, which ends up directly competing with his ability to successfully integrate from the perspective of the PNV's assimilationist politics. This shift from ethnicity to cultural identity also represents an effort on the part of the PNV to take the political focus off of class politics and independence from the Spanish State, as such. This allowed the party to cultivate an appeal to a broad, cross-class coalition of nationalist voters. In order to maintain this base however, distributive justice must be downplayed. Why is it harder for Emmanuel, a racialized immigrant new entrant farmer, to find customers than other people? Why is starting a farm so precarious that taking time for learning a language, socializing or even getting a full night's sleep is out of the question for most new farmers, and less feasible still for those without family support on the farm?

Many new entrants wait a few years to formalize their farm business to avoid the extra economic burden when starting out and to extend the time that they might be eligible for financing via the Young Farmer Programme (the first five years of operation). However, as Emmanuel hints, the ability to not pay social security is also a form of white privilege.

Half my income I have to give to social security because I am self-employed. Of course, like I said before, other people can afford not to declare their income in the beginning since the first years are tough. But I can't. I'm a suspect everywhere I go.¹²

The Basque government actively cultivates the shared imaginary of the valuable, noble Basque farm sector 'of our childhood'. Economic inequality and struggle are glossed over in favour of preserving the idyllic image of the rural as an anchor of Basque identity. In one of its public statistical reports from 2017 the authors state,

The current Basque agricultural sector is highly professionalized, farmers have turned their farms into economically viable and socially enriching enterprises for the rural environment as a whole; since they manage a lot of territory, maintaining the image of the rural environment of our childhood in our collective imagination as a symbol of our roots, and generate wealth producing quality and safe

food; farmers are certainly the heart of our rural environment¹³ (EUSTAT 2017, 21).

The creation of a Basque food label, *Euskolabel* aims to highlight local food production with an easily recognizable Basque flag on the label, yet says nothing about the way it is produced. Hazi (a public agency dedicated to improving competitiveness and sustainable development in the food and environmental sphere) has created a campaign tapping into the well-developed patterns of collective identity formation based on local cultural pride and connection to territory. “Return to the Origin” is the slogan of this campaign involving all *Euskolabel* products, which aims to raise awareness among consumers about the value of our producers' work, which offer us superior quality food and maintain our landscape as we know it.¹⁴ In practice this means that farmers who don't fit into the collectively imaged rural landscape ‘as we know it’ are hyper visible in rural social landscapes, standing out as ‘suspicious’. At the same time their specific challenges, inequalities, needs and multiple efforts to earn recognition as part of the future of Basque farming, are not incorporated into the institutional framing of the farm sector.

When the politics of recognition hinge on an identity model that strategically avoids complicating this image with distributive questions, then the central symbols of that model become immovable and fixed. As suggested in chapter 4 as well, the priority goes to converting rural spaces into museums about the agrarian past rather than supporting the agrarian future. In her presentation in Durango, Amets, captured the sentiment this way: ‘Thanks to women all over the world we have agroecological models today, and we have to recognize the social and political value that this has, beyond folklore’¹⁵ (Ladislao and Etxaldeko Emakumeak 2019).

Recognizing small-scale farmers as a kind of folklore of the past has implications in the present. Living agrarian cultural activities are less and less common, contributing to a lack of interest among young people, as one dairy farmer laments, ‘Here, we’ve lost the Frisian cow show. We have to get that back. It doesn't take much. And he [the mayor] told me he'd like to do it. It's dairy country and there's no livestock judging!?’ In any

village of Cantabria there is. It gets young people excited. Here we have zero generational renewal. Everyone is old already.¹⁶

5.3.2 Institutionalizing gender perspectives

The post-industrial period also represents a shift in the PNV's strategy of collective reproduction in terms of gender relations moving away from total denial of women's rights towards recognition without redistribution. The Basque feminist movement irrupted with force upon Franco's death. It was logical. Neighbouring countries had seen advances in the field of women's rights while Basque and the rest of the women under Franco were relegated to the domestic sphere, losing rights that had already been won during the Second Republic in the 1930s. Women required their father's or their husband's permission to do just about anything. Among many forms of oppression, in 1975 women were legally recognized in the civil code as '*incapaces*' (incapable, the term used for the disabled), of making their own decisions. Married women couldn't 'receive a salary, nor sign a contract of employment, were it not with her husband's consent. If you had a business or a trade, you needed authorization from your husband for all business operations you conducted'¹⁷ (Zabala 2008, 28). What little paid labour was available to women was often couched in specifications that excluded women from certain posts, or disincentivized them by offering a public 'dowry' when they got married and left their jobs (Zabala 2008, 28).

The initial demands of the feminist movement were about dismantling the egregiously unequal and sexist legal framework that the Franco era had left in its wake, and these foundational issues propelled a rapid expansion of women's autonomous organizing, which made many gains. Internal divisions and strong debates emerged in years following around the institutionalization of the movement (Amurrio and Esteban 2010, 9). In 1982 the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party won the general elections in the central Spanish government. This opened up public institutions to feminist movements.

The institutionalization of the feminist movement took two different forms. Initially, Women's Institutes were established, the first of these in Madrid in 1983, with the rest of the autonomous communities following suit; the first Basque Women's Institute—Emakunde—was

founded in 1988. Then feminist ideas began to circulate in universities through the creation of different departments and institutes, and the consolidation of women's studies, gender studies, or feminist studies (Amurrio and Esteban 2010, 9).

In the Basque Country this move by government to institutionalize feminist organizations was seen by many as a threat and an attempt to co-opt the movement (Zabala 2008, 23–4). Zabala herself admits that it was clear that the establishment of Emakunde brought many victories in the politics of recognition with feminist discourse permeating public institutions, but they were partial. ‘They have expropriated our words and concepts, to tame them and take away their subversive force’¹⁸ (Zabala 2008, 39–40).

What she describes falls short of the kind of recognition Fraser argues for, where equal status is assured. The recognition was focused on visibility, air time about gender issues, and women's inclusion in the labour market. While at the same time, ‘these same institutions dismantle social and women's care services in the most brazen way’¹⁹ (Zabala 2008, 38). Key demands in years following focused on increasing public support for social reproductive labour. Animated by slogans like, ‘The iron and the mop, for everyone, full stop’²⁰ and, ‘Mr. Malone, tonight you make your dinner on your own’²¹ (Zabala 2008).

Emakunde soon turned its attention to the particular situation in the Basque countryside, publishing an extensive diagnosis in 1994, which attempted to visibilize the experience of rural women and to recognize historically invisibilized women's work in rural areas (Intxaurraga *et al.* 1994, 7). The first Basque celebration of the international day of rural women was launched in 2004. This event has since been organized annually by the Rural Women's Commission, and accompanied by an increase in coverage of rural women's issues in PNV publications, like the *Sustrai* magazine. Urretabizkaia explains that farm women feel alienated by this focus on *rural* women, rather than *agrarian* women (de Gonzalo Aranoa and Urretabizkaia 2012, 72). In the words of Belén Berdugo of (Federación de Asociaciones de Mujeres del Medio Rural, CERES) ‘They use us as window dressing, appropriating the image of the woman as a

victim (“help us”) or as modern and diverse (prizes and photos for innovators and entrepreneurs like something out of the ordinary). They turn us into image, pure marketing disconnected from our real presence and essence²² (cited in de Gonzalo Aranoa and Urretabizkaia 2012, 71).

A network of public functionaries dedicated to gender equality has developed throughout rural municipalities. Launched in 2006 the Network of Basque Municipalities for Gender Equality working Against Violence Against Women, *Berdinsarea* has provided an institutional space for municipal authorities to exchange strategies for addressing gender inequality through local public policy and programming. The network convenes nearly 80 per cent of Basque municipalities, and focuses on ending violence against women, via workshops, anti-gender violence campaigns at local festivals, etc. Among the rural towns, a specific recognition of the issues women face in the agrarian sector and farmer women as a collective are less common. *Etxaldeko Emakumeak* established a series of workshops to engage with a group of public employees hired as gender equality specialists in rural areas, since many actually live in nearby cities, and are unfamiliar with agrarian issues.

Indeed, the way public institutions have picked up and put into practice work on issues of gender inequality in rural areas has not remained in step with how feminist movements and rural women frame what is important. As demonstrated in chapter 4 and in the heated debates in Durango, the dismantling of the land for care trade and changing demographics in both urban and rural areas has brought racial politics into debates about gender inequality. Intersectional perspectives help reveal how immigrant women do not experience inequality in rural areas in the same way as the women whose families have lived there for generations. The challenge of making processes of collective reproduction in rural areas inclusive is not lost on rural women. The number one priority issue that needs to be encouraged in the agrarian sector identified by women farmers is the incorporation of new young farmers into the sector, this was followed by economic support as the next most important issue (EUSTAT 2017, 25). These points were closely followed by a desire for rural towns to open up and integrate whoever wants to come live there (EUSTAT 2017, 31).

Although the recognition of the particular situation faced by rural women has lagged behind efforts in urban areas, a proliferation of initiatives can be observed from the mid 1990s onwards. These events and networks tend to be celebratory, and feed the collective imaginary that has been cultivated by the PNV, framing the central role of Basque rural women, highlighted by the authors of the commentary about the use of Euskera in Durango, as defenders of Basque land, language and life itself (Matxiarena *et al.* 2019). The way that the status of young women entering the farm sector is also instrumentalized is evident in the following exchange with Mikel,

[T]he director of the rural development agency] introduced me to a young woman. The agency is working on the issue of young farmers. She's done all the courses and wants to start farming. The director told me it would be a 6-month thing, the provincial government pays something and then with the idea of passing the farm on to her. Is there demand for this type of programme? He said yes. This is a 7-hectare farm. I can't guarantee she'll get to keep this. Well, it was just a first meeting and we will see what happens.²³

And how do you feel about a young woman taking over, I asked. 'Even better, they will give her more money.'²⁴ In this way gender quotas and festivals mainstream gender issues, but the focus is shifted away from more confrontational demands for distributive justice for rural women, and the process of collective reproduction reifies the image of traditional rural women, rather than visibilizing how the population of women in the agrarian sector and rural areas is evolving.

5.4 Internationalist, independentist, working class collective identity

The post-industrial period saw the deepening of divisions between Basque nationalists who no longer had a common enemy in Franco. The PNV's hold on institutional power was consolidated by striking political pacts with the Spanish government to join forces against ETA. This coincided with an increase in the brutality of the tactics of armed insurrection and violence deployed by ETA, and the debates about the appropriateness of this approach further fragmented and alienated parts of the left (López Vidales 1999, 3–4). Despite its significant internal fissures the leftist independentist²⁵ movement was primarily a popular movement, that

grounded its collective identity in working class consciousness (Zelik 2017, 98).

Kramer's broad sweeping analysis of different forms of nationalism on both sides of the Atlantic ocean reminds readers that 'All nationalisms construct collective identities by stressing their differences from other nations and peoples' (Kramer 2011, 5). The exclusionary politics of nationalist ideology in a globalized world can in many cases lead to the use of xenophobic justifications for promoting racial purity. Even when not explicitly supremacist, nationalism can easily be interpreted as contradictory to internationalism. 'In short, historically socialism sought to promote solidarity among workers in different countries as part of the goal of the world socialist revolution. Nationalism, on the other hand, sought to transcend social class divisions through a national project'²⁶ (Balfour 2009, 1).

However, the extensive presence of feminist and internationalist symbols and the history of class-based organizing in spaces where Basque radical leftist nationalists gather complicates this easy generalization. Indeed, 'newer forms of multicultural nationalism and transnational institutions have emerged in recent decades to challenge older, more exclusionary aspects of nationalist thought' (Kramer 2011, 5). Kasmir's work on the Basque country urges us to examine the diverse political agendas of different nationalist movements 'making a shift toward seeing a plurality of nationalisms' (2002, 64). Indeed, an internationalist, working class vision of Basque identity was formulated by ETA as a direct challenge to the PNV in 1964 and set the framework for a political struggle within Basque nationalism.

We have always been and always will be on the side of workers who, whether born in Euskadi or not, work for true democracy in our country. They are the basis of the future Basque society. We consider them and their children, without a doubt, rather more Basque than those capitalists with several Basque surnames who dare to call themselves patriots while they do not cease to enrich themselves at the expense of their own people (Bruni 1989: 58, cited in Kasmir 2002, 48–9).

In contrast to the PNV's cross-class, yet culturally homogeneous nationalist coalition, 'ETA's construction of "workers," native or immigrant, who "work for true democracy in our country" linked class and activism to produce a novel Basque figure: the patriotic, immigrant worker. The phrase *El Pueblo Trabajador Vasco* (The Basque Working People) became ubiquitous in radical nationalist rhetoric and imagined a nation that was different from PNV's racially or ethnically circumscribed *Euskadi*' (Kasmir 2002, 48–9). Still, at the time immigration flows came primarily from other parts of the Spanish state, thus, although this construction of the patriotic immigrant worker was based on cross-cultural political bridges, it did not rely so heavily on the kind of cross racial alliances which are increasingly in question today.

The brutality of the Franco dictatorship, that persecuted leftists and nationalists alike, had laid the foundation for a political merger that challenges the brand of nationalism espoused by the PNV. Díaz Alonso suggests that communists and nationalists in the Basque country mutually shaped each other and merged forces, something politically difficult and uncommon, but in this case possible because of the shared enemy both groups found in Franco (Díaz Alonso 2012, 291). Kasmir's ethnographic insights from the turn of the 21st century in Mondragon paint a vivid picture of what leftist, internationalist radical Basque nationalist politics looked like and how economic structural realities help to explain its emergence. She argues 'that far from being essential, national identity is highly flexible, constructed and contested in the dialectic between politics and cultural expression and between political economy and class' (Kasmir 2002, 43). Though the PNV has attempted to downplay class politics from its nationalist vision by using Basque cultural identity as the driver of collective reproduction, Kasmir reminds us that all nationalist projects are 'promoted by actors with class interests.' In order to re-situate class in nationalist politics, it therefore becomes crucial to examine 'the way in which particular classes are "called" by state-makers to do symbolic work for the nation [...] many anthropologists find that peasants are central to nationalist symbolism because of their presumed traditionalism, ties to the homeland through the soil, and weddedness to place' (e.g., McDonald 1989, cited in Kasmir 2002, 44). Similarly, one of the cultural icons called upon by the PNV to do the work of embodying the collective imaginary of the nation has been the *Baserritarra*, yet the class differentiation within

the agrarian sector is glossed over by a focus on the romantic culture and folklore associated with the rural world.

In contrast, Kasmir's work draws on fieldwork in Mondragon where:

radical-nationalist bars are a location for the creation of a Basque identity that is opposed to PNV's ethnically-based version of Basqueness and is a key point of distinction between the moderate and radical conceptions of the Basque nation. This radical definition of Basqueness combines leftist and nationalist politics with the forms and styles of punk rock, a genre that flourished in the 1980s and early 1990s in the declining centres of industrial capitalism throughout Europe and the United States. Punk expressed the dislocation of a cohort structurally poised to take up work in the factory but displaced by economic crisis and the shift from industrial to post-industrial economies (Kasmir 2002, 41-2).

Kasmir's work illustrates the crucial shift in the way Basque identity was cultivated in the post-industrial period, calling on unemployed youth and punk culture to define a different kind of Basque nationalism, one that is class-based, radical and internationalist. At the time of her analysis there was and continues to be a tremendous amount of diversity within this political field. Varying degrees of proximity to and sympathy for ETA and to the electoral politics of the affiliated party HB. At the risk of oversimplifying for the sake of brevity, I refer broadly here to the *izquierda abertzale*, meaning the patriotic left in Basque. This term signifies a big tent political category in which leftist nationalist ideologies converge in the Basque Country.

One of the central characteristics of the *izquierda abertzale* was and still is, the importance placed on building collective muscle.

What counted was the decision of the general assembly or the organization. Anyone who wanted to build their own personal political career, on the other hand, was quickly marginalized by the *izquierda abertzale*. While green and alternative political parties in Europe soon let democratizing practices fall by the wayside - such as the principle of rotation of delegates and representatives - after reaching parliaments,

the *izquierda abertzale* has always been dedicated to collective learning²⁷ (Zelik 2017, 99–100).

This dynamic was further encouraged by the illegalization of ETA affiliated political parties in 2003. Intent on advancing a strategy of controlling municipal institutions, this meant that ‘clean’ candidates were needed constantly, forcing new people without political records to step up and assume political leadership positions, which in other situations they may not have even considered (Zelik 2017, 99). Constant rotation of public representatives was also a matter of survival.

The repression made an impact, preventing the proliferation of political opportunism, so characteristic in mainstream political life. The directors of the leftist independentist newspapers have always been vulnerable to an attack (as suffered by Josu Muruguza or Xabier Galdeano) or an arrest (as in the case of Martxelo Otamendo and Jabier Salutregi); a party's entire executive committee could be charged with ‘affiliation with an armed gang’, young activists have consistently had to leave their normal lives behind. Therefore, for a long time there was no choice but to rotate positions, share experiences and understand each other as a team²⁸ (Zelik 2017, 102).

Zelik goes on to argue that despite commonly heard criticism from residents of other autonomous communities, the *izquierda abertzale* has never been a closed, exclusionary political collective. ‘[Y]ou have never had to be Basque – neither by “blood” nor by culture – to be part of the community. Whoever has shown an interest in the political project or Basque culture has always been welcomed with open arms²⁹ (Zelik 2017, 103–4). Indeed in his words, ‘[T]he crucial difference between left and right is precisely that, for the left, rights and values are universal, that is, they are extended to all humanity – and for life in general – while the right wants these rights to be privileges for a class, a nation or a gender³⁰ (Zelik 2017, 103). I can no longer count the number of people I have met via the farmers union or working in allied non-profits who have spent time in Latin America, especially in Chiapas and Guatemala supporting struggles for local sovereignty. The only coffee to be found in my shared house in town came from Chiapas, made available via the Basque – Chiapas solidarity networks many of those who had spent time there are still engaged in. As Valencia’s book about Basque international solidarity work

from the 1980s onwards explains, ‘Although it has been said of the Basques that we only think of ourselves, there were many young people in the eighties who joined different struggles around the world. We are part of a small group of people that tenaciously defends their rights and who, for that very reason, support other peoples who also fight for their freedom’³¹ (Valencia 2011, 9).

As Kasmir claims, ‘This radical Basque identity marginalizes the racial and ethnic measures that marked earlier conceptions of Basqueness. In doing so, it legitimates the identities of those immigrants and children of immigrants who transcend their own ethnic origins and become Basque’ (Kasmir 2002, 61). However, her careful ethnography illustrates how the process of asserting a non-ethnically-based Basque identity is bumpy, contested and uneven. The napkins and flags one finds in leftist taverns today suggests that these internationalist class politics have provided a foundation for the incorporation of allied struggles like feminist, ecologist, and refugee solidarity movements. Indeed, although the core identity-making space for the radical leftist version of Basque identity was the industrial working class, this moved beyond the factory, and later as Kasmir argues identity formation took place in bars, which rather than spaces for getting drunk, were more akin to cultural centres (Kasmir 2002, 49). The other defining feature of the culture of the *izquierda abertzale* that she identifies is their presence in the streets, of towns and cities. Kasmir describes the collective identity of post-industrial radical leftist nationalist Basque youth as in contrast to Basque peasants or *Baserritarrak*:

The young men and women who frequent radical bars constitute a meaningful folk category in Mondragón. They are the significant segment of town youths who are in *la martxa* (the action) or *kaletarrak* (of the street). *Kaletarrak*, a widely used term in Basque society, is semantically and symbolically contrasted with the concept *baserritarrak* (of the farmhouse). *Kalea* (the street) is understood as the sphere that is neither the rural farmstead nor the private space of the home. The street implies an urban milieu of dense association in public spaces (Pérez-Agote 1987: 117). The street can also have an added political referent, as it does in Mondragón. The political register of the street suggests an arena of activism and participation in demonstrations (Kasmir 2002, 50).

This quote suggests that the radical expression of Basque identity that challenged the ethnically rooted PNV political project was associated with industrial towns and cities, not rural farmsteads. Interviews suggest however, that this contrast is not so stark as this quote might suggest. I argue that the post-industrial period also saw the growth of a distinctly rural kind of radical leftist politics associated with the *izquierda abertzale*. Bolstered by the internationalist framing of food sovereignty movements, EHNE-Bizkaia and affiliated farmers have sought to open up space for the new wave of immigrants, despite the challenges and at times racial blind spots that this reveals within the *izquierda abertzale*.

5.4.1 Collective reproduction among rural internationalists

In the founding document of EHNE, authors framed their struggle in what might be understood as expanded class terms, viewing workers struggles as both relevant to the economic and the social reproductive realms: 'We, the peasants, are land workers, and as such, we want for ourselves the same rights that other workers have and want. These rights are not only economic, but relate to all areas of life'³² (Aldai Arrillaga 2017, 168).

Similar processes of contestation and redefinition of collective rural identity that Kasmir describes as having taken place among post-industrial unemployed youth, are also transposed onto new entrants in rural areas. Given this analysis of the role that punk played in forging a different, class-based Basque national identity of resistance, and leftist politics, it is perhaps no surprise that among rural collectives and enclaves attempting to infuse agrarian identity with radical leftist, internationalist nationalist politics, a kind of 'agropunk' music is also celebrated. It is as if the style communicates a repopulation of rural areas by urban youth, signalling a particular political position by way of their dress, their hair and their music. For example, the group Vinagre de Moderna's music video for the song *Bacillus Thuringiensis*³³ is staged in front of a classic Basque *caserío*, and merges symbols and imagery of Basque agrarian culture, feminism and punk music.

This music culture compliments Etxaldeko Emakumeak's work of questioning and reformulating the role of women in the rural Basque

collective imaginary, as Amets aimed to do in her speech on the opening panel in Durango. These efforts made by women farmers to see the rural as a place where feminist ideas are also generated can be understood as a response to the fact that historically the role of rural Basque women in cultural identity formation has been contradictory.

[C]ontrary to traditional societies under male power—whose origin myths allude to a remote time in which women had power but lost it because they did not know how to manage it (Bamberger 1974)—in the Basque version the myth stresses that the change toward a patriarchal order was a consequence of an exterior imposition, and that women continue having power, although this is domestic rather than public. In short, real women control and organize the life of men who are under their ‘protection,’ although not on equal terms with men [...] It is an ideal based on a romanticized model of a rural society where egalitarianism, lack of conflict, and harmonious family and neighborhood relationships are the main identity markers (Diez Mintegui and Bullen 2010, 116).

The increased protagonism of women farmers in leftist organizing, as Urretabizkaia calls ‘ruralizing feminism’ has contributed to increasing recognition of the important role of women in the kind of food production that food sovereignty movements promote. Historically sidelined by industrialization and the masculinization of rural places and agrarian work, the food sovereignty frame has provided an opportunity for reconfiguring how women are seen in agrarian contexts, ‘breaking a little bit the distance between feminism and women baserritarras, on the one hand and the urban-rural tensions, on the other’³⁴ (de Gonzalo Aranoa and Urretabizkaia 2012, 87).

In 1998 the then general secretary of the EHNE federation, Maite Aristegi wrote about the struggle for food sovereignty as part of the Basque nationalist project,

We consider food sovereignty the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce people’s basic food while respecting productive and cultural diversity. We have the right to produce our own food in our own territory. Thus, food sovereignty is a precondition for genuine food security³⁵ (Aristegi Larrañaga 1998, 200).

Indeed, leftist national sovereignty efforts align well with food sovereignty ideals, and the years of building and engaging in La Vía Campesina, has instilled in Basque farmers' union, EHNE-Bizkaia a strong sense of the richness of international solidarity, as well as a strong local collective muscle well-versed in what it means to defend one's sovereignty.

This has involved the political work of establishing solidarity connections between sectors, social actors and at different scales. This outward-lookingness has helped shape EHNE-Bizkaia's vision and practice of food sovereignty, so much so, that from the outset, EHNE-Bizkaia has been very clear about the importance of 'bringing together common struggles', as Andoni García, a long time EHNE-Bizkaia leader explains. This reflects both a strategic orientation and a practical need (Calvário *et al.* 2020, 862).

As demographics shift, an increasing attention not just to international solidarity work, but also to multiculturalism at home is evident among the *izquierda abertzale*. This work, while clearly coherent with the class-based independentist politics that have been practiced for decades by the Basque left, what does it mean for the process of collective reproduction, especially in rural areas? For both the PNV and the *izquierda abertzale* Basque collective identity has clearly become more porous and open to immigrants who seek to 'become Basque' (Kasmir 2002, 61).

Usue is a historic figure in EHNE-Bizkaia. She has served on the executive committee, she has been actively involved in Etxaldeko Emakumeak, and together with her partner who works closely with the Ongi Etorri Errefugiatuak network (which offers support to refugees in the Basque Country), they have been a driving force behind a constellation of initiatives in a small rural town that seek to create welcoming safe spaces for asylum seekers, linked to the local rural economy. They have established a bar/restaurant that serves food sourced from local agroecological producers, and a small farm stand with produce for sale in the entryway. They negotiated with the municipal government to use the building next door, where they have set up a long-term residence for refugees in need of housing. A small shop where artisanal products are

sold as well as jobs in the restaurant provide income opportunities for residents. They are in the process of setting up a collective farm to offer more jobs growing food to serve the restaurant, and are active in the collective effort to establish a safe house for criminalized human rights defenders. One farmer and beekeeper from this town told me that while the growing project generates tensions with some members of the community, he considers it a luxury for his children to grow up exposed to so many different cultures. And after decades committed to the struggle for food sovereignty, for defence of the land in the valley where her family has lived for generations, Usue insists, this land isn't mine, it must be for everyone.

This work stands out as a pioneering example of how Basque leftists fighting for food sovereignty have prioritized making rural spaces safe, welcoming and supportive for new arrivals, and tackling the structural inequalities that the Spanish immigration system creates head on. The approach to struggle embedded in this work includes but goes well beyond the productive sphere. In a sense, by linking a job creation project with a residence, and access to healthy food which is supporting more ecological ways of relating to the natural environment, this cluster of initiatives are bringing to life what expanded class struggle might look like in rural post-industrial contexts. The process of collective reproduction and the frictions and evolutions taking place currently in the Basque country discussed above can facilitate and/or complicate such expanded class struggles.

Indeed, there are certainly many more examples of similar efforts and good intentions, however in terms of collective reproduction, many farmers interviewed also highlight how the weight of the collective judgment and policing from neighbours is heavy on newcomers. As one interviewee working in a rural development agency asked, 'are we prepared to accept new people into our towns? I don't think so.' It's true, the issue of race came up very little in interviews. The majority of farmers I spoke with are not racialized. The racialized farmers I spoke with, were diplomatic when describing the discrimination they felt, yet the frustration, and more than anything the feeling of isolation came across clearly. The bulk of groups speaking openly about race in the Basque Country are urban-based. Indeed, the evidence is too little to make broad

sweeping claims or assertions. But when it did come up, the way it came up in such a fleeting way made an impression on me.

I sat with Mikel over-looking the valley as he told me about his life. After having been encouraged to take on very high levels of debt, which he now carries like a ball and chain, he feels trapped. All the doctors told him he must stop working. The stress has taken a toll. But he keeps going, despite these warnings. His son is not interested in taking over the farm, though he comes to lend a hand occasionally on the weekends, but it's not enough given the farmer's increasing physical limitations and ailments. So, he mentions quickly that he hires a 'young guy to give me a hand, from Ecuador, or Peru...' I am struck by how quickly he switches the subject to the tensions between the farmers of the valley and his frustrations with the PNV's way of governing (a favourite topic among many interviewees). Later in the conversation we return to the issue of generational renewal and the ideas circulating around the valley. 'And the man who works for you? Would it be possible for him to take over?' I ask. He exhales slightly exasperated, 'No.' And moves on to another subject.

Here is man in desperate need of a way to retire with dignity, and whose commitment to the future of the Basque farm sector can be seen through his lifetime of engagement in the farmers' union, the local cooperative, and local public institutions. On multiple occasions during our 3-hour conversation he lamented about the need for generational renewal in the sector. His quick dismissal of the racialized hired worker as a potential farm successor struck me as a possibility actively unexplored. I suggest that these subtle, seemingly innocuous off-handed comments or lack of comments, when taken together, are a reflection, not necessarily of discrimination by this dairy farmer, rather of a systemic blind spot, non-recognition of cultural and racial diversity in rural Basque identity, a political project of cultural homogenization that has been spearheaded by the PNV since the beginning of the post-industrial period upon Franco's death.

According to Shafir the increasingly inclusive understanding of collective identity formation marks a generational shift.

Older nationalists still tend to see nationalism in the context of racial purity and younger Basques tend to view nationalism in the context of class and civic identity. The political centre of the nationalist movement has moved from promoting an ethnic to a civic concept of citizenship. The political left of the nationalist movement has moved from an ethnic to a class concept of citizenship (Shafir 1995, pp. 17, 125–126, cited in Taylor 2002, 37).

However, as I read and listen to the voices of racialized activists, authors and speakers on the decolonial panel in Durango, the frictions involved in this process also emerge. The essence of the critique launched at the Basque Feminist movement in Durango was that the struggles of racialized women were not recognized as equally important as those of white women by the movement. And that race needs to be visibilized in order to be taken more seriously. At the core are two fundamental issues which are actively being grappled with and I argue, are key challenges for enabling processes of collective reproduction which recognize the new and evolving landscape of identities and inequalities present in Basque society, including rural areas: the continued silencing and invisibilizing of race; and the tendency among white Basque leftists to see themselves as colonized people and not participants in and beneficiaries of colonialism.

This shift to create a more porous style of Basque nationalism in many ways responded to the already diverse nature of the population due to the influx of immigrants from other parts of Spain throughout the 20th century. However, it also coincided with Spain's transition from a net sending country to a receiving country of migratory flows globally from the mid 1990s onwards. Throughout the entire Spanish State the immigrant population expanded from 500.000 people in 1995 to 6,5 million in 2009, ranking second among top OECD countries in total volume of international migration received (Cebolla y González Ferrer 2008 y 2013, cited in Iglesias *et al.* 2020, 19). According to the observatory on immigration in the Basque Country, the migrant population has increased over the past 20 years in both urban and rural areas. In 1998 foreign-born individuals made up 1.3 per cent of the population of all Basque residents. By 2018 the number had risen to 9.4 per cent. Key sectors of employment for this population are farming, construction, services and domestic labour (Eguía *et al.* 2013, 218).

Despite important changes in the population in both urban and rural areas, the quantitative data gathered by public institutions has failed to prioritize any depth of understanding of these dynamics. First the way that data is collected helps to uphold the notion that all racialized people residing in Spain are immigrants. Despite the idea that Basque identity can be acquired, there is no data collected to be able to visibilize the racial diversity that now exists among Basque people. Official Spanish government statistics use terminology related to immigration, country of origin and nationality (as in the place listed on one's passport). This method of visibilizing ethnic difference has clear limits, once the children of immigrants acquire Spanish passports. Spain has thus far not taken the path of the US³⁶ or Britain which have included questions about race/ethnicity in the census. For Simon and Piché (2011) the fundamental question is if to 'distinguish and characterize populations according to their ethnic origin constitutes a risk of stigmatization or, on the contrary is imperative in order to measure and explain discrimination and demand more inclusive policy?' (cited in Estévez Hernández 2015, 15). In 2011 a new question was added to the census asking respondents if either of their parents were born outside of Spain, thus creating a category of second generation immigrants (Estévez Hernández 2015, 24). In 2016 the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommended gathering more accurate census data and public debate is beginning to emerge around the need for, as Mbe Bee Nchama asserts that there is a need for, 'demographic data on the composition of the population broken down by territorial communities, guaranteeing self-definition of identity, and anonymity, of course, showing that we exist statistically speaking. We do not currently know the number of people belonging to the African and Afro-descendant community and the specific issues that affect us'³⁷ (Bee Nchama 2020).

The non-recognition of race as a European phenomenon described in chapter 1 resonates with the work authored by racialized individuals and collectives about their experiences throughout the Spanish State (Bela-Lobedde 2018, Abé Pans 2019, Pikara 2020). As one author of *Afrofeminas* explains, 'Spain is not racist they say, as they silence our voices that shout the experiences of systematic and institutional racism that is learned from the cradle, that as soon as you enter school they

already aim at you and you learn that being different is a bad thing'³⁸ (García 2020). What García is expressing in these words is not only her frustration about being the target of racist practices and policies that have conditioned her experience since birth. She is also highlighting the widespread failure among non-racialized people to recognize that this is the reality for most racialized people throughout the Spanish state.

While the important international solidarity work that Basque activists have been engaged in for decades is remarkable, the way the *izquierda abertzale* has positioned itself as part of a global solidarity network of oppressed peoples also reveals a point of tension. The point made by Bueriberi in Durango when she argued that it is not ok to compare the colonial experience to the repression Basques have suffered by the Spanish government suggests that there are collective privileges, related to race, global capital, and the benefits derived from the colonial project that Basques are being asked to recognize in themselves. This recognition is needed in order to make space for diversity and ensure that the *izquierda abertzale* is not just based on a narrowly defined idea of class, but also an intersectional political project.

However, according to Zelik, another consequence of the repression Basque leftists faced was exile for many activists, which contributed to making a 'profoundly internationalist movement.' Thus,

many Basques, despite their economic wealth and the colour of their skin, identify more with the Black African than with the German tourist is an expression of these internationalist experiences. It is thus undeniable that the Basque, despite insisting so much on their own identity, has developed a perspective on globalization, from below and identified with the undocumented³⁹ (Zelik 2017, 104–5).

The important question here is, is this kind of collective self-identification with the racialized experience building solidarity at home among an increasingly diverse population? Based on Bueriberi's comments, it is actually doing the opposite. But she is not the only one voicing such concerns. Helio Garcés provides a sharp critique, calling this the 'manoeuvre of an injured ego.'

We do not deny oppression within the global North because our people suffer from it in their daily lives. Thus, we cannot accept when a true situation of our respective communities is portrayed dishonestly. It is not necessary for the honest Andalusian to compare himself with the indigenous peoples of the Americas to legitimize their struggle; it is not necessary for the Basque, the Catalan, the honest Galician to compare himself to the Afro-descendants, to the Palestinians, to the Saharawis to make their reality visible. In fact, every time they make the mistake of comparing themselves to those identities, they harm the racialized communities with whom they share territory. Every time they do – and they do so too often – they contribute to the invisibilisation of the racism that our communities suffer in their own territories; in their own cities; in their own neighbourhoods. And most importantly, they solidify and deny the racial privileges from which they themselves benefit, whether they realize it or not. Instead of speaking against them, they fortify them; rather than questioning them they reaffirm them through their identitarian pride⁴⁰ (Garcés 2016).

While leftist sovereignty struggles lend themselves well to international solidarity work, that experience offers fewer resources for, and can even inhibit the unpacking of one's own privileges and systems of oppression 'at home' that is so essential for anti-racist movements. As one Basque activist notes,

[I]t's our turn to work on our whiteness, our privileges, and all this stirs up a lot for us. We, who have been oppressed, are now being attacked as privileged, and it hurts. This is something we need to talk about and collectivize. In short, what do we do with our discomfort? In this way we need to start talking about how not to reinforce our privileges, not so much out of guilt, but from a place of responsibility⁴¹ (Gandarias Goikoetxea 2020).

Collective reproduction is a process shaped by the interaction between the collective identities that are cultivated and the politics of recognition expressed via public and cultural institutions. The tension that emerges throughout this chapter is between the strength and capacity for organization that comes with strong and tight knit collective identities encouraged via identitarian politics and the exclusionary nature of identity politics when confronted with cultures and races that do not fit into existing collective imaginaries. Kasmir argues, 'As we consider the

transformation of Basque identity in the 21st Century, class remains a valuable tool for ethnographic study, for determining who is and is not included in the nation, and for distinguishing the different political agendas of nationalist projects' (2002, 62–3). I argue that not only class, but race and gender also continue to be essential lenses for understanding the evolution of collective reproduction of rural Basque identity. As the demographics, gender dynamics and models of production in rural areas are shifting, this inherently political process has both material and symbolic implications. In this sense political subjectivities emerge responding to and driving changes in collective reproduction processes taking place at a societal level. 'If identity is decentred, politics is about the attempt to create a centre' (Dirks, Eley, and Ortner 1994, 32 in Kubik 2009, 26). As the traditional peasant imaginary disappears, the current political dynamics are focused on what (if anything) replaces it in generations to come. Who is seen as part of that future, and what kinds of political subjectivities they cultivate will be conditioned by how the tensions within collective reproduction discussed here are resolved.

Notes

- ¹ Original text: 'La secretaria de un sindicato no la puede ocupar un patrón. Ni los hombres liderar el feminismo. Simplemente, las blancas deben mantenerse al margen de nuestro discurso'.
- ² Original text: 'Las empresas vascas internacionales nos explotan no solo aquí, sino también en nuestro país de origen'.
- ³ Original text: 'Hizkuntzak, bertze gauzen artean, mundua ikusteko modu bat ematen digu. Bertze jatorrizko herrietan bezala, lurrarekin komunikatzeko eta oreka mantentzeko ezinbertzeko tresna da. Gure mendiei, errekei, animaliei eta zuhaitzei izena ematen dion horrek erakusten digu bidea. Landa eremuan bereziki mantentzen den ikuspegia da, hirietako adreilu eta zementuak arruntean estaltzen duena. Nabarmen gelditu da jardunaldi hauetan ere, guk hiriaren berri izanagatik, hiritarrek ez dutela gure berri. Landa eremuko emakumeak historikoki lurra eta hizkuntzaren defentsan bete dugun paperagatik egon gara bereziki sistema heteropatriarkalaren eta kolonialaren jomugan. Euskal Hiritik teorizatzen dugun bitartean, Euskal Herria itotzen ari da. Lurraren eta hizkuntzaren kontrako etengabeko eraso honetan,

feminismotik ditugun gabeziak nabarmenak dira. Lurraren eta jatorrizko herrien defentsa bizi beraren defentsa den arren.’

- ⁴ Original text: ‘Las razones para organizar grupos en los que solamente participen mujeres son una cuestión táctica, es decir para un momento dado y en determinadas circunstancias concretas. Probablemente la de mayor importancia y contundencia es que es la única forma de construir un sujeto colectivo con identidad propia. Era nuestro objetivo y lo conseguimos, aunque quizás con un resultado identitario excesivo, que nos ha podido llevar a esencializar un poco el sujeto “mujer”. Este posible defecto, sin embargo, se está tratando de remontar desde la década de los noventa, acudiendo al concepto de diversidad y pasando a hablar de “mujeres” en lugar de “la mujer”. En esta medida, la apuesta por un movimiento multicultural, que incluye a muchas mujeres diferentes, también está ayudando al feminismo en la creación de un sujeto con una identidad menos prefijada.’
- ⁵ Original text: ‘No se entendería Euskadi sin su vinculación con el sector primario y el medio rural y litoral. El sector primario constituye un valor fundamental para Euskadi no solo por lo que supone de aportación económica y de empleo, sino porque tiene una estrecha vinculación con la identidad social del país.’
- ⁶ Original text: ‘La imagen en los medios de las personas migrantes (especialmente la de la migración “irregular” y con mayor énfasis en las mujeres) está polarizada entre la invisibilización y la hipervisibilización. Por una parte, invisibilizadas como sujetos políticos con historia, voz propia y culturas ricas; y por otra, hipervisibilizadas como personas sometidas, peligrosas, necesitadas, invasoras, carentes de formación académica o técnica.’
- ⁷ Original text: ‘[p]ese a tal ambigüedad en el discurso nacionalista sus únicas características indubitables eran la especificidad y su gestación por los vascos como colectivo – la identidad, la cultura que define al pueblo, proporciona el criterio por el que se define la naturaleza de vasco.’
- ⁸ Original text: ‘El vasco ha sido un pueblo emigrante. Ha sido bien acogido en todas partes, sobre todo porque ha sabido respetar la tierra en la que recaló. Desde ese respeto, pensamos que también es exigible una reciprocidad de respeto [...] a su lengua, a sus formas de vida y a sus categorías anímicas.’
- ⁹ Original text: ‘[A]sí como el cuerpo humano recibe alimentos extraños a su ser y los metaboliza haciéndolos parte de sí y *expulsando lo no asimilado*, este pueblo pequeño pero vital asimila elementos y comportamientos, los va integrando, sin perder su personalidad, aunque modificándola.’
- ¹⁰ Original text: ‘una serie de factores que provocan la descapitalización de los inmigrantes en el país receptor: falta de reconocimiento y baja transferibilidad de sus conocimientos y cualificaciones, baja calidad de sus sistemas educativos, falta

de competencia en el idioma local, falta de experiencia en el nuevo mercado laboral, falta de adaptación a los nuevos hábitos y tradiciones culturales, etc.?’

- ¹¹ Original text: ‘lo mas pesado para mi es después de 8 horas trabajando ir a clase. Y sobre todo para mi la frustración de saber que no puedo aprender bien yendo solo a clase y es que de verdad no lo puedo dedicar tiempo fuera del horario. Por eso prefiero ir a repetir algo que sé que se me va a quedar que hacer hacer hacer en el cuaderno. Es que no puedo. Esto es lo que te decía. Otro día me estaba maquinando la cabeza por que no puedo encontrar mas gente para la cesta, si los que están, están a gusto. ¿Porqué otra gente encuentra y yo no? Obviamente porque han buscado mejor, y esas cosas es el tiempo que dedicas a ello. Pero es que no puedo, bueno puedo pero requiere dejar cosas y ahora mi prioridad es sacar esto adelante.’
- ¹² Original text: ‘La mitad de mis ingresos tengo que llevar a la seguridad social siendo autónomo. Claro. Y además como antes dije. Yo, otra gente puede darse el lujo de no hacerlo o bueno también porque los principios son difícil puede ser que no. Pero yo no puedo porque yo soy sospechoso sea donde sea.’
- ¹³ Original text: El sector agrario vasco actual está muy profesionalizado, agricultoras y agricultores han convertido sus explotaciones agrarias en empresas que desde el punto de vista económico son viables, y socialmente enriquecedoras para el conjunto del medio rural; ya que gestionan gran cantidad de territorio, manteniendo para el conjunto de la sociedad aquella imagen del medio rural de nuestra infancia que permanece en el imaginario colectivo como parte intrínseca de nuestras raíces y generan riqueza produciendo alimentos de calidad y seguros; son en definitivo el corazón de nuestro medio rural’.
- ¹⁴ Original text: ‘Vuelve al Origen" es el eslogan de esta campaña en la que participan todos los productos Euskolabel, y que tiene como objetivo sensibilizar a los consumidores sobre el valor del trabajo de nuestros productores, que nos ofrecen alimentos de calidad superior y mantienen nuestro paisaje tal y como lo conocemos’. See: <https://www.hazi.eus/es/noticiashazi/4272-en-marcha-la-campana-publi-promocional-de-eusko-label.html>
- ¹⁵ Original text: ‘Gracias a mujeres de todo el mundo tenemos hoy el modelo agroecológico, y tenemos que reconocer el valor social y político que tiene esto, más allá de la folclorización’.
- ¹⁶ Original text: ‘Aquí se ha perdido el concurso de la vaca frisona. Tenemos que recuperar eso. No requiere mucho. Y me dijo que le gustaría hacerlo. ¿¡Es un valle ganadero y no hay ningún concurso de vacas!? En cualquier pueblo de Cantabria hay. Le da el gusanillo a los jóvenes. Porque aquí el relevo generacional cero. Es gente mayor ya.’

- ¹⁷ Original text: ‘ni percibir un salario, ni firmar un contrato de trabajo, si no era con el consentimiento de su marido. Si tenía un negocio o un comercio, requería autorización del marido para todas las operaciones comerciales que realizase.’
- ¹⁸ Original text: ‘Nos han expropiado las palabras, que no los conceptos, para domesticarlas y quitarles la fuerza subversiva.’
- ¹⁹ Original text: ‘estas mismas instituciones desmantelan de la forma más descarada los servicios sociales y de atención a las mujeres.’
- ²⁰ Original text: ‘La plancha y la fregona para todas las personas.’
- ²¹ Original text: ‘Manolo, esta noche la cena, te la haces tú solo.’
- ²² Original text: ‘Nos utilizan de escaparate, apropiándose de la imagen de la mujer como víctimas (hacer algo por nosotras) o como modernas y diversas (premios, fotos, innovadoras, emprendedoras como algo fuera de lo normal). Nos convierten en imagen, en puro marketing y desvinculan nuestra presencia y esencia reales.’
- ²³ Original text: ‘[El gerente del ADR] me trajo una chica y me presentó. Que se va a llevar ese tema de jóvenes. Ha hecho los cursos y se quiere incorporar. Y me dijo 6 meses y la diputación paga algo y luego con la idea de quedarse con la explotación. ¿Hay demanda? Me dijo que sí. Esto es una explotación de 7 hectáreas. No puedo garantizar que se queda con esas. Bueno hicimos un primer encuentro y vemos.’
- ²⁴ Original text: ‘Mejor. Le dan más dinero.’
- ²⁵ I use the term independentist here to differentiate this current of collective Basque identity from that espoused by the PNV, but also because of the fact that it encompasses a wide range of leftists, from anarchists to social democrats, not all of whom advocate for a Basque nation-state as such. I also use the term *izquierda abertzale* as it is used commonly in Euskera to refer to this big tent, leftist arm of pro-independence Basques.
- ²⁶ Original text: ‘En síntesis, el socialismo histórico intentó promover la solidaridad entre los obreros de diferentes países como parte del objetivo de la revolución socialista mundial. El nacionalismo, por el contrario, buscó trascender las divisiones de clase social a través de un proyecto nacional.’
- ²⁷ Original text: ‘Lo que contaba era el comunicado de la asamblea u organización. Quien haya querido construirse una carrera política propia, en cambio, ha sido rápidamente marginado por el movimiento abertzale. Mientras que los partidos verdes y alternativos en Europa pronto dejaron atrás los mecanismos democratizantes -como el principio de rotación para diputados y liberados- después de haber llegado a los parlamentos, la izquierda abertzale siempre se ha dedicado a construir aprendizajes colectivos.’

- ²⁸ Original text: ‘la represión ha tenido su efecto, impidiendo la proliferación de un oportunismo arribista, tan característico en la vida política común. Los directores de los periódicos abertzales siempre han tenido presente la posibilidad de un atentado (como los que sufrieron Josu Muruguza o Xabier Galdeano) o de una detención (como en los casos de Martxelo Otamendo y Jabier Salutregi); el comité ejecutivo completo de un partido podía ser acusado por ‘pertenencia a banda armada’, militantes de las organizaciones juveniles constantemente han tenido que dejar su vida normal. Por consiguiente, durante mucho tiempo no hubo otra opción que rotar puestos, transmitir experiencias y entenderse como equipo.’
- ²⁹ Original text: ‘nunca se ha tenido que ser vasco -ni ‘de sangre’ ni de cultura- para ser parte de su comunidad. La persona que ha mostrado interés por el proyecto político o por la cultura euskaldun siempre ha sido recibida con los brazos abiertos.’
- ³⁰ Original text: ‘[l]a diferencia crucial entre izquierda y derecha consiste precisamente en que, para la izquierda, los derechos y valores son universales, es decir, tienen vigencia para toda la humanidad -y, como entendemos cada vez más, para la vida en general- mientras que la derecha quiere que estos derechos sean privilegios para una clase, una nación o un género.’
- ³¹ Original text: ‘Aunque se ha dicho de los vascos que solo pensamos en nosotros mismos, fuimos muchas las y los jóvenes que nos incorporamos en la década de los ochenta a las distintas luchas del mundo. Formamos parte de un pueblo pequeño que defiende tenazmente sus derechos y que, por eso mismo, apoya a otros pueblos que también luchan por su libertad.’
- ³² Original text: ‘Nosotros, los baserritarras, somos trabajadores de la tierra, y como tal, queremos para nosotros los mismos derechos que tienen y quieren los demás trabajadores. Esos derechos no son solo económicos, sino de todos los ámbitos de la vida’.
- ³³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fp_JyM_q7n0
- ³⁴ Original text: ‘rompiendo un poco la distancia esa entre el feminismo y las mujeres baserritarras, por un lado y el choque urbano-rural, por otro.’
- ³⁵ Original text: “Consideramos soberanía alimentaria el derecho de cada nación para mantener y desarrollar su propia capacidad para producir los alimentos básicos de los pueblos respetando la diversidad productiva y cultural. Tenemos el derecho a producir nuestros propios alimentos en nuestro propio territorio. Así pues, la soberanía alimentaria es una precondition para la seguridad alimentaria genuina.”
- ³⁶ A full engagement with the deep debates about the value of counting and categorizing a population in this way is beyond the scope of this research.

However a few points are in order about word choice. First, the difference between race and ethnicity is not a clear distinction. For afrofeminas race is a social construction related to the colour of one's skin, while ethnicity reflects one's cultural heritage. These concepts mean different things in different places. Therefore moving forward, my intention is not to impose a particular language and understanding of race and ethnicity drawn from my experience growing up in the United States. Instead, I focus on the way race and ethnicity are constructed in the Basque Country, including what is made visible as well as what is not seen or discussed. Given the colonial history of using the census as a tool for racial categorization and establishing social hierarchy in the colonies, followed by the invoking of inferior races as a justification for the Holocaust on European soil, Estévez Hernández claims that the word race (*raza*) carries negative connotations. In my own experience I notice that this word is often avoided when speaking Spanish in favour of ethnicity.

³⁷ Original text: 'datos demográficos sobre la composición de la población desglosados por comunidades territoriales, garantizándose la auto adscripción identitaria, y el anonimato, es decir, que existamos estadísticamente hablando. Actualmente no sabemos el número de las personas pertenecientes a la comunidad africana y afrodescendiente y las problemáticas específicas que nos afectan.'

³⁸ Original text: 'España no es racista dicen, mientras callan nuestras voces que gritan las experiencias de un racismo sistemático e institucional que se aprende desde la cuna, que tan pronto como entras a la escuela ya te señalan y aprendes que ser diferente es algo malo.'

³⁹ Original text: 'muchos vascos y vascas, a pesar de su bienestar económico y el color de su piel, se identifiquen más con el negro africano que con el turista alemán es expresión de estas experiencias internacionalistas. Por tanto, me parece innegable que la izquierda abertzale, pese a insistir tanto en su identidad, ha elaborado una perspectiva de globalización muy propia, desde abajo e identificada con los sin papeles.'

⁴⁰ Original text: 'Nosotros no negamos la opresión en el interior del Norte porque nuestra gente la sufre en su cotidianidad, por eso no podemos aceptar que se juegue de forma deshonesto con el verdadero lugar que ocupan nuestras respectivas comunidades. No le hace falta al andaluz honesto compararse con los indígenas de las Américas para legitimar su lucha; no le es necesario al vasco, al catalán, al gallego honesto compararse con los afrodescendientes, con los palestinos, con los saharauis para visibilizar su realidad. De hecho, cada vez que cometen el error de compararse con dichas identidades perjudican a las comunidades racializadas con las que comparten territorio. Cada vez que lo hacen —y lo hacen demasiado a menudo— contribuyen a invisibilizar el racismo que

nuestras comunidades sufren en sus propios territorios; en sus propias ciudades; en sus propios vecindarios. Y lo más importante: solidifican y niegan los privilegios raciales de los que ellos mismos son garantes, quieran o no. En lugar de explicitarlos los velan; en lugar de cuestionarlos los reafirman a través de su soberbia identitaria.’

⁴¹ Original text: ‘El otro tema es que a nosotras las blancas nos toca trabajar nuestra blanquitud, nuestros privilegios, y todo esto nos revuelve un montón. Nosotras, que hemos sido las oprimidas, ahora nos están atacando como privilegiadas, y esto duele. Esto es algo que tenemos que hablarlo y colectivizarlo. En definitiva, qué hacemos con esos malestares. Y así empezar a hablar también de cómo no reforzar los privilegios, no tanto desde la culpa, sino desde la responsabilidad.’

6

Systemic reproduction...or transformation? Redistribution of value(s) and agroecofeminist politics

I met up with Amaia outside of the cooperative dairy farm where she works one sunny afternoon. She arrived with her partner and two small children. He and the older daughter went off to play with the animals and she and I did our interview while walking with the baby stroller. For her, (member of Etxaldeko Emakumeak) it wasn't until she realized that with two small children she could no longer work the hours that she had been, that a deeper shift in the relationship between production and social reproduction was structured into the organization of the dairy farm. 'When I became a mother we decided that we had to change and reorganize the workday so it was more like a normal job. You have to take care of the kids [...] At first I felt guilty, but then people began to understand the importance of care work.' She pushed the other coop members to accept a reduction in hours as an alternative modality to be included within the cooperative structure. Having more people, earning a little less, but rotating and sharing the responsibilities of tending to the animals grazing, milking and cheese making has enabled the dairy to offer jobs with weekends and vacation time. This reduction in work hours allows them to employ more people, thus prioritizing both social reproductive needs and generational renewal.

This cooperative dairy farm is one of two organic dairy farms in Bizkaia. Unlike other dairy farmers I interviewed, they have a dynamic team of eight people, many of whom are under 40. With plans for building a new paddock, a new young apprentice still completing his studies beginning to work there, and energized visions for the future of the cooperative, the people who work at this farm convey a different energy about generational renewal and the future. The secret to this achievement according to one member is the model of production. The cooperative

and agroecological vision has been at the core of the project from the beginning. This has provided the foundation, and space for deliberation. And through this collective deliberation they consolidated the vision from the beginning that they didn't want to shape their productive relations in the way that 'the agricultural policies were selling. From the beginning we were clear that it had to be direct selling and grass fed.'¹ And although it took much deliberation to shift the organization of productive labour to enable more time and support for people's social reproductive time and needs, ultimately the group made that change as well. This is something which might at first glance appear to simply be a question of scheduling, but as I argue in this chapter, is actually a much more profound effort to contribute to systemic transformation being framed as part of an agroecofeminist political subjectivity.

6.1 Systemic reproduction and capitalism's crisis tendencies

Systemic reproduction refers here to the function social reproduction plays in reproducing socio-economic relations and the overall logic of the system. However, as many scholars have argued, inherent (not only social, but also ecological and political) contradictions built into the functioning of capitalism render it vulnerable to crisis, which characterizes the current post-industrial period (O'Connor 1988, Fraser 2017, Moore 2017, Arsel 2019, Alonso-Fradejas 2020). As introduced in chapter 2, there is an extensive literature analysing the contradictions of capitalism which render it inherently crisis prone. The first, theorized by Marx between capital and labour, wherein the exploitation of labour erodes the capacity to consume, upon which capital depends for continued accumulation. It is essentially a crisis of overproduction, economic in nature. The second, advanced initially by O'Connor (1988), is between capital and nature, which ensures the 'conditions of production' (O'Connor 1988, 7). This contradiction highlights the ecological limits that ultimately undermine production due to capital's predatory and extractive relationship to the natural world. 'Systemically primed to free-ride on a nature that cannot really self-replenish without limit, capitalism's economy is always on the verge of destabilizing its own ecological conditions of possibility' (Fraser 2021, 101).

This contradiction, as framed by O'Connor, alludes to the conditions of production, which also includes social reproduction. The worker and the conditions necessary for production to take place are understood as produced, as if by magic out of thin air. Fraser refers to these inputs as 'capital's others' (2020). Or, the parts of the system that are essential, but invisibilized and devalued in order for value to accumulate elsewhere. And here too, the relation between capital and its political other is crisis prone. 'Firms whose *raison d'être* is endless accumulation have every reason to evade taxes, weaken regulation, privatize public goods, offshore their operations—and thus to undermine the political prerequisites for their own existence' (Fraser 2021, 104). By way of its immigration laws, the European political infrastructure also upholds a racial hierarchy that serves the systemic logic. As the collective of racialized women in the Basque Country explains,

It is the [immigration] law that institutionalizes racism in the Spanish state and in Euskal Herria creating administrative legal boundaries between people and dividing them between people 'with papers' and people 'without papers'² (Marcha Mundial de Mujeres de Euskal Herria 2021, 25)

This racial hierarchy is also prone to crisis as the conditions of expropriation and injustice deepen and are applied to an ever-growing population, upon which an ageing rural community in a context like post-industrial Europe increasingly depends on care. Maintaining the walls of the fortress becomes a bigger and bigger drain on public resources, the social forces pitted against it become greater and greater.

6.2 Agroecofeminist repeasantization

Systemic reproduction understood in the context of these crisis tendencies reveals the vulnerability of the process of keeping the system going. Indeed, the key starting point for this chapter is the idea that the sustained reproduction of the system is not guaranteed. In fact, it is highly contested. After years of specialization and de-agrarianisation during the industrial period, rural areas are at a crossroads. As the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) dramatically forecasts, farming will either continue down the path of hyper productivity, mechanization and specialization, increasingly devoid of human labour,

and value assigned to social reproductive activities (Mooney *et al.* 2021). Or, pushing in the other direction one current of contestation that has emerged in order to reanimate processes of generational renewal by making farming more about sustaining life in the post-industrial agrarian context is a push towards what can be broadly called repeasantization. Neo-peasants advancing this political agenda reshape their relationship to their surroundings by farming agroecologically and demanding food sovereignty as a way of reclaiming control over local food systems.

By recovering key principles of peasant economies, which prioritized social reproduction and supplying local markets, ‘new peasantries’ (van der Ploeg 2008, 2013) are seen as the protagonists of a repopulation of rural areas and transformation of local food systems. Back to the land movements in Europe and North America are re-emerging, typified by organizations like Reclaim the Fields in collaboration with La Via Campesina, or the Greenhorns, and National Young Farmers Coalition, seeking to attract new people to agriculture. They are assuming the peasant identity as capable of both honouring the past and innovating for the future. In addition to engaging in more biodiverse systems of food production, oriented towards providing food for local communities, the peasant farm’s ability to grow its own food and produce many of its own inputs increases the autonomy of the household, rendering its residents less dependent on wage labour and commodity markets and therefore less impacted by exploitative labour-capital relations.

Increasing autonomy and decreasing dependency on external inputs is central to a subsistence logic that alludes to peasant-based livelihoods of the pre-industrial period, and this approach characterizes current efforts to expand the scope of unproductive labour, which doesn’t contribute to creating surplus value for capital. One of ways that repeasantization efforts recover this principle is by way of agroecological production. The term emerged in the 1970s as a response to the ecological crises that were becoming increasingly present in rural areas. In 1983 Altieri described agroecology as the scientific basis of sustainable agriculture. Over time in addition to the agronomic principles of regeneration and decreasing inputs on the farm, the concept’s social and cultural dimension came to refer to the reproduction of rural communities, and the social fabric of life in and around the farm. Finally the political vision associated with it was further

fleshed out to include efforts to address political barriers to sustainable agriculture (López García 2015, 25).

Such struggles are proposed as the solution to the crisis of generational renewal by organizations in the Basque Country like EHNE-Bizkaia and Etxaldeko Emakumeak. In the face of massive inequality and injustice, these voices construct a kind of political subjectivity based on demands for, not just representation as seen in chapter 4, recognition as seen in chapter 5, but also redistribution. Drawing on insights from the Basque Country, I ground the analysis in the concrete rural realities and redistributive demands of farmers attempting to reimagine the role of social reproductive work in the economy and the relationship between capitalism and its others. Manifestations of intertwined economic, social, political, and ecological crises are increasingly evident in Basque agriculture during the post-industrial period. I explore the way these contestations and survival strategies in response to intertwined crises, are put into practice and how they are given meaning. I pay special attention to the emergence of *agroecofeminist* politics.

EHNE-Bizkaia was a founding member of La Vía Campesina, and has been a key force behind the process of repeasantization as central to building food sovereignty in Bizkaia (Calvário 2017a). Realizing that farmers are not numerous enough nor do they have sufficient political force to advance this agenda alone, EHNE-Bizkaia spearheaded the creation of Etxalde in 2012, a broader coalition for food sovereignty in the Basque Country. This period of organizing focused on building bridges with labour unions, urban consumers, and participating in other coalitions with these groups. Although EHNE-Bizkaia has seen periods of women's leadership and there are women on the union's executive committee, there has never been a space within the union structure dedicated to women only. In 2014, in the context of Etxalde a group of women farmers took the opportunity to respond to that need and formed Etxaldeko Emakumeak, their own space in the food sovereignty movement. Since then, they have anchored their work at the intersection of feminism and food sovereignty. In 2015, the World March of Women's caravan created a moment to strengthen alliances with global and local feminist movements. Etxaldeko Emakumeak helped mobilize women to give some of their saved seeds to the caravan that started in Kurdistan, as it passed

through the Basque Country and finalized in Portugal, creating a peasant seed bank to visibilize the intention of women farmers to build alliances across urban and rural divides. Members of Etxaldeko Emakumeak began providing fresh agroecological produce to feminist events, and consolidating the alliance locally (thus paving the way for the integration of Etxaldeko Emakumeak into the opening panel of the Feminist congress in Durango discussed in chapter 5, for example). Through a collective process of framing their political vision, they have added their particular agenda to the mix by coining the term *agroecofeminism*. ‘Among the great challenges we are working on is to spread food sovereignty to the feminist movement and spread feminism to the agroecological peasant movement. In this back and forth, the proposal of agroecofeminism was born, understood as a concrete (but not closed) proposal that we make to agroecology, feminist economics and eco-feminist thinking’³ (Etxaldeko Emakumeak 2018, 9). In what follows, I attempt to unpack to what extent and how agroecofeminism frames redistributive struggles bringing these ideas to life and shaping processes of systemic reproduction.

I argue that the thrust of agroecofeminist repeasantization is to prioritize social reproduction over productive imperatives and the primary strategies for achieving this are redistribution of value and values. The idea is to decrease dependence on the market and capital accumulation, while increasing recognition of dependence on nature and your community. The former is a practical way of organizing farm activities and production, while the latter is a deeper philosophical shift that impacts the how and why of decisions and relations. These practical and philosophical strategies are in reality quite hard to pull apart, which indeed reflects the goal of giving new meaning to farming and the role of agrarian social reproduction in systemic reproduction. The nature and direction of change can best be observed by focusing on the changing relationships between social reproduction and production as expressed in farmers relationships with: 1.) land, and natural resources; 2.) labour; 3.) credit; and 4.) food provisioning. After a brief theoretical framing of the politics of redistribution, each of these sites of contestation are explored below. This is followed by a discussion of how and the extent to which agroecofeminism responds to the multiple crises manifesting in the post-industrial rural context.

6.2.1 Production, reproduction, and the politics of redistribution: putting life in the centre

Social reproduction theorists have most commonly theorized the relationship between social reproduction and production in the context of waged labour, often referencing urban proletarian type jobs. In this typical framing, women's energy is dedicated to care and domestic work and seen as a subsidy to capital. But as Ferguson argues, it is not *directly* value producing. Instead, it ensures the preconditions (reproducing the worker) for value creation, where productive processes use human energy to generate surplus value.

The rejection of the social reproductive vs. productive binary is a key intervention common among most theorists in this camp. The assertion is that social reproduction is an essential component of the capitalist system, not a separate sphere. However, the debate lies in the specifics of the relation between these falsely divided spheres. For Autonomous feminists, 'all work is "productive"—because, as Federici states, "every moment of our lives functions for the accumulation of capital"—refusing housework and social reproductive labour more broadly conceived also obstructs the creation of value' (Ferguson 2020, 122).

On the other hand, Marxist feminists stress that the relationship between social reproductive work and value creation is distinct from the relationship between capitalistically productive labour and value. For Ferguson, social reproductive work *contributes to* value creation and should be understood as a key part of capitalist processes. This echoes Sacks' notion of indirectly productive labour. In contrast to the autonomous feminist line, she suggests that labour is never completely governed by the logic of capital because of the human lives that drive labour processes (Ferguson 2020, 126). Those lives have needs, wants, desires and struggle in them. Indeed, creating greater autonomy for attending to life needs over capital, is one way that 'those engaged in social reproductive labour can and do defy the alienating and life-crushing tendencies of capitalism to assert and create new forms of relations with each other and with the natural world' (Ferguson 2020, 141). In this sense, social reproductive work may contribute to something other than the reproduction of the

current capitalist system, or in Sacks' terms it may become increasingly unproductive (Sacks 2019).

However, rather than asking if and how social reproduction contributes to value production, in line with Perez Orozco, the question that emerges especially in the context of food production is if and how production sustains life? While it is important not to lose track of the contributions of social reproduction to productive relations, as Bhattacharyya suggests,

Conceiving of the household as always in service to the waged (or market) economy erases much of what is valuable about the work of women of the world and this occurs, to a large extent, as a result of too narrow (or technical) a conception of 'value'. We understand that this erasure is a by-product of a fixation with waged work. Waged work has been central to the thinking of economy [...] However, in our time of econocentrism, where 'the economy' is made to stand in for all existence, it can be hard to recall that non-work encompasses most of human life (2018, 58).

This narrow conception of value is of course crucial to understanding productive relations, and it, 'enables him [Marx] to socio-historically locate the relationship between capital and labour and to reconstruct capital not as a thing in itself but as a particular social relation' (Taşdemir-Yaşın 2017, 379). This understanding of value is fundamental to understanding how the capital-labour contradiction operates, however it is less useful for understanding other forms of value and relationships to value creation relevant to capital's others. Elson suggests that labour is not the only source of value and thus Marx's 'labour theory of value' should more rightly be called the 'value theory of labour' (Elson 1979). This makes space for other conceptualizations of value since 'the commodity form not only structures social labour, as a value theory of labour suggests, but also structures nature and the human– nature interaction through a socio-historically specific pattern of domination and objectification of nature' (Taşdemir-Yaşın 2017, 397). The political implications of this argument then are that disrupting the labour structure that facilitates commodity production is not the only way to disrupt capital accumulation. Reorganizing political structures, or human-nature interaction can also contribute to such an effort. Similarly, restructuring the relationship

between social reproduction and production may also contribute to disrupting the systemic logic that governs capitalist relations.

Mary Mellor's work demonstrates how something as purely market based as money actually rests upon a socially and politically constructed system of value which functions because belief and trust in the system combined with state authority backing it underpin the role of money as a form of value. Low farm incomes and unequally distributed money within the agrarian sector especially affecting new entrants has been noted as a factor that discourages new farmers and contributes to the crisis of generational renewal. 'Money puts a restrictive boundary around access to the means of sustenance. Private money-based ownership, together with property rights over resources and productive capacity, means that the money economy excludes or marginalises those without money' (Mellor 2010, 23).

The politics of food sovereignty is fundamentally about redistributing wealth and power in the food system. This responds to the very real inequalities that characterize the dominant food system. For agroecological farmers just starting, the most common description of their experience that emerged in focus groups and interviews is 'precarious'. Average annual income in the Basque Country is roughly €25,000/year, yet incomes for farmers I interviewed are typically earning half that. Thus, finding ways to increase incomes or decrease costs are also key components of redistributive struggles for survival which attempt to reshape the influence of capital imperatives via upstream and downstream relations. For Fraser, redistribution is made up of a range of efforts. 'The remedy for economic injustice is political-economic restructuring of some sort. This might involve redistributing income, reorganizing the division of labour, subjecting investment to democratic decision-making, or transforming other basic economic structures' (Fraser 1995, 73). There is no question that such redistributive demands are at the heart of food sovereignty struggles and the vision of Etxaldeko Emakumeak.

However, as the broadened conceptions of value described above suggest, questions of redistribution framed this way remain somewhat myopic, seeing only the inequality generated within productive relations.

Agroecofeminists, I believe, are signalling the need to push economically defined redistributive demands further. The idea is eloquently explained by Bhattacharyya who says ‘to relinquish our conception of “life” to the demands of productive work, imagining reproduction to relate primarily or only to the activity needed to remake contributions and contributors to the formal economy, is to miss much of what remakes life’ (Bhattacharyya 2018, 42).

Thus, rather than focusing narrowly on claims for a redistribution of surplus value within the current system, Basque agroecofeminists advocate for a complete reorganization of what the system itself values, and thus seeks to accumulate. ‘In agroecological projects, it is necessary to value the organizational and emotional aspects of the work as much as the technical and productive dimensions’ (Etxaldeko Emakumeak 2018, 23). In a sense, the crisis of generational renewal is a warning that the processes of systemic reproduction are under threat. In Fraser’s words, capitalist agriculture is eating its own tail. Agroecofeminist political agendas suggest that in order for the system to be able to reproduce itself into the future, it must reorganize and redistribute both economic wealth, but also its values.

At the women’s assembly of the Via Campesina 7th international congress hosted by EHNE-Bizkaia in 2017 this sentiment was captured by a young peasant woman from Brazil: ‘For us, feminism means changing relationships between people and nature and between men and women. Our work on the farm must be valued, while the work of the home cannot be the exclusive burden of women. We must construct new values and new relations in daily life, in society and within our organizations’ (Cultivate! for La Via Campesina 2017). Echoing and building on the international exchanges that have shaped agroecofeminism, the Basque farmers of Etxaldeko Emakumeak are reframing indirectly productive and unproductive activities as valuable, putting life at the centre of decision making and priorities, shifting productive structures and attempting to restructure the relationship between social reproduction and production. Food sovereignty and agroecological models of production upon which agroecofeminism is based, respond to the ecological crises evident in the sphere of food production (described in chapter 1 and further elaborated in the following sections), focusing on ensuring regenerative relations

between farmers and their natural environment. All together these redistributive strategies are intertwined, as regenerative ecological relations are also framed as a key component of putting life at the centre of productive agrarian relations, as well as a blueprint for ensuring generational renewal.

6.2.2 Land: beyond property – valuing ecology and the future

The prioritization via public policy, of agrarian models of production that value economies of scale, high levels of mechanization and economic efficiency, over job creation, and rural social and cultural needs, have contributed to the concentration of wealth and natural resources in the farm sector, which does not favour generational renewal. Years of liberalization of the CAP and, so-called ‘decoupling’ (from 2003 onwards) have enabled, on the one hand, a process of land concentration in the primary sector, so that fewer people control more land, and, on the other hand, a scaling up of the model of production, as we have witnessed in many other parts of Europe. This phenomenon has been especially pronounced in livestock production, where, in the decade between the agricultural censuses of 1999 and 2009, ‘the number of farms with milk cows has fallen by 68.5%; however, the average number of milk cows per farm has increased from 13 in 1999 to 26 in 2009 (+ 100%)’ (EUSTAT 2010).

According to interviewees, informality in subleasing arrangements is common. Especially among farmers who raise animals and need land for grazing and avoid over-accumulation of slurry, it is typical to have a patchwork of agreements, which make up one’s land access strategy: a small base in private title, complemented by use of public mountain pastures, as well as verbal agreements with a collection of neighbours (sometimes to use the land for free, while letting the landowner claim the subsidies, other times rent is paid, and the renter gets the subsidies, or other combinations of these factors). The economic benefits from the CAP of having more hectares, creates a set of complex, informal, sometimes unregulated arrangements, referred to as ‘created interests’ as if to avoid speaking directly about the complete dependence on subsidies and the divisions this has sewn within the farm sector. The way this consolidated system governing land access and control works is therefore spoken about in hush hush terms, suggesting cultural disapproval of the

way public funds are distributed. The nuts and bolts of this system are long-lasting personal relationships between neighbours whose family names can often be traced back centuries to when they were inscribed on the stone houses typical to the region. For new farmers not born into it, this is a dense landscape to work one's way into to get land. In this way public financing and subsidies may actually be exacerbating the problem of land access. The value added to property values by CAP subsidies, tied to hectares, as well as the money that sellers know new farmers can get for a new installation have the perverse effect of driving prices up or complicating negotiations.

The Agricultural Land Fund of the Bizkaia provincial government is one of the clearest examples of a public project set up to try to overcome these barriers. Launched in 2010, this land bank is made up of plots of public or private land, available for rent in 5-year contracts to young farmers, in an attempt to facilitate generational renewal (Departamento de Agricultura 2010). Other models have also been developed at the municipal level, such as the land bank that was part of the rural development plan in the town where I lived, described in chapter 4, launched by EH Bildu upon winning the majority in the local government in 2011. While theoretically facilitating the redistribution of land by making parcels available to new farmers, in practice these initiatives have created new hurdles for new entrants as they are forced to navigate public institutions and partisan politics in order to get and maintain access to land. However, the importance of land for farmers goes beyond immediate access rights. The possibility of long-term planning and sustainable ecological relations are also significant things farmers value in land relations, beyond property titles and rental agreements.

For example, strategic crop selection is an important redistributive strategy, aimed at increasing revenues. However, it is limited by existing inequalities in land access and such policy solutions proposed to remedy them. The relatively short-term rental contracts limit farmers' ability to plan ahead and invest in future production. Iñaki was convinced that apples and pears were the best investment for their farm. Locally grown fruit in general is not abundantly available in Bizkaia, so the farmers' union often advises new farmers to think about planting some of these higher value fruit crops. Apples have a long history in the Basque Country

traditionally used for cider, but on Bizkaian hillsides they have been squeezed out by forestry and ranching interests. Iñaki dreams of growing multiple varieties, not just for cider. However, most fruit trees don't begin producing until seven or eight years in. The contract they have with the municipal government for the land ceded to them by the land bank is for 10 years. Plus, the conflicts with the municipality described in chapter 4 have shifted his view of how to ensure economic security on his farm. Realising the value in the long term of being able to think in fruit tree time in relation to their land, to invest years in improving the soil, the drainage, and the ability to raise their family on the farm itself, Nuria and Iñaki decided to purchase a crumbling old farmhouse to slowly renovate and gradually transfer the bulk of their production to the land it sits on. In order to do this, Nuria has gone back to working part time as a nurse in the public health clinic, where she earns a higher wage than on the farm. She misses spending full days outside among the crops, but she knows this arrangement is temporary and will allow her to finally, not just access a piece of land, but cultivate an ecological and long-term relationship with it. The two of them joke about how they would prefer not to have to resort to private property in order to have such a relationship with the land, but for now, pending revolution, it is their solution to ensure that the things they value can guide how they interact with their farmland.

The importance of long-term ecological land relations for new farmers can be understood as a response to the increasing signs of crisis and impacting Basque farmers' relationship to land and other natural resources. Soil and water contamination are high throughout the region (EKOS 2019, 37). Other farmers note depletion of aquifers. Weather patterns are shifting, complicating crop planning. Monoculture pine plantations across the hillsides are vulnerable to new diseases as was the case in 2018 (Ormazabal 2018). While much of the ecological legacy in the Basque Country has been shaped by heavy industrial activities over the course of centuries, a good example of the additional impact of intensified farming can be seen in the dairy cattle production region. The increase in the number of cows, and a shift to feed-based production rather than grass feeding, creates an excess of slurry. This manure must be distributed across the hillsides, but when farmers intensify production, the balance between the number of cows and the amount of land is shifted, creating a problem of what to do with all the slurry generated. If too much is

discarded onto the pastures throughout the valley, it can't be absorbed fast enough, and runoff flows into the river at the bottom of the valley. Mikel's description of the situation revealed his frustration at having been encouraged for years to scale up and push production past the delicate balance between cows and land, only to find himself in the midst of a literal shit show.

There was too much slurry. All the pits were full. People throwing it in the bushes, even in your own yard, and heavy fines. You have to spread it on the fields and when it's not raining. Down there for example, if I throw it, I'll get a fine. They're preparing something else. They say there's some bags to store it in when you have too much. But I think it's going to be the same. [...] I generate very little extra. But the guy with 300 cows and not much land, where does he put it? And gradually it goes down to the river. It's gotten serious.⁴

Adding to the problem, the main dairy town has no water treatment plant, thus the town mayor, who was active in environmental organizations before becoming mayor, admitted to me with embarrassment that all grey and black water from the population centres dotting the valley goes straight into the river. The construction of water treatment facilities is the jurisdiction of the provincial government, which refuses to build one unless the town joins the privately managed water agency, which is threatening to raise the price of water more than double what residents currently pay. In a largely agricultural area, already struggling to make ends meet, the mayor knows spiking water bills will cripple farmers.

This example demonstrates how the preconditions necessary for a particular model of agrarian production have been ensured by pro-capital policy, which enables concentration of farm land and privatization of water management even though this undermines small-scale farmers; by sacrificing clean water and stable pastures to accommodate excess slurry; and by dismantling the social fabric of rural areas which make generational renewal possible. These intertwined crises have reshaped farmers relationship with land. For Beth and Jose who have an organic cooperative dairy farm, this means keeping the number of cows they have low, and cobbling together as many scattered pieces of grazing land, rented, leased, purchased, or sub-rented informally to ensure that they can keep the

balance of cows to land. Sometimes pressed into informal tenure agreements, they are more vulnerable to losing land access, as was the case which had Beth furious the day we met. However, the way the farmers relate to the land is multidimensional, it is not just a dry calculation between number of cows and hectares they manage to get access to. Food sovereignty encourages a reconnection with agrarian and rural culture anchored to the land. For this reason, Beth hosts school children on her farm annually as part of a programme to include rural farm experiences into primary school curricula.

The importance of farmers being able to exercise autonomy and sovereignty over land is central to agroecofeminism, however Basque farmers still find themselves operating within the context of land property relations dominated by a public-private property dichotomy, where they are struggling to find alternatives to this systemic logic of property relations. Indeed, what land property relations look like in a system that puts life at the centre and how to take concrete steps in that direction beyond casual references to the importance of the commons, is a key sticking point highlighted by agroecofeminists.

6.2.3 Labour: diversify, collectivize, decrease and redistribute

Despite the fact that the Basque Country has been historically known for its almost exclusively family farming base, drawing little on hired labour, current data shows that even this is slowly changing and evidence of gradual proletarianization is emerging. Although the total number of farms and people farming is decreasing, the number of people employed on farms as hired labour increased slightly by 4 per cent from 2,678 in 2003 to 2,786 in 2016. Over the same period the number of family members (not including the title holder) working on Basque farms plummeted from 24,999 in 2003 to 9,050 in 2016.⁵ Of this family labour the number of young people likely to take over from their parents is low, Alberdi Collantes pointed out in 2005 that people under 40 made up only 27 per cent of family labour. However, of those, the number of young family members that spent 100 days or more helping on the farm — thus likely candidates for farming in the future — makes up just 2 per cent of all family labour (641 individuals, a third of whom are women) (Alberdi Collantes 2005, 10).

Most conversations about race, migration and agriculture in Spain make reference to the tragically exploitative conditions of farmworkers on industrial farms, mostly in the south, far from Bizkaia. However, interviews suggest that immigrant labour makes up some portion of Bizkaian hired labour, but foreign-born populations are not well documented in official statistics. Population data drawing on registered residents includes information disaggregated by place of origin. However agricultural census data is not disaggregated in the same way, so it is difficult to get a clear picture of the race/ethnicity dynamics in the farm sector. Among new entrants hired labour is incredibly rare due to low farm incomes and most (except four individuals) farm owners or cooperative members of agroecological farms that I interviewed and came across in Bizkaia are racialized as white with Spanish nationality. The majority of survey respondents in Macias Garcia et al.'s study on new entrants have Spanish nationality, but 4 per cent did not, mostly coming from other European countries and in this category the percentage of women was higher than Spanish nationals (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, 53–4). At the same time the entire population that does not have Spanish nationality residing in Spain is roughly 10 per cent, more than double the respondents in this survey, raising the question as to why this population is so underrepresented among new farmers? Especially since the foreign-born population in many rural areas is growing, even though the overall rural population is declining.

Two very different reflections about working on the farm as a racialized migrant woman, illustrate how the politics of agroecofeminism is reshaping productive labour relations in this context. Maria is from Guatemala, the daughter of peasant farmers. In the absence of jobs or means of survival she decided to migrate to Spain, and found out she was pregnant upon arrival — ‘who hires a pregnant woman with no papers?’ She doesn’t go into detail about the many obstacles that she has managed to overcome, but now is living in a small town and working with Irene, of Etxaldeko Emakumeak, on her farm. They do the crop planning and manage the farm together, but despite these responsibilities that can feel stressful, she says that she feels at peace when she is there, and can let go of all her worries when she is farming. The hours pass and she doesn't even realize. Amina is from Morocco and she used to work in Southern

Spain's sprawling industrial greenhouses harvesting strawberries. She smiles a weary smile as she says, there it's not like Maria described. 'There, time couldn't pass slower.' She earned €30 per day, working long hours. 'It was terrible.'

Between Irene and Maria, there is a complicity. They joke about their disagreements over when to plant the corn, I hear Irene asking a colleague for advice about Maria's administrative needs, admitting that she is understanding in much more detail just how many institutional barriers a Guatemalan immigrant faces. There is a deliberate effort to farm together in a way that enables each of them to focus on the needs of their family, the town they both live in, and their personal interests. Maria has opened a workshop in town where she sells her sewn goods. And says after sustaining the fear and stress of migration, she finally feels like she is able to be herself again.

Despite these noteworthy efforts, one of the reasons why Etxaldeko Emakumeak emerged is because of the inequalities women continue to face in farming. Some 42 per cent of rural Basque women do some kind of labour related to the primary sector, but only 8 per cent are paid by a job in the farm sector (EUSTAT 2017, 20–1). Who takes up farming is shaped by the way productive and reproductive labour is distributed and institutionalized (or not), which means that not all new farmers carry the same burdens and time limitations, that can make or break a new farm. A lack of time due to the burden of care work, may also mean that there is less data about their experiences and perspectives. For instance, a quarter of the women interviewed for this study had to cut the conversation short in order to attend to children or other care work, while no man did the same. The average time for conversations with women was 86 minutes compared to 119 minutes for men. One woman farmer interviewed described her experience compared to her older male neighbour. 'Juan is a machine. But with the vineyard, the winery and two young children 2 and 4 years old I can't do it all. I'm the one who buys organic products. Juan makes everything himself. He's been at it for many years.'⁶

When women do formally enter the agricultural sector, they face a gendered division of labour. According to interviews: leadership positions

in organizations, maintenance of machinery and being the public face of the farm, are tasks more commonly carried out by men; on the other hand, administrative management, making cheese, preserving or canning and care work are jobs more frequently done by women. 'In her analysis of tractor advertisements, Brandth found that men farmers are expected to have similar characteristics to the machine — strength, persistence, technical ability and power, and control over nature (1995, 132). Despite changes on farms in terms of gender roles, farm machinery still demarcates men and women's work' (cited in Sachs *et al.* 2016, 9–10). Nuria confirms that this is the pattern she and Iñaki fall into, even though they have explicitly discussed their desire to overcome it. True, some women farmers interviewed did not conform to this gendered division of labour and confidently change tractor parts. And Etxaldeko Emakumeak attempts to create spaces where this kind of knowledge can be exchanged. For example, via trainings for women farmers to learn about how to maintain and repair farm equipment.

The call to revalue life-sustaining activities includes the important point that in this revaluation, men and non-family structures must share responsibility for social reproductive work (Etxaldeko Emakumeak 2018, Trevilla Espinal and Islas Vargas 2020). Within Nuria and Iñaki's family, they are deliberate about trying to upend traditional gender roles and division of tasks. Summer time is the most challenging for them. Of course, they see the importance of breaks from school for their three small children, but the childcare options during that time add additional strain on their time and/or financial resources. Paying for summer camps or day care is too much for their budget, so during some of the busiest months of the year, they alternate: one of them is with the kids while the other tends to the farm and vice versa. The family gets vacation time together by alternating with Irene's family, each covering for the other in order to take a week of vacation. This is just one example of how much of the work already mentioned that contributes to a redistribution of systemic values is about reorganizing how social reproductive activities get done and the importance placed on them relative to productive labour. It is at once about redistributing human time and energy, saving money and redistributing systemic values.

Some farmers simply bring their children into productive and masculine spaces, to force the issue to be socially recognized.

The first few years they treat you like awww, a young girl, they touch your head. But once you push back, they mark you as the one that gives a lot of attitude. Once with my new-born son, I took him to the council meeting and started nursing out there in the plenary, just to make a point. It wasn't even lunchtime. Then they called me Bescansa because just before that the deputy of Podemos had done the same [in the Spanish Parliament].⁷

Ensuring more time for social reproduction, rest, and/or more jobs, even when it means earning less money, as described by Amaia above is a strategy that is echoed by other farmers. For Beth and Jose, 'Wages or salaries are not high, we do not reach 1000 euros/month, but they are 6 jobs. And we've prioritized that, because I could work longer hours and not hire other people, but I want to relax from time to time.'⁸ Even still, they complain that their nephews who work with them on the farm don't want to take over when the older couple retires. This suggests that regardless of how clearly farmers see the need to redistribute systemic values, the human energy required to keep the farm going is still massive, wages remain low even if more time is allotted for vacation. In short, redistribution of value throughout the system in order for farmers to earn a decent living, must go hand in hand with efforts to reorganize the relationship between productive and reproductive work.

Another strategy for increasing farm incomes is to diversify economically. Off-farm jobs and pluriactivity have been central to peasant survival in Bizkaia since the pre-industrial period. While at first glance according to the official statistics and institutional frame it would seem that by 1989 the majority (66,7 per cent) of farms on 2 to 50 ha were living exclusively on farm incomes. But Ainz Ibarondo reveals that a significant portion (42 per cent) were receiving a pension as well, and among those under 65 nearly half (49 per cent) were being managed by women fulltime while their spouse likely had off-farm income. This leaves only 13,7 per cent of all farmers living exclusively on farm income. And this trend towards pluriactivity appears to be more exaggerated among smaller farms and increases across the board from 1982 to 1989 (Ainz Ibarondo 2001, 306).

However, the way such pluractivity is set up can greatly impact the autonomy of farmers and the degree to which their production sustains life vs. how much agrarian social reproduction subsidizes capital. For Etxaldeko Emakumeak the aim of visibilizing and valuing social reproductive work is to rebalance the way farmers prioritize their time. According to this logic then, being less economically efficient, but providing more jobs that permit people to spend time with their families, ensuring fewer care deficits is preferred. Increased diversification of crops often means more labour time, however is more ecologically sustainable and is seen as a good thing. To help farmers manage some of the larger more time-consuming tasks on the farm, Etxaldeko Emakumeak has focused on recovering the practice of collective labour called *auzolan* in Basque. In addition to making faster work of big projects, these group works days offer opportunities to strengthen internal collective relations that serve as the foundation for advancing an agroecofeminist politics.

6.2.4 Credit: decreasing dependence

As we have seen in the previous chapters, credit has been used historically and still today as a reproductive fix, in the face of care deficits. The role of credit has been theorized by Roberts, ‘as a key means through which households have sought to meet the costs of social reproduction being offloaded by the state (through welfare retrenchment) and capital (through low wages and precarious working conditions)’ (Roberts 2016, 145). Many new farmers interviewed for this research, in contrast, deliberately avoid taking on debt, seeking alternative ways to cover care deficits, and opting not to scale up production, thus avoiding the need for large capital investments. Or crowdfunding, or relying on networks of family and friends. Such strategies are inherently dependent on a certain amount of existing privilege, or inclusion in the collective, however the objective is to increase autonomy and decrease dependence and the burden of debt.

Public subsidies are of course another key pillar enabling small-scale and new farmers to survive and increase their earnings; however, most subsidies are linked to credit. In response to the crisis of generational renewal, assistance specifically targeted at supporting new young farmers exists as part of the Rural Development Programmes (PDR) managed by

each Autonomous Community, through which European CAP funding flows, matched by national or subnational institutions. Within the Basque PDR, the Young Farmer Plan (Gaztenek) was established in 2004, offering several lines of credit and finance (low interest loans, co-financing for investments and grants) for people between 18 and 40 years old, during the first five years of farming. In its first eight years, Gaztenek has provided almost 7.5 million euros for investment in new agricultural projects and has supported 450 new entrants⁹. Those who receive assistance from the young farmer programme get a percentage of the general expenses of the first installation paid for, and the rest is covered with farmers' own funds and/or debt. The amount of debt and self-financing that young farmers are taking on is in fact decreasing and the role of public grants increasing. '[T]he grants received by these young people has increased by 38% per project. When average public grants accounted for 44% of the total invested by the young person in 2000-2006, it now accounts for 64%'¹⁰ (Macias Garcia *et al.* 2016, 50).

Part of the resistance to taking on debt comes from the fact that it has been used to encourage farmers to scale up and modernize production. As one young new farmer remarks about agrarian subsidies, 'I know there are economic interests behind it. There are the banks, there are the tractor dealers, they are all waiting for the subsidies more eagerly than the beneficiaries themselves.'¹¹ Indeed much of the growth in the farm sector upon entry into the EU was facilitated by debt, which now hangs heavy on ageing farmers like Mikel who feel trapped by payments to the bank, and unable to retire.

Indebtedness is still seen as a sign of professionalism, competitiveness, and one of the distinguishing features between what the Basque Rural Development Plan of 2015–2020 views as two different farm models. On one hand, productive, highly trained and professional farmers have 'greater adaptability but higher levels of indebtedness.' This is then contrasted with small-scale, ageing farmers, 'with production systems closely linked to the environment, with low productivity, with poor and amortized levels of equipment and machinery, with little adaptability' (Gobierno Vasco, Dirección de Desarrollo Rural y Litoral y Políticas Europeas *et al.* 2017, 16–7). Farmers earning less than €20,000/year are

not even counted as professional farmers, effectively excluding many small-scale and new farmers from the sector.

In terms of farmers lived experiences with and relationship to credit, the role of the Agrarian County Offices (OCAs), which is the point of contact for farmers when requesting subsidies, is central. The interface with OCA staff, the grant information that is provided and extension services that are offered is an important channel through which farmers gain access to credit and subsidies. Interviews suggest that the social relations that take place in these spaces are also a huge source of influence on new farmers. Most interviewees felt pressured by public assistance and grant managers to scale up and take on lots of aid and debt to do so. 'The staff of the OCA encouraged us to go big, but we didn't. We went step by step. You have to learn how to manage it. And it was a good decision to go slowly.' Others felt that the staff of the OCAs was simply uninformed, bureaucratic and confusing. 'In the OCA, it should be different. It's a bunch of guys just sitting there, pure paperwork. They should be a little more up to date with their information. They seem to know things like they heard about it once. They're there processing papers, but sometimes not knowing what the papers are for.'¹² The lack of clarity about funding cycles and processes was highlighted as especially frustrating.

Then, when you start receiving the payments, it comes in maybe 20 instalments, like a slow drip. There is one [subsidy], I think it is for organic production, that comes in one payment, but the rest come in little pieces. One year I went with all the paperwork to the OCA and I asked her to explain it to me. But she didn't understand it either. It feels like it's set up so that you don't understand. So that you don't know how much money you should expect, and you just have to live with it. Or from one year to the next they tell you this money that you got before is no longer available, period. It's maddening.

If we look at the distribution of aid by gender, women represent only 32 per cent of CAP beneficiaries, and access only 23 per cent of the total amount of aid disbursed (de Gonzalo Aranoa and Urretabizkaia 2012, 35). Despite the unequal distribution, many new farmers find themselves stuck between the need for economic support while understanding full well the dependency the system creates, 'If it wasn't for the CAP, without subsidies, this would be over. Not even if we did all direct sales. Because

in the end the prices we get are for conventional agriculture. But we don't work in conventional. Staying economically solvent without subsidies...impossible. Not that we make much money, but it could be 15 per cent, more or less of our income, easily.¹³ There is a tactical nature with which some farmers approach public supports like the CAP subsidies, using them to build a different model, one that ensures the future of the farm, supporting investment in infrastructure and salaries to be able to support new young farmers.

The Young Farmer Plan, similar to the public agricultural training programmes, does not fully exclude small-scale or agroecological farming practices, but the focus of the frame envisioned for future Basque farmers remain committed to modernizing and scaling up. For example, Elena Unzueta, spokeswoman for the provincial government of Bizkaia claims that the priorities for co-financing in 2019 are 'to contribute to the structural modernization of the farms and the introduction of new technologies in productive processes,' and to 'promote generational renewal and pathways of entry for new farmers.'¹⁴ Yet, of the 3.5 million euros awarded, 2.6 million go to modernization and 875,000 euros are for supporting generational renewal. In other words, the budget priorities reflect a deepening commitment to modernization, rather than supporting generational renewal by way of agroecological farming.

According to van der Ploeg,

modernization has involved a clear 'script,' prescribing and sanctioning the development of a particular type of farm enterprise. Key elements were an increased use of external inputs, recourse to the newest and often most expensive technologies, and the reconfiguration of the farm in order to accommodate them. For many farms this 'script' implied self-marginalization and created the conditions for entrapment should prices become unstable (2000, 400–1).

Thus, what he and co-authors refer to as 'farming economically' captures an alternative approach based on agroecological production that reduces the need for credit by using 'a low-external-input agriculture approach which can contribute to environmental sustainability' (Ploeg *et al.* 2000, 400–1). This approach allows one to enter the sector without a

huge upfront investment. According to Iñaki, 'I think it's a sector where you can start with relatively little, and invest slowly. It's not a sector where you risk a lot of investment at first. It allows you to try first. But when you start like this, it gives you that margin, but it's very precarious at first. You need subsidies eventually to get out of that precariousness.'¹⁵

Although Etxaldeko Emakumeak is critical of the unequal and gendered distribution of subsidies and credit among farmers in Europe, the focus of their politics is perhaps more about building autonomy. This points to strategies for redistributing resources and avoiding the need for credit, or taking it on slowly, focusing on finding multiple ways to decrease costs on the farm, including debt payments. As Txema puts it, 'No dependency is the key.'¹⁶

6.2.5 Food provisioning: farmers as care workers

The proposals put forth by the food sovereignty movement 'envision ways in which social life can be reconstituted around alternative principles that respect the ecological relations through which social reproduction occurs' (McMichael 2009b, 306). If farmers are the stewards of human-nature relations (upon which the very survival of the human race depends) and the providers of the material basis for care, then a food sovereignty-based vision of what farming means positions farmers as something akin to care workers, ensuring that their community is fed. Relations between farmers and their community are thus central to expanding the political agenda to redistribute systemic values.

One key mechanism to help structure these relations is by way of community supported agriculture (CSA), direct to consumer networks, or box schemes. They are all ways of describing what has become a common way for new entrants to structure their agroecological food distribution. This set up ensures closer relations between farmers and their customers, and reflects an ethic of building community through food networks. Reinforcing these relationships locally emphasizes the idea that farmers are feeding their community. Some CSAs even set up payment and commitment mechanisms as means by which consumers can care for their local farmers, committing to buy what they produce weeks or months in advance. Shisler and Sbicca suggest that women farmers apply a care ethic

to their understanding of feeding their communities, and ‘This care [is] similarly extended to soil—the basis for healthy farmland’ (Shisler and Sbicca 2019, 887). This vision of farming as a way of caring for community and the environment is reflected in the practice and vision of food sovereignty. And it is true that the adoption of agroecological models of production most certainly has gendered implications. In Macias Garcia et al’s survey 40 per cent of women set up their farms on a food sovereignty-based model, compared to 23 per cent of the men (2016, 5).

Agroecofeminists build on the idea that food sovereignty is based on eco-dependent territorial relations and are demanding that the care work of nurturing that territorial community as well as one’s family be shared among men and women. In the frame promoted by Etxaldeko Emakumeak and EHNE-Bizkaia, CSA networks are one manner of prioritizing the life sustaining nature of food production. It ensures that food providers are able to earn a decent living, and provides avenues by which consumers can support the kind of agriculture that is ecologically regenerative in order to ensure sustained healthy production. In other words, these networks attempt to redistribute value in the food system by restructuring local food economies, and at the same time redistribute systemic values by forging stronger human bonds and infrastructures of collective care for people and the environment.

For many new farmers growing food is what they are most prepared for, but selling food is the biggest headache. ‘I don’t like the commercial aspect. I understand that there is a part of me that is very idealistic and I would like to provide for the community that I have close.’¹⁷ Understanding this, EHNE-Bizkaia spent many years assisting in the development of CSA networks that could be ready and waiting for new farmers. In 2005 the union began Nekesarea, a CSA network that brought together some 60 consumer groups with more than 80 farmers (Espluga Trenc *et al.* 2019, 113). In order for territorial markets to function better, relationships between farmers in the Basque country are shifting as well. Platforms like EH Kolektiboa offer spaces for knowledge exchange and networking among farmers. Spaces like this have enabled the connections necessary for a different architecture of relationships between food producers to be built.

Now we have managed, for example, that a farmer in Alava gives us grain at a fair price that he needs and that it is worth it for us and no one is looking at the ups and downs of the market. He gets to know for sure that he has sold a set amount and we know where it comes from. Now he's got more grain he sells, but he guarantees what he sells to us will be there [...] It's a really nice thing.¹⁸

A similar strategy is the promotion of public procurement, as is the case in the municipality of Orduña, where the local government has established contracts with local farmers to supply the kitchen, which serves meals to the elder care facility and the school. In this way local authorities contribute to establishing a stable architecture of care which farmers can participate in and which covers their basic needs in return. Taken together these diverse initiatives represent efforts to redistribute and relocalize food sales, moving away from big box supermarkets, towards local production. This is fundamental for the survival of new farmers. However, such networks are demonstrating capacity to respond to care deficits faced by consumers as well, in defence of life, rather than economic incentive. Kidekoop, a consumer cooperative in Bilbao initiated a solidarity food box programme at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, in collaboration with the neighbourhood anti-racist defence fund as food insecurity spiked especially among racialized urban populations. This programme collects economic donations from food cooperative members (totalling nearly €1000 over the course of 2020) and in-kind donations from farmer suppliers in order to provide agroecological food boxes for the defence fund to make sure the community is fed.

These reimagined farmer to eater relations also attempt to counter the atomizing nature of agrarian capitalism that leaves rural areas depopulated and new farmers feeling isolated and alone, by weaving together a sense of collective interdependence. 'Feminist agroecologies place the interconnectedness of people and nature at the centre of economic and political systems. Producing food in a way that nurtures relationships of equality requires accounting for the invisible care work that goes on in the fields and behind closed doors' (Milgroom *et al.* 2021). In fact, agroecofeminism in practice is the assertion that both the social reproductive work that goes on in the home as well as the type of farming

that establishes relations of care with surrounding communities via networks like CSAs is more important than maximizing productivity and efficiency on the farm.

6.3 Systemic reproduction...or transformation?

Though social reproduction theory has been advanced primarily by scholars critical of capitalism and its intertwinement with patriarchy, some emphasize that the actual work of social reproduction is about precisely that: reproducing the system. As Katz puts it, ‘Social reproduction is vexed because, again almost by definition, it is focused on reproducing the very social relations and material forms that are so problematic. Social reproduction is precisely not “revolutionary,” and yet so much rests on its accomplishment, including—perhaps paradoxically—oppositional politics’ (Katz 2001, 718). As Federici argues, ‘Contrary to an assumption that runs through recent works on social reproduction, to look at social reality from this viewpoint is not itself to take a Marxist or a radical stand generally speaking. Social reproduction theorists have included a wide range of promoters of capitalist development. Thus, as an analytic category ‘social reproduction’ cannot be adopted as a form of a political identification, as it is done by feminists describing themselves as “social reproduction theorists”’ (2019, 55). Despite criticisms claiming that the strength of this literature is to describe how capitalism survives, I argue that it can also contribute to understanding how capitalism is weakened, and overcome. Namely in its insistence on revealing capitalism’s others and intertwined crisis tendencies and the implications this can have on efforts to push for systemic transformation rather than reproduction.

6.3.1 Risks and opportunities of agroecofeminist politics

The previous two chapters have outlined the nature of the current crisis of agrarian social reproduction in the Basque Country. And as O’Connor suggests, the direction of change is not known, thus, it is not just capital and the state struggling to find a new fix or ‘fit’ between the relations of production and the factors required to ensure the conditions of said production. However, failing to envision the crisis tendencies that manifest in each of these spheres as intertwined, in fact enables quick fixes that shift the burden from one to the other, thus allowing for the systemic logic to adjust and reproduce itself. White women’s ‘emancipation’ in the

labour market was only possible because the burden was shifted onto underpaid and predominantly racialized women as domestic workers, thus failing to address global inequality and a racist immigration system. The question remains as to whether the particular kind of agroecofeminist redistributive politics described above leaves room for the burden of capital's crises to simply be shifted somewhere else?

Even though agroecofeminism calls for co-responsibility for care work between men and women in the Basque primary sector, the risk of essentializing women's connection to nature and sustainable farming reflect long standing debates in ecofeminist literature. The term agroecofeminism already positions itself squarely in response to both the ecological and social reproductive crises that farmers face. It also represents a nod to the rich ecofeminist thinking that Basque and Spanish scholars and activists have generated over the past four decades (Puleo García 2000, Herrero 2011, Kerslake Young 2013). Historically these scholars have examined politics at the intersection of ecological and social reproduction, which is relevant but not limited to a food system-based analysis. 'Ecofeminist political economy argues that women's work and lives form the missing link between economy and nature' (Mellor 2010, 157). For Trevilla Espinal and Islas Vargas, care work is interpreted broadly to include ecological stewardship. In other words, caring for nature is caring for us and the destruction of that relationship is contributing to the socioecological crises we face today (Trevilla Espinal and Islas Vargas 2020). Other ecofeminists have called this relationship one of 'ecodependence' (Svampa, 2015; Mies and Shiva, 1998; Martínez-Alier, 2004 cited in Trevilla Espinal and Islas Vargas 2020). As Herrero has pointed out, 'Ecological dependence confronts us with the problem of limits. We live in a world that has limited amounts of available, be it minerals or fossil energy, and even renewables also have limits linked to the rate of regeneration'¹⁹ (Herrero 2014, 224).

At this point in history, in light of the threats posed by climate change, loss of biodiversity, desertification, acidification of the oceans, and the endless list of ecological crises that have become so central to the future of human existence, food production and the way farmers interact with the natural world has the potential to improve or exacerbate these existential threats. In short, farming can be a life sustaining activity, part

of the forces of reproduction, or a life undermining activity because of its role as one of the primary mediators of human–nature relations. In the words of the Agricultural and Rural Convention, ARC2020, ‘Rural communities should be seen as drivers in the transition to greener and more caring societies in Europe’ (ARC2020 2020).

A number of scholars have voiced concern about the risks of essentialism embedded in what has been, ‘variously described as “the subsistence perspective” (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 2000), “the female principle” (Mies and Shiva 1993), and a “barefoot epistemology” (Salleh 1997, cited in MacGregor 2004, 58). MacGregor is especially concerned about the issue of political strategy:

I question whether care is a wise choice of metaphor around which to create a feminist political project for social and ecological change. How can societal expectations that women be caring or the exploitation of women’s unpaid caring labour under capitalism be challenged at the same time that the specificity of women’s caring stance towards the environment is held up as an answer to the ecological crisis? What does it mean, moreover, for women to enter the realm of the political through a window of care and maternal virtue? How is this feminist? And how, if at all, is it political? (MacGregor 2004, 57).

Gaard explains that these claims of essentialism triggered the renaming of political currents that all had their roots in ecofeminist thought, ‘hence, the proliferation of terms such as “ecological feminism” (Warren 1991, 1994), “feminist environmentalism” (Agarwal 1992; Seager 1993), “social ecofeminism” (Heller 1999; King 1989), “critical feminist eco-socialism” (Plumwood 2002), or simply “gender and the environment” (2011, 27). Shisler and Sbicca also explore the practice of agriculture as care work and conclude: ‘Care work has the potential to expand agricultural space for women, but also risks reproducing traditional gender ideas, which can subjugate women into subservient roles’ (2019, 876). However, Shisler and Sbicca’s analysis misses the very strategic and pragmatic reasons behind choosing this model of production that have nothing to do with performing gender. CSA networks provide political alliances and economic security for new farmers, who can focus more on production

and less on marketing and distribution if they know they have a set group of consistent buyers.

Indeed Sachs et al. point out that,

Contrary to essentialist claims that women are choosing sustainable agriculture because it is nurturing and a kinder and gentler form of agriculture, Trauger suggests women farmers report they are doing this type of farming because ‘they can do the work’ without the large cost of purchasing or leasing large parcels [...] The increased presence of organic, sustainable, and local agrifood systems provides an opening for women to enter farming because of their ability to enter agriculture at a lower initial cost than more highly capitalized industrial commodity production (Sachs *et al.* 2016, 11–2).

In order to overcome the romanticization of subsistence and upholding care work as inherently feminine, Mary Dietz suggests that care must be politicized: ‘care needs to be connected to a theory of justice and to be relentlessly democratic in its disposition’ (1993, 171, cited in MacGregor 2004, 73). Trevilla Espinal and Islas Vargas who describe gardens as spaces of territorial care, suggest that they can be spaces in which the relations between men and women as well as between farmers and nature, consumers, and other care workers are reshaped. ‘The challenge is to politicize and problematize care in these spaces, with an eye to linking care with agroecology and vice versa’²⁰ (Trevilla Espinal and Islas Vargas 2020).

In this chapter I have discussed emerging agrarian political subjectivities in the context of capitalism’s crisis tendencies in order to highlight the way they respond to and propose to overcome systemic contradictions which undermine life in pursuit of profit. Agroecofeminist politics strategically position farmers as care workers, arguing that their labour needs to be properly valued, denouncing the precarious conditions that many new farmers, especially women, experience, all while providing essential work to their communities. In practice agroecofeminism attempts to restructure the relationship between production and reproduction. This requires redistributing surplus value and channelling more resources towards the forces of reproduction, but it also means redistributing what the system itself values. These dual redistributive

struggles are playing out in the context of land, where farmers are fighting for access in the context of increasing concentration as well as cultivating multifaceted relations with the land that they farm, highlighting its meaning as more than an economic asset. These struggles are also happening in the context of labour, via attempts to diversify and collectivize production, to create more space and time for reproductive work, and increase autonomy. Credit is another realm where farmers are struggling to decrease their dependence in order to disengage from markets governed by the imperatives of capital. Finally, agroecofeminists are working to create different kinds of local food economies, establishing community supported agriculture networks and other forms of exchange, which project a logic of care onto the relations between food producers and consumers.

Throughout this analysis I also attempt to show how the contradictions of capitalism impact social reproductive relations in uneven ways, and are not the same for all places and all people. I argue that in order to connect care to a theory of justice as Dietz suggests, it must tackle these inequalities. Conceptually this relies on what Bakker and Gill describe as ‘variegated social reproduction’ (Bakker and Gill 2019, 14). This view offers of a broad conception of social reproductive work and foregrounds the question of how such work relates to value. This forces us to go beyond a focus on women’s housework, ‘And rather than seek to understand oppression exclusively in terms of the wagelessness, isolation, or other hardships of women’s housework, this perspective calls for a broad exploration of the mechanisms and social relations involved in the devaluation of life-making’ (Ferguson 2020, 111). As has been stressed by intersectionality scholars (Davis 1983, Crenshaw 1991, Hill Collins 2017) and throughout each of the chapters, the vectors of devaluation are often related to gender, but not always and not only. Other social oppressions related to race and class intersect and shape the variegated impacts on the possibilities for social reproduction. This also means that the restructuring of relationships to revalue life that are emerging as part of a suite of survival strategies and redistributive politics must take into consideration this uneven terrain.

Notes

- ¹ Original text: ‘las políticas agrarias estaban vendiendo. Desde el principio teníamos claro que tenía que ser la venta directa y el pastoreo.’
- ² Original text: ‘Se trata de la ley [de extranjería] que institucionaliza el racismo en el estado español y en Euskal Herria creando fronteras jurídico administrativas entre las personas y dividiéndolas entre personas “con papeles” y personas “sin papeles”.’
- ³ Original text: ‘Dentro de los grandes retos que tenemos nos gustaría contagiar de Soberanía Alimentaria al movimiento feminista y contagiar de feminismo al movimiento campesino agroecológico. En este ir y venir, nace la propuesta de agroecofeminismo, entendido como una propuesta concreta (pero no cerrada) que hacemos a la agroecología, a la economía feminista y al pensamiento ecofeminista.’
- ⁴ Original quote: ‘Ha sobrado purines. Se llenaban todas las fosas. La gente echando al monte, aunque sea tuya, y multas fuertes. Hay que echarle en el prado y que no este lloviendo. Ahí abajo por ejemplo lo tiro y multa. Están preparando otra cosa, dicen que para guardar hay unas bolsas cuando te sobre. Pero creo que va a ser lo mismo. [...] A mi me sobra poquito. ¿Pero el que tiene 300 vacas y poca tierra, a donde lo meta? Y poco a poco baja al rio. Se ha puesto serio.’
- ⁵ Author’s own calculation drawing on the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE): Encuesta sobre la estructura de las explotaciones agrícolas* (2003, 2005, 2007, 2013, and 2016).
- ⁶ Original text: ‘Juan es una maquina. Pero con el campo, la bodega y dos hijos pequeños de 2 y 4 años no me da. Yo soy de las que compra productos ecológicos. Juan fabrica todo. El lleva muchos años.’
- ⁷ Original text: ‘Los primeros años te tratan como awww una chica joven, te tocan la cabeza. Pero una vez que das caña ahí te marcan como la que da mucha caña. Una vez con mi hijo recién nacido le llevé al consejo y saqué el pecho ahí en el pleno, por reivindicación. Ni siquiera era la hora de comer. Luego me llamaron Bescansa porque en aquél época la diputada de podemos había hecho lo mismo.’
- ⁸ Original text: ‘Los salarios o remuneraciones no son altas, no llegamos a 1000 euros pero son 6 puestos de trabajo. Y hemos dado prioridad a eso, porque yo podría trabajar mas horas y no contratar otra gente, pero yo quiero relajar de vez en cuando. Entonces hemos preferido hacer eso.’
- ⁹ <http://irekia.eus/es/news/15480>
- ¹⁰ Original text: ‘[L]as ayudas recibidas por estos jóvenes han aumentado un 38% por proyecto. Cuando las ayudas públicas medias representaban un 44% del total

invertido por el joven en el periodo 2000-2006, ahora representa un 64%. En media, los jóvenes que se instalaron con las ayudas entre 2000 y 2007 tuvieron que autofinanciar su proyecto hasta 27.157€ frente a 16.420€ para los que se incorporaron entre 2007 y 2013.’

- ¹¹ Original text: ‘Yo se que hay intereses económicos detrás. Están los bancos, están los concesionarios de tractores, están todos esperando que salga la subvención mas que los propios beneficiarios.’
- ¹² Original text: ‘En la OCA, tiene que ser diferente. Son unos tíos ahí sentados, puro papeleo. Hay que estar un poco mas al día. Saben cosas como de oídas. Están ahí tramitando papeles, pero a veces sin saber de que van los papeles.’
- ¹³ Original text: ‘Si no sería por la PAC, sin ayudas, esto se acaba. Ni haciendo venta directa. Porque al final los precios que tenemos son convencionales. Y no trabajamos en convencional. Mantenerse económicamente sin ayudas, imposible. No es que ganamos mucho. Podría ser 15% mas o menos de nuestros ingresos, a lo tonto.’
- ¹⁴ Europa Press (2018), ‘Diputación de Bizkaia destina 3,5 millones en 2019 a incorporar jóvenes al sector primario y financiar inversiones,’ *Europa press*, 18 December, 2018, <https://www.europapress.es/euskadi/noticia-diputacion-bizkaia-destina-35-millones-2019-incorporar-jovenes-sector-primario-financiar-inversiones-20181218141451.html>
- ¹⁵ Original text: ‘Creo que es un sector en que puedes empezar con relativamente poco, y ir metiéndote más y más inversiones. No es un sector en que te arriesgues mucha inversión al principio. Te permite probar. Pero cuando empieces así, te da ese margen, pero es muy precario al inicio. Hay que aprovechar de las subvenciones en la medida de lo posible para ir saliendo de la precariedad.’
- ¹⁶ Original text: ‘La no dependencia es la clave.’
- ¹⁷ Original text: ‘A mi el aspecto mercantil no me gusta. Entiendo que hay una parte mía que es muy idealista y me gustaría abastecer al a comunidad que tengo cerca.’
- ¹⁸ Original text: ‘Ahora hemos logrado por ejemplo que un productor de Alava nos da el cereal a un precio justo que el necesita y que a nosotros vale y no estas mirando los altibajos del mercado. A el le da seguridad y tiene vendida tantos y nosotros tenemos seguro de donde viene. Ahora ya tiene mas cereal, pero garantiza lo que compramos a nosotros. Asegurado [...] Es una cosa bonita.’
- ¹⁹ Original text: ‘La dependencia ecológica nos sume de lleno en el problema de los limites. Vivimos en un mundo que tiene su limite en la cantidad disponible, ya sean los minerales o la energía fósil, y aquello renovable también tiene limites ligados a la velocidad de regeneración’
- ²⁰ Original text: ‘El reto está en politizar y problematizar el cuidado en estos espacios, con miras a vincular el cuidado con la agroecología y viceversa.’

7

Conclusion

7.1 Key trends across three regimes of agrarian social reproduction

The previous chapters have looked through the lens of social reproduction theory to reveal a number of factors which have and continue to complicate, challenge and rethink generational renewal in Basque farming. This chapter attempts to recap and synthesize some of the key evolutions that have taken place over time, and then focuses on the current post-industrial period to tease out some of the main insights when we take a step back and look at the ways that the three dimensions of agrarian social reproduction overlap and interact with each other.

7.1.1 Generational reproduction: from the peasant family to the agrarian welfare state

The dynamics of generational reproduction of Basque farmers, when seen in the light of the historical perspective provided in chapters 3 and 4, have changed significantly. During the pre-industrial period, rural families were often faced with the challenge of too many potential heirs to the farm and given the harsh conditions feeding and caring for everyone was a constant struggle. Off-farm labour in the rural iron foundries was a common way to supplement farm production which was limited by acidic soils and difficult terrain. Ensuring the reproduction of the family farm was a matter of survival and thus the key organizing principal of peasant households. The foundation of the pre-industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction was undoubtedly family based. This meant that great efforts were made to prevent subdivision of land, thus upholding a solid custom of patrilocal indivisible inheritance passed on according to the right of primogeniture. The marriage contract established clear duties and

responsibilities between generations the younger providing care in exchange for access to the land and farm equipment. The dowry paid by the family of the bride for access into this arrangement was then used as a kind of compensation shared among the siblings who did not inherit so that they could set up their own household elsewhere of a similar status. Here we see how these processes of generational reproduction fed into systemic reproduction by helping to maintain the class position of all siblings, while also protecting the family farm from being divided into a state insufficient for subsistence. Excess rural populations also took advantage of opportunities to emigrate made available by colonial expansion, in the hopes of sending remittances and eventually returning with new wealth extracted from the Americas. Thus, the possibilities for generational reproduction were also fortified by the privileged white colonial status their negotiation with the Castilian crown afforded them, which the process of collective reproduction made sense of by weaving a narrative of the collective nobility of the Basque people.

The second half of the 19th century was a time of massive transition. The rural iron industry was in decline as the increasing use of coal fire delinked industrial production from the rural roots of the vegetable charcoal-based system of the previous era. Urbanization and industrialization intensified around the Nervion river delta and Bilbao's population swelled with new workers migrating from rural hinterlands throughout Bizkaia and other parts of Spain. As peasant households unravelled, an industrial and urban social fabric came together, increasingly relying on the emerging benefits, labour protections and social policy architecture to cover social reproductive and care needs. The development of state-managed care lagged behind in rural areas, thus highlighting divides between the countryside, linked with the traditional foral system of the past, and the city, held up as the symbol of modernity and progress. Eventually as the process of state building permeated rural areas and during the Franco dictatorship what emerged was an authoritarian welfare regime, which used the distribution and withholding of social reproductive services as a political tool for repression and coercion. Franco's repression targeted Basque culture and identity, thus representing how by blocking and/or limiting access to care and state-managed welfare, he attempted to undermine and extinguish the collective reproduction of Basque identity.

With the fall of the Franco regime, industrial crisis and the subsequent entry into the European Union, the post-industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction has seen generational reproduction enter into crisis. Rural areas have continued to bleed population, draining the workforce positioned to be the next generation of farmers. At first this was seen as strategic and even encouraged, as part of specializing and modernizing. The development of an agrarian welfare state, an extension of the uneven and unfinished project of the Spanish welfare state, and in line with the EU's Common Agricultural Policy has pumped the agrarian sector full of subsidies in order to survive. However, the haemorrhaging has not stopped, causing policy makers to sound the alarms. What it has done has fortified the role of the state in the care diamond of current agrarian social reproductive regime. Thus, the politics of representation have become central to determining who is able to farm now and in the future, and what type of productive and reproductive relations are encouraged. Moreover, as peasant households and the system of family-based agrarian social reproductive relations that characterized the pre-industrial period has been dismantled, so too has the land for care trade, which structured intergenerational relations and ensured access to both care for the elder generation and land for the younger. Now care is accessed in different ways, by hiring domestic workers, a sector which is in large part feminized, racialized and underpaid; by strategically navigating public institutions in the hopes of overcoming the multiple barriers new farmers and rural women face in order to get access to the agrarian welfare state benefits; or by relying as families have since the pre-industrial period on invisibilized women's labour, which exceeds the number of healthy work hours in a day.

It's not inherently a problem to delink land and care and decrease the importance of the family in the care diamond, but what has replaced it is failing to cover basic needs for generational renewal. Throughout the evolution of three regimes of agrarian social reproduction, the generational reproduction and care work necessary to keep productive processes going has always been subsidized, paid for by means outside of those productive spaces. Whether by the expropriation of wealth from the Americas via colonialism, or the neocolonialist relations upholding the current system of domestic work; by women's unpaid work or by the state.

And, regardless of the increasing role of the state, as Bhattacharya reminds us,

The most historically enduring site for the reproduction of labour power is of course the kin-based unit we call the family. It plays a key role in biological reproduction—as the generational replacement of the working class—and in reproducing the worker through food, shelter, and physical care to become ready for the next day of work. Both those functions are disproportionately borne by women under capitalism and are the sources of women’s oppression under that system (Bhattacharya 2017a, 73).

As state subsidies have come to play a larger and larger role in generational reproduction in the post-industrial period, agrarian welfare has partially contributed to providing care, but this has come at the expense of the environment, degraded by an intensive and industrial model of agrarian production. CAP subsidies have also been linked to land, thus fuelling processes of concentration rather than ensuring that new farmers have access to land via institutions. In this process, despite the enduring role of the family, new entrants are playing a more and more central role in generational renewal. Indeed, historically immigration (urban to rural or people coming from outside of national boundaries) is also an important way in which labour power is reproduced (Bhattacharya 2017a, 74). In the case of Basque farming, extra-familial generational renewal poses new challenges. Many new entrants face barriers to both access to the support and subsidies provided by the agrarian welfare state, and access to land. Yet state supported access to land and care have become fraught with headaches, barriers and misrepresentation of the very farmers most well positioned to ensure generational renewal. All of these challenges can be understood as the context in which new agrarian political subjectivities emerge emphasizing the importance of re-centring struggles in sites of social reproduction, and revaluing care work.

7.1.2 Collective reproduction: colonially privileged *and* colonized people

After the mesa decolonial in Durango, the idea of decolonial politics has gained noticeable traction among Basque leftists. However, as I began observing the flood of seminars, webinars, panels and lectures that somehow addressed colonial and decolonial topics, I noticed that there

were in fact multiple interpretations of how Basque collective identity relates to colonialism. Some voices take a nationalist perspective talking about the decolonialization of the Basque Country in reference to the occupation by the Spanish state. In other cases, decolonial discourse is deployed, as it was by the panellists in Durango to shed light on the dynamics of white privilege that shape race relations in the Basque country derived from where Basques were historically positioned during Spanish colonial expansion. In any case, decolonial language is rarely deployed in reference to the academic literature on decoloniality, which anchors it to a specific intellectual literature. Floren Aoiz, describes the complex bind this creates for Basques' sense of collective identity:

We must remember that the Basque territories were subordinated to the Spanish and French institutions in the process of the imperial expansion of both states, one of the main stages for the deployment of colonial modernity. Coloniality therefore affects us doubly because of our complicated historical relationship with the colonizing subjects. The Basque Country has been forced into subordination that is linked to that coloniality, but at the same time we have benefitted from colonial relations of power. This forces us to conduct a rigorous and courageous reflection, which invites us to see ourselves as a subaltern people and at the same time one that is involved in the pillage and subalternisation of other peoples¹ (Aoiz 2020).

As he indicates, it is only by seeing the evolution of collective reproduction over the three periods examined in this thesis, that the disparate uses of colonial terminology in today's Basque political landscape begin to make sense.

Collective reproduction in the pre-industrial agrarian social reproduction regime was rooted in three main institutions. The church, the familia troncal and the foral legal system. Each of these three institutions reinforced a sense of autonomous collective strength and nobility among the Basques. The private churches defended control over church assets and decision making from the rest of the European church hierarchy. The importance of the indivisible collective patrimony of the Basque family enshrined in the system of mayorazgo among the elites as well as inheritance patterns among the peasants, also served to reproduce and strengthen the importance of the collective and its survival. The foral

legal system captured these customs and codes in law and formalized Basque institutions. At the same time these processes of collective reproduction provided means for the accumulation of wealth among the elite, for gendered inequalities to further crystalize in social relations, and for money to flow from the American colonies back into the Basque country.

It was from a position of institutional solidity and entrepreneurial savviness that Basques managed to negotiate extensive privileges within the colonial enterprise, granting every Basque noble status and access to high-level positions, as well as ensuring a near monopoly on the production of transatlantic ships and a central role in the trade of iron, food stuffs and slaves. Like many histories told by colonists, those who went to the Americas are recounted as brave explorers, or as valiant younger siblings of the one who inherited the farm, off to find fortune and bring it home to help the family, and ensure the reproduction of the collective. ‘According to Basque author Pierre Lhande, writing in 1909, “To be an authentic Basque, there are three requirements: To carry a sonorous name that indicates the origin; to speak the language of the sons of Aitor, and...to have an uncle in the Americas”’ (Bass 2008, 2). Aduriz describes the relations between the Americas and the Basque Country as ‘intimate’, ‘affective’ and ‘emotionally close’ (Aduriz *et al.* 1998, 118).

During the industrial period, under the Franco dictatorship this position of privilege in relation to the Spanish central authority was flipped on its head. Before the Spanish civil war, Franco was a general in Spanish colonial Morocco. Upon taking power he brought his experience in colonial domination and cultural repression to bear upon the Basques, the Catalonians, the Galicians, and any other collective deemed a threat to Spanish nationalism. The same forces used to colonize Morocco were deployed domestically in a process of internal colonization.

the logic of colonial violence was also extrapolated to the peninsula during the Asturian revolution and the civil war: the savage violence of Morocco's troops (legionnaires and regulars) against a part of the inhabitants of the metropolis themselves represented a momentary reversal of colonial hierarchies and complicated anti-colonialist and anti-racist positionings. Notably, racist logics were deployed for domestic consumption: phrenology, for example, used to study

primitive peoples, was also applied locally to ‘dangerous classes,’ including certain political categories² (Gil-Benumeña 2018, 48).

Certainly, prior to this period the relationship between the Seignory of Bizkaia along with the other Basque provinces and the expansionist impulses of the Castilian crown was by no means harmonious. And as Aoiz suggests, a sense of having defended Basque culture from the imperial tendencies of both Spain and France is a deeply rooted element of collective identity that predates Franco. Nonetheless the industrial period under his dictatorship brought a level of repression, which was not only violent and oppressive, it is recent history still fresh in the memories of people who are alive today, contributing to and shaping the process of collective reproduction.

This repressive context gave birth to the pragmatic politics of the PNV as well as the radical left, some of whom took up arms and deployed a violent approach, but the shared collective experience of defending one’s culture and way of life against an occupying fascist power was a defining feature of collective reproduction during this period. In exile radical leftists developed solidarity with anti-colonial movements around the world whose efforts to defend their own autonomy and independence resonated with the Basque context. In the process of building a nationalist collective imaginary, the rural world was held up as the anchor of Basque culture to their territory. This was the cultural essence of what Franco wanted to colonize and extinguish. This history has fuelled a sense of collective identity wherein Basques are the victims of colonization. Doubly victim to this colonization, Basque women were stripped of their rights, encouraged to retreat to the home and required the permission of their husband to do just about anything.

In the post-industrial period both of these Basque histories and distinct relationships to colonialism are coming to a head. The central role that migration has played historically in collective reproduction has been inverted. No longer a sending country, now increased migration is shifting demographic and racial realities in both urban and rural Basque populations. Plus, with the death of Franco, women came raging out of the home and into the streets, demonstrating the power of feminist

movements that the rights that had been stolen from them in the civil war be recognized once again. The PNV has responded by deemphasizing the ethnically and racially based forms of Basque nationalism espoused by the party's founder, Sabino Arana, and shifting to a kind of cultural idea of Basqueness, which can be acquired. In this opening up of the collective project, newcomers are expected to assimilate as a way of showing respect. The boundaries of the nation have become more porous, yet the positions that racialized and migrant people are expected to occupy remain limited, and they rarely include a role in the agrarian world as anything but hired labour either inside the home or on the farm. The street names and symbols of Franco's legacy have been changed throughout the Basque country (Gómez 2016, Muñoz 2019) but not those celebrating the generals of war from its colonial past. Meanwhile the noble *baserritarra*, icon of cultural tradition, has been undermined by agrarian policy, while the symbol has been 'folklorized'. Rural women are celebrated, and gender perspectives have been mainstreamed, but the focus is shifted away from more confrontational demands for distributive justice for actual women farmers, and the process of collective reproduction reifies the image of traditional rural women, rather than visibilizing how the population of women in the agrarian sector and rural areas is evolving.

An increasing symphony of voices is contesting the politics of recognition based on the construction of Basque collective identity as a colonized people rooted in the static agrarian traditions of the family farm. Feminists and anti-racist voices are bringing to the fore seeming contradictions in the process of collective reproduction, highlighting the patriarchal nature of those traditional families, and the white privilege and profits that Basques derived from colonialism. Perhaps it is no surprise that feminist movements and leftist agrarian movements, accustomed to what it feels like to be instrumentalized in the party politics of recognition without representation or redistribution, are the very same spaces in which a critical interrogation of decolonial politics is emerging.

Though Basque farmers are part of *La Vía Campesina*, locally in the Basque Country the primary engine driving these debates is the feminist movement. These conversations have been triggered by both big public events like the *mesa decolonial* in Durango as well as more informal

comments and ways of framing the Basque struggle. Flora Pozzobon explains these types of moments:

Sometimes we hear our feminist colleagues claim that they embody intersectionality because they suffer oppression on the grounds of gender, class and national-linguistic status. But many times they make these statements from a university position, with a documented immigration situation, or from their Western white middle class status. Hearing those claims boils immigrant and racialized women's blood, especially when we wonder if the woman who cleans their office or their house speaks Basque. We already know that the only job offers on the Lanbide [public employment agency] website that do not require it are those of cleaner or internal caregiver³ (Pozzobon 2020).

Indeed, what is clear is a lack of common interpretation of intersectionality due to different relationships to the colonial experience among the people who currently reside in the Basque Country. I have deployed the analytical tools of social reproduction theory, which draw on Marxist historical materialism throughout this thesis in order to stress the important difference between an instance of colonization and the historic process of colonialism, which consolidated and continues to shape the material inequalities embedded in racial capitalism which Basque society benefitted from via remittances and capital from colonial exploits in the Americas which flowed back into rural infrastructure, private estates and new business investments that fuelled the industrialization process in Bizkaia. In so doing I situate social reproductive relations and collective struggle in rural areas in the context of a broader systemic logic. Bhattacharyya's work on racial capitalism helps to construct a unified theoretical understanding of how patriarchy, racism and capitalism co-constitute each other and consolidate a particular racial and gender order that is favourable to capital accumulation. It is this structural reality along with the contradictory interpretations of what decolonial means to Basques, that Bueriberi's frustration is born from when she spoke on the mesa decolonial in Durango. Indeed, it is less about the academic decolonial literature, and much more about how the multiple interpretations of the concept among Basque society have in fact helped to unearth one of the core tensions in the ability of the Basque collective identity to evolve and diversify along with the residents in the Basque territory.

And as Pozzobon says, the Basque feminist movement may just hold within it the necessary conditions for digesting this colonial history and channelling it into an updated and inclusive political subjectivity capable of expanding the possibilities of generational renewal.

The feminist movement carries in its DNA the search for an inclusive and pluralistic political subject. And in Euskal Herria we have shown, although sometimes it hurts, that we are able to recognize ourselves and question ourselves to continue to grow. That is why we who come to these lands expelled from our territories by a system that has built the abundance of the North at the expense of the exploitation of South, we who have not yet assimilated the fact that our great-grandmothers were slaves, we who have many colleagues who live today practically as they always have, in the servants quarters of the master's house, we reach out to continue to build decolonial feminism on this earth⁴ (Pozzobon 2020).

7.1.3 Systemic reproduction: crises, fixes, and contestation

As Ainz Ibarrondo argues, the *caserío* has survived because it has served a particular function for the society in which it exists. The process of systemic reproduction reveals what that function is and how it has evolved across three regimes of agrarian social reproduction. Function refers to the role agrarian social reproduction plays in shaping socio-economic relations and vice versa. It is about understanding the structural relationship between production and social reproduction.

Social reproduction of the capitalist system—and it is to explain the reproduction of the system that Marx uses the term—is therefore not about a separation between a noneconomic sphere and the economic, but about how the economic impulse of capitalist production conditions the so-called noneconomic. The ‘noneconomic’ includes, among other things, what sort of state, juridical institutions, and property forms a society has—while these in turn are conditioned, but not always determined, by the economy (Bhattacharya 2017a, 75).

The contribution of social reproduction theory helps conceptualize the totality of capitalism, such that class relations are not limited to the social relations of production between worker and capitalist, but also include the

way that a worker's relationship to capital shapes social reproductive relations and vice versa.

In the pre-industrial period agrarian life was harsh and ensuring the survival of the family and the farm was the main priority. In order to do so the Seigniorial lords had to be paid and some food stuffs purchased. Thus off-farm labour in the rural iron industry was one way peasants accessed money in order to use it in service of social reproduction. As this relationship with the money economy grew and created the conditions for the permeation of capitalist relations into rural areas, we can see an increasing breakdown of the subsistence logic. This transition to the industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction was further accelerated by the series of liberal reforms throughout the 19th century which, privatized the commons, and aimed to increase the transferability of land, freeing rural properties from the indivisible constraints of the *mayorazgos* of the nobility. The shift to urban iron and steel factories based on coal rather than wood and the consolidation of the Basque model of industrial capitalism meant the decline in the decentralized mode of rural iron production. This massive shift in productive relations was enabled by an equally massive reorganization of the relations of agrarian social reproduction.

The industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction shifted the primary function of rural populations in the broader system of class relations from a primarily agrarian workforce which complimented rural industry with short-term and part-time hired labour; to the source of a new flood of urban factory workers needed to feed the labour demand of the growing iron and steel industry in Bilbao. The farmers who did remain in rural areas were encouraged to shift to more modernized and specialized production, thus the policy of the industrial period actively decreased the number of farmers. However, in terms of property relations the boom in forestry plantations further enabled these shifts, allowing rural land owners to plant pine on their land and go work in the city, without having to sell their land. This thinning of rural populations (that is, decline in generational renewal) was seen as a difficult, but ultimately necessary process of natural selection. In other words, the flow of rural populations into urban factory jobs was the systemic fix that this period provided in

the face of a crumbling pre-industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction.

As the modern and specialized model of agrarian production is showing signs of unsustainability, and industrial crisis has eliminated factory jobs, and the Basque economy has shifted towards services, the post-industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction is characterized by a contested field of opposing visions about what the future of Basque farming should look like. Generational renewal has emerged as a key policy concern, now framed in terms of crisis. Responses and proposed solutions to this crisis emerging in the form of food sovereignty, agroecology and *agroecofeminism* interpret the issue of generational renewal as a symptom of a much bigger systemic crisis. Thus, the actual practices of *agroecofeminism* build on agroecology, food sovereignty and ecofeminism to prefigure an alternative vision for the future of the Basque food system that fundamentally restructures the relationship between production and agrarian social reproduction aiming to revalue the forces of reproduction.

Land

Peasant production relies on a patchwork of land. Historically the commons played a big part of this. But the privatization of the commons helped undermine the pre-industrial regime of peasant social reproduction. During the industrial period rural land owners were able to take up jobs in the city without selling the farm by planting pine, the 'green gold' of the northern coast of the Iberian Peninsula. The rapid expansion of forestry plantations has brought with it a range of negative ecological consequences, as well as making it more difficult for new people to establish themselves in rural areas, since families, steeped in a collective history of prioritizing the survival of the shared family patrimony (the concept of the *familia troncal* still governs rural land inheritance laws), are reluctant to sell even if they no longer live on the farm, as captured in the common Basque saying, *saldua galua* (to sell is to lose).

Faced with the difficulty of getting access to land, new entrants with no family farm to inherit turn to rental agreements, informal subleasing, or in some cases the growing range of state mediated land banks. However, what agroecofeminist politics highlights is the value of not just

access to a piece of dirt, but also the ability to build the autonomy for thinking in the long term, and cultivating sustainable ecological relations with the land. The importance of farmers being able to exercise autonomy and sovereignty over land in this expanded future-looking and ecological sense puts farmers in a bind as they find themselves still operating within the context of land property relations dominated by a public-private property dichotomy. For agroecofeminists, who are critical of the role of private property in systemic reproduction, they find themselves struggling to find alternatives to this systemic logic of property relations.

Labour: revaluing peasant production and care work

Off-farm jobs and hired domestic and farm labour have been features of the Basque agrarian sector since the pre-industrial period. In the industrial period the primary function of farm families was to supply labour to the modernizing iron and steel industry as well as some food products via local and regional markets for increasingly urbanized consumers (Ainz Ibarrondo 2001, 330). Now the role of off-farm labour, hired labour and the relationship between urban and rural areas continues to generate debate. This also reveals the ways that farming is interdependent with other sectors. Agroecological new entrants are politically reclaiming the peasant identity, yet these rural peasant economies in practice actually include fluid movement of labour between the urban and the rural. Workers are cross-sectoral, non-familial, or serve to de-construct traditional notions of what a family is.

Agroecofeminist politics proposes a restructuring of labour by envisioning what farming looks like if the goal of farm work is to sustain life, rather than to make a profit. Etxaldeko Emakumeak has launched an invitation to think through what this looks like in practice. It is not a closed set of rules or guidelines. However, it suggests a need to reorganize productive relations so that more importance can be placed on social reproduction. This includes reducing time dedicated to production, collectivizing both production and reproduction, and implementing agroecological production systems in order to increase autonomy and decrease dependence on capital, moving towards greater unproductivity. They stress the need to visibilize care work so that it can be revalued and shared. The relationship to domestic work has always been a marker of class. Rural families as providers of care and wealthy urban families as recipients.

Proposals to collectivize care work, and share responsibility for it, revalue it, attempt to decrease those class markers associated with it, and increase equality of access and dignity of those who provide it.

Credit: a consistently double-edged sword

Credit has historically been and remains today a double-edged sword for farmers, both providing an essential lifeline in times of desperation and locking them into debt, dependence and ultimately undermining the conditions needed for social reproduction. The introduction of fixed term loans, which enabled the seizure of property when peasants failed to make payments was a crucial piece that helped shepherd rural areas from a pre-industrial to an industrial regime of agrarian social reproduction. Access to credit during the post-industrial period has also represented a tool used to shape the direction of agrarian productive development. Primarily associated with CAP subsidies, this delivered the European vision of highly specialized, modernized, mechanized and capitalized agriculture to the Basque countryside. Now, although most struggle economically to establish themselves, agroecofeminist new farmers are hesitant to take on debt, not only because of the economic burden it implies, but also because of the ideological vision for how agrarian production should look, which continues to favour larger more industrial models of production.

Food provisioning: From subsistence family farms to community ecodependency

Basque peasants have arguably never been able to survive in a bubble without depending on some off-farm inputs. The central role of the rural iron industry marked the evolution of peasant agriculture, limiting its spatial expansion into the forested hillsides used for fuel for the iron foundries, and providing some access to money in order to buy a limited selection of food stuffs to supplement the family farm production. The industrial period saw a push towards specialization and an almost entirely market-based model of food provisioning among farm households. Now during the post-industrial period, the politics of agroecofeminist re-peasantization are attempting to recreate a system of agrarian relations wherein the reproduction of agrarian life is the priority. However rather than returning this system to the scale of the household, the emphasis among new agroecological farmers is on the territorial level, attempting to create local food economies that recognize and nurture relations of

interdependence between farmers, eaters and their natural environment. Thus, CSAs gather groups of small farms in order to provide a diverse and balanced diet to their networks. These networks take on a more intentional dimension of providing a dialectic of care that helps support new entrants, but can also support consumers in need.

7.2 Representation, recognition, redistribution, and the political subject

Together with systemic reproduction, the generational and collective dimensions of social reproduction map out the material, social, cultural and political terrain for the struggles over representation, recognition and redistribution that are playing out today and to which agroecofeminism contributes. This multidimensional and systemic view of social reproduction brings us back to the question of political subjectivities. In other words, how do the ways we see agents of social change, and the ways they present their political agendas inform how we understand social change and struggle? As the preceding chapters have illustrated, from this terrain of contestation a wide range of political subjectivities emerge.

The debate between Fraser and Honneth is about the extent to which recognition and redistribution claims are in tension with each other or part of a mutually reinforcing emancipatory agenda. Fraser's status model attempts to provide a framework for understanding the mutually reinforcing nature of the two, plus representation which she adds to her conceptual intervention in later works. When analysed through the lens of social reproduction theory, the systemic view of the context in which emancipatory claims get made comes into view. Through this lens we see how and where quick fixes can shift the burden from one of capital's others to another, thus allowing for the systemic logic to adjust and reproduce itself.

But what are the political implications of such a multifaceted view of emancipatory politics? Indeed, many different groups and actors are impacted and potentially mobilized in such moments. But the contours of social mobilization and criteria for movement organizing in this particular moment are subject to much debate, or needed debate — as Arsel notes, in regards to the role of class in confronting ecological crises (2019). As

explained in chapter one, such debates reflect multiple and often overlapping attempts to push past the narrowly productivist understandings of orthodox Marxists who saw the industrial working class as the revolutionary subject, while at the same time not falling into the post-structural class blindness of new social movements anchored to identity politics. In line with Arsel, questions emerge around the relationship between organized workers in the ‘real economy’ and those invisibilized ‘others’, the driving force ensuring the conditions of production. Huber, for example, expresses his frustration with Fraser and others’ move away from the politics of production as follows: ‘Many social critics would consider an emphasis on factories and industrial points of production to be hopelessly orthodox, but in the context of climate change and other ecological crises, such industrial sites remain the belly of the beast’ (Huber 2020, 24). McAleve’s notion of whole worker organizing is one attempt at forging a middle way of understanding social change that weaves together an analysis of structure and agency within production and beyond the shopfloor (McAleve 2016, 24). Others argue that the waged worker is a category that describes a decreasing portion of the global population, and thus other frameworks and terminology like ‘working people’ (Shivji 2017) for organizing collective action in the name of social change are needed.

For Bhattacharya it is necessary to expand how we understand class struggle to include this diversity of political subjects. She argues, ‘this link between production and reproduction, and the extension of the class relationship into the latter, means that [...] the very acts where the working class strives to attend to its own needs can be the ground for class struggle’ (Bhattacharya 2017a, 77). As I have indicated in chapter one and illustrated in the subsequent chapters, these conceptualizations of the working class and class struggle matter for at least two key reasons. First, hearing the demands and social contestations that emerge from outside of the context of wages and working conditions as potentially relevant to class, helps deepen our understanding of the incredibly broad range of issues which shape the class experience. Second, an expanded conception of the working class facilitates an expanded conception of strategic alliances helping to make sense of both the ways different groups are engaging as well as the unexplored political opportunities that exist.

Recentring politics on the site of social reproduction means: a.) Seeing the issues faced by the people who are labouring in those spaces as equally important as the political agenda that emerges from the factory floor; and b.) Anchoring political conversations and strategic visioning in the physical places where social reproductive labour happens. This has implications for the content (*what* issues are prioritized, what is considered to be part of the political agenda) and for the process of collective organizing (*where* meetings happen, with who, in what format and tone), as well as for the tactics deployed to make social change (*how* change happens: confrontation, disruption, conflict, collaboration, creativity).

7.2.1 Recentring politics on the site of social reproduction

As the trees cleared I arrived at a massive house, with its doors flung open, projects and furniture and insulation and unmounted doors spilling out into the extensive yards surrounding the building. This was not a typical caserío. This used to be the summer home of a wealthy family, collectively purchased by a recently created foundation with the aim of creating a space of refuge, residence and collective organizing. Stretching from the ground up to the third story roof was a giant purple symbol of the feminist movement made of a patchwork of crocheted squares. On the far side of the house I saw some familiar faces of the women of Etxaldeko Emakumeak gathered on a patio. They were busy cutting fabric and laying out markers and art supplies on three tables, setting up the activity that they had prepared. A troupe of young children was running around in the yard, jumping on tree stumps and snatching pieces of cake as the food was laid out on the tables spread across the patio. I couldn't quite tell who was mom and who was just keeping an eye on the little ones, making sure they had what they needed and felt part of the activities. Just after me Amina arrived with three huge plates of tortilla, and more cakes. As usual the breakfast potluck meant that there was too much food.

In concrete terms this place is a safe house for criminalized activists. But politically it uses the physical space of a collective house to anchor a range of collective projects. It represents the most recent addition to the cluster of initiatives discussed in chapter 6 that are building an inclusive and radical leftist politics in rural areas. Inside Sofia had brought a basketful of beautiful rainbow chard, which was the centrepiece of the

mística/altar, surrounded by banners (La Vía Campesina, Gora Borroka Feminista, Etxaldeko Emakumeak, and printed articles about the labour exploitation the Moroccan women farmworkers in Almería and Huelva). This gathering was framed as an agrofeminist breakfast to begin discussing the issue of migration and race in rural areas. By situating the event in this space, Etxaldeko Emakumeak brought the conversation to the physical site where among other issues this topic is most relevant. Although the safe house is a collective effort separate from Etxaldeko Emakumeak, many of the key protagonists in these groups overlap. And it gives Etxaldeko Emakumeak a physical space in which to expand their struggle.

At first glance agroecofeminist politics situated in this context doesn't seem to frame the issues facing farmers as class issues and they rarely organize around uniquely productive concerns like prices, or access to markets. The agrofeminist breakfast was not about planning a strike. Plus what does class struggle mean for neo-peasants, who are recrafting their approach to farming by recovering the peasant way, a group which Shanin famously described as the 'awkward class', neither forced to sell one's labour, nor truly capitalist (Shanin 1972, Friedmann 2019)?

The three dimensions of social reproduction I have used to analyse the issue of generational renewal help reveal how it is all at once an issue of political representation, recognition and redistribution. It is a gender issue, it is a race issue, it is an environmental issue, and it is a class issue. Rather than get mired in the divisions this potentially creates, my aim in approaching the subject in this way is to contribute to the empirical basis for Tithi Bhattacharya's claim that 'Every social and political movement "tending" in the direction of gains for the working class as a whole, or of challenging the power of capital as a whole, must be considered an aspect of class struggle' (Bhattacharya 2017a, 85–6). She makes a convincing argument that situating class struggle at the site of reproduction is as important as the organizing work that takes place at the point of production. By drawing on the example of two different union campaigns, one which only met with workers at the factory and the other which spent years engaging with the community where the workers live, she shows how in fact organizing only at the point of production without connecting class struggle to the spaces of social reproduction and worker's lives is in fact much weaker strategically.

I suggest that we must also submit our understanding of agrarian relations to this reframing in order to identify the class struggles emerging from those arenas, which include agroecofeminist peasants. By seeing the types of events that physically situate class struggle — meetings, trainings, protests, celebrations etc. — in the community centres, and living rooms, or the safe houses, of the (expanded) working class, the exclusivity of wage workers as the primary political subject, and the superiority of productive relations is challenged. Instead, the reproduction of social life, is also put at the centre of political organizing. And the political subject is a social being first, and then a worker. This makes space for seeing work as something that takes place inside and outside of the formal economy, and that serves a variety of purposes, including generating surplus value, biological reproduction, care and/or subsistence.

The starting point of this thesis was the idea that the crisis of generational renewal in farming is in fact a crisis of social reproduction. This frames farm work as productive labour, and focuses on the indirectly productive labour that is struggling to ensure the reproduction of the workers needed for generational renewal. In chapter 4 I explored how the politics of representation taking place in the context of PNV controlled institutional spaces exclude and undermine new entrant agroecological farmers and rural women and racialized people. In this scenario the indirectly productive labour of care is institutionalized via the agrarian welfare state and/or commodified in the form of transnational care chains that increasingly situate the work of immigrant women in precarious positions as hired domestic workers. Chapter 5 looked at the indirect labour of Basque society in defining and upholding the boundaries of cultural identity in the process of collective reproduction. This process is deeply influenced by the politics of recognition, which plays out in the broader social and cultural sphere and is reinforced by public institutions. In both of these chapters farmers themselves are seen as both productive workers producing food commodities and as indirectly productive workers ensuring the social reproductive needs of their own homes and farms. Up until this point, the types of struggles I explore in these processes clearly fit nicely into Bhattacharya's conception of expanded class struggle. Her approach also helps capture the intersectional nature of expanded class struggle.

Beyond the two-dimensional image of individual direct producer locked in wage labour, we begin to see emerge myriad capillaries of social relations extending between workplace, home, schools, hospitals—a wider social whole, sustained and coproduced by human labour in contradictory yet constitutive ways. If we direct our attention to those deep veins of embodying social relations in any actual society today, how can we fail to find the chaotic, multiethnic, multigendered, differently abled subject that is the global working class? (Bhattacharya 2017a, 74)

Chapter 6 however, further expands the lens with which we see farmers' labour, putting the work of Etxaldeko Emakumeak in conversation with Barca's conceptualization of the forces of reproduction. The analysis of agroecofeminist politics provided shows how farmers are framing themselves as care workers, struggling for greater autonomy from the imperatives of capital. In this way agroecofeminist farmers, from their awkward peasant class position situate themselves politically as both productive and indirectly productive workers also struggling for unproductivity. Amidst this awkward and expanded class position, what gives force to their struggle is recentring it on and in the reproductive sphere. The precise boundaries between questions of class vs. race or gender, and the neat definitions of different types of labour, though relevant and important conceptual debates, fade as the struggle is centred on urgent political questions of how to strengthen the forces of reproduction in the face of multiple crisis.

This approach is especially strategic because these farmers represent a part of this expanded notion of the working class who have maintained some degree of control over the means of subsistence, essential to social reproduction of all people. Bhattacharya reminds us that the 'open class war' waged in the years referred to here as the post-industrial period, at a global scale was a neoliberal assault, exceptionally effective precisely because,

it extended beyond the confines of the workplace. By systematically privatizing previously socialized resources and reducing the quality of services, capital has aimed to make the work of daily regeneration more vulnerable and precarious while simultaneously unloading the entire

responsibility and discourse of reproduction onto individual families (Bhattacharya 2017a).

What Bhattacharya and Barca have in common when applied to the agrarian context is the importance they place on political subjectivities that can keep us alive, as well as help build bridges and expand struggle, rather than invisibilize or undermine. Offering conceptual umbrellas which many diverse workers fit into, does not erase the different positions in relation to capital that they have, however it does encourage political alliances to strengthen different modes of contestation emerging from different types of workers.

7.3 Agroecofeminism in alliance

Social movements pushing for the transformation of agrarian relations have clearly identified the need to build broad coalitions and strategic alliances. Given the dwindling numbers of farmers in post-industrial contexts, this is evident in farmers' strategies from the international work in the context of La Vía Campesina, to the motivation behind forming Etxalde in the Basque Country. Scholars and activists thus call for 'unity in diversity' (Desmarais 2007) and exclaim, 'Food Movements Unite!' (Holt-Giménez 2011) to consolidate movements in the global North. Samir Amin calls for 'convergence in diversity' (2011). Leaders from the Basque Country (Paul Nicholson) and Brazil (João Pedro Stédile and Horácio Martins de Carvahlo) call for 'alliances of transformative action' (2011: 3). Montagut (2011) notes that shifts in consumer activism, often framed as the linking of islands together into an archipelago, should actually be conceived of as nodes that form a net.

As the previous chapters have argued, the crisis of generational renewal is a crisis of social reproduction, however the crisis of social reproduction is inextricably intertwined with ecological and political crises. Thus, it is clear that in response to this intertwinement, farmers and food sovereignty movements are focusing on building bridges in order to effectively respond to these multiple challenges and ensure generational renewal. But on what basis are these bridges built? The insights gained from exploring the dynamics of generational, collective and systemic reproduction, help unpack this question revealing some of the political opportunities for such

alliances. First, by exploring the nature of generational renewal and the dismantling of the land for care trade, and the politicization of care work that agroecofeminism aims to offer, the relevance of bringing together diverse kinds of care workers across the essential sectors that sustain life and generational renewal comes into view. Second, by examining the dynamics of collective reproduction it becomes clear that for alliances to be inclusive, the ways that colonial relations continue to play out and shape generational renewal today must be interrogated. And finally, looking at the contested politics of systemic reproduction shows how an expanded notion of working class is strategic in order to facilitate collaboration between groups inside and outside of the ‘real economy’ with different relationships to capital in order put disruptive class struggle in service of regenerative class struggle.

7.3.1 Solidarity among the forces of reproduction

Agroecofeminist visions for systemic transformation have very effectively brought the ecological crises exacerbated by agrarian capitalism into the centre of the debate, arguing for a kind of food production that is regenerative and cools the planet, rather than contributing to the climate crisis. And efforts by the women of La Vía Campesina described have for years been working to ensure that the food sovereignty is feminist from the most intimate internal spaces to the political vision it proposes to the world (Desmarais 2003). As Soler Montiel et al. argue, ‘We cannot assume that food sovereignty and agroecology are already feminist in themselves’ (2020, 8). In parallel, a proliferation of scholarly work has sought to make more explicit the links between feminism and food sovereignty and agroecology, and in so doing visibilize the role of social reproductive work in sustaining food production. For example:

Agroecology and food sovereignty are ways of relating to food that nurtures bodies, communities and the environment, generation after generation. Agroecology is about caring for the soils, for water, for the life cycles of microorganisms, insects and other animals of the agroecosystem, for seed and plant as well as those who process, transport and eat the food. Feminisms at the core of agroecology and food sovereignty aim to keep life, and the reproduction of life, at the heart of their concerns (Milgroom *et al.* 2021).

By situating agroecofeminist activities in the context of intertwined social and ecological crises in rural areas we can appreciate how they emerge in response to care deficits and strategically deploy ecofeminist ethics of care to assert an alternative mode of food production and socioecological reproductive relations. This approach politicizes, expands and revalues regenerative agriculture as care work in rural areas. This political framing is strategic in that it reveals opportunities for new alliances and relationships amidst a landscape of variegated social reproduction in rural areas. Indeed, as mentioned in chapter 5, agroecofeminist farmers are not the only care workers in rural areas. Chapter 3 showed how historically rural care work has been feminized and in the post-industrial period increasingly racialized and commodified with the expanding presence of transnational care chains. International solidarity between farmers in the global North and South, in the context of La Vía Campesina has connected Etxaldeko Emakumeak to global and regional campaigns in defence of farmworkers rights and built connections with related movements for food justice, immigrant labour justice, farm justice, gender equality, environmental sustainability and conscious consumerism (among others. See Guthman 2008, Holt Giménez and Shattuck 2011, Masson et al. 2016). However, the capacity of food sovereignty and agroecology to address the intersecting crises impacting gender and race relations represents an emerging process which, though it was not central to Etxaldeko Emakumeak's organizing in its early years, is being incorporated into the work they do.

According a report written by the World March of Women, Basque chapter and the collective of racialized women in the Basque Country, as in the rest of Europe,

In the Spanish state and the Spanish Basque Country, the labour niches for migrant women are those which respond to a racialized and sexual division of labour. In 2015, in the Basque Country, there were 76,000 homes employing domestic workers. In the French Basque Country approximately 16,64% of the population hired domestic services in 2013 and all indicators suggest those numbers continue to rise' (2021, 13).

This racial organization of productive and social reproductive relations serves a function in the broader systemic logic, covering care deficits that

the state and families are not covering but also generating wealth: the migrant population contributes some 1.525 million euros to the GDP of the Basque Country, which is 810 million euros more than this group receives in public subsidies (Marcha Mundial de Mujeres de Euskal Herria 2021, 13). The rural population in the Basque Country is ageing and care work is in higher and higher demand in the countryside. Public care services are offered in many rural areas, but municipally operated programmes are increasingly being serviced by private companies (Europa Press 2019).

From the perspective of these hired rural care workers, social reproductive work has been so devalued that they can barely survive. Their political activism has focused on security and health.

Workers come to homes alone and houses are generally not prepared to deal with people with physical limitations, which carries certain risks for the physical health of female employees as injuries are commonly caused by moving a lot of weight. These types of ailments are not recognized as occupational hazards nor are psychological problems such as anxiety or depression. Accidents in between services are also ruled out. A question that is worrying in the case of women moving between rural villages in Bizkaia, where the chances of an accident during transit are greater⁵ (Ferreira 2019).

Domestic workers often find themselves with no means of transportation and limited access to information about their rights. Domestic workers are mobilized, but within the framework of labour unions (Eusko Languillen Alkartasuna (ELA), Languile Abertzaleen Batzordeak (LAB), Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT) and Unión Sindical Obrera (USO)), with no distinction made between urban and rural contexts. And they tend to frame their politics in redistributive terms, however it is rare that they demand a redistribution of systemic values. Etxaldeko Emakumeak has developed a clear political agenda that combines ecological and social reproductive concerns, but swings the other way and leans more heavily on a politics of questioning the logic of the system itself and less about prices, remuneration or things of the same nature as organized domestic workers. Perhaps for this reason, coalition building along these expanded class lines has thus far appeared to be less evident. Nonetheless, agroecofeminist politics reveals the political

opportunity for alliance and Etxaldeko Emakumeak's engagement in the safe house broadens the space for cross racial organizing, making important steps towards revaluing the range of life sustaining activities in rural areas, not just agroecological food production.

7.3.2 Decolonial internationalism

As we gathered into the meeting room at the safe house, Irene began by introducing the importance of the topic to be discussed — race and migration in rural areas — for Etxaldeko Emakumeak, the need to recognize our privileges and build bridges. The idea was to do a round of presentations sharing where we were born, and our connection to the land, or why we came that day. The beginning of the circle was mostly women from Bizkaia, some urban some rural, as well as three or four born in Madrid who have settled in rural Bizkaia, Bilbao and around. Very few spoke to the issue of race. Many made reference to the farmers among their parents or grandparents who helped them cultivate a connection with the land. Then we reached the point in the circle where all of the racialized women sat closely together.

Delia refers to herself as the daughter of the land, she is from a peasant family in Honduras where they grew corn and beans. She understands herself and her struggle against iron mining as a seed that has grown from the work of Berta Cáceres, Honduran activist who was assassinated as a result of her activism. In the face of threats on her life, Delia had to flee the country. She landed in Madrid, then Zaragoza, and finally found her way to Bizkaia. Along that path she has worked all the domestic labour jobs. Now she is the first *defensora* taken in by the safe house. And is helping to coordinate with networks providing support to other *defensoras* in need of exile. As the introductions continued, the emotional intensity of the stories these women shared increased. This initial round ended up taking a bit longer than anticipated and clearly provoked a stronger emotional response in the room than expected. We hadn't even had breakfast yet and the entire room was in tears. The carefully planned methodology was let fall in favour of giving some space to just begin to open up to each other and get to know each other.

This workshop is one example of the importance agroecofeminism puts on building bridges despite the barriers and slowness that such processes encounter. Sometimes conceptual bridges develop faster or oversimplify what these processes look like on the ground. Especially in the global North, what many see as the original protagonist of the food sovereignty movement — the peasant — is often outnumbered by commodity farmers, immigrant workers, urban gardeners, and peri-urban food justice activists who also make up the movement, along with a range of other rural residents, often out of view in collective organizing for food sovereignty. This reality has fuelled questions about the relevance of movements for food sovereignty if they are not able to engage with industrial workers, feminist or anti-racist struggles (Holt-Giménez 2011, Agarwal 2014, Brent *et al.* 2015b).

Shafi and Nagdee argue that race needs to be seen as a ‘structural relationship.’

Race marks out the relationship of particular groups to power and processes of exploitation and extraction, and indexes divisions of labour and social control. This definition emphasises how race operates; it stresses the fact that race is politically, socially and geographically contingent, rather than stable; and is shaped by changes in political economy and geopolitics, rather than just a subjective process of racial identification. This is not to deny individuals’ rights to explore their personal identification with race and ethnicity, but to argue that this process of inward-looking self-definition is not the focus of antiracist movements that seek to challenge concrete oppression. (Shafi and Nagdee 2020, 13).

In the Basque Country colonial histories and racist immigration policies come together to structure racial relations. As described by Marcha Mundial de Mujeres de Euskal Herria: ‘Migration policies are a consequence of the colonial structure of the world system. The territories it continues to wield power over are the bodies of the dispossessed and the condemned, deciding who should be admitted to live in subalternity, inferiorized and who is left to die at the manufactured borders’⁶ (2021, 15). In order to challenge the structures of racial capitalism, ‘A renewed antiracist movement must be able to analyse the function of racism and organize against the wider processes of exploitation and dispossession that

underpin it.’ (Shafi and Nagdee 2020, 14). As Fatima Aatar argues, racism isn’t a consequence of capitalism, it is a fundamental component in the construction and continuation of the capitalism that white radical leftist struggles have positioned themselves against, ‘that is why we are committed to a break not from the regime of ’78, but with the regime that has been perpetuated since 1492, in order to destroy the racism embedded in Spain’⁷ (Aatar 2017).

In this regard, and albeit in its very initial stages, as the description of the morning at the safe house suggests, Etxaldeko Emakumeak is pioneering what these alliances look like in rural areas, however the messy reality of the work highlights some important risks and opportunities which social reproduction theory helps visibilize. In part this can be tricky political terrain because it requires a careful formulation of political priorities in a context where on one hand mainstream PNV driven politics have tended to lean heavily on a class-blind, culture-focused assimilationist identitarian framing of politics (see chapter 5); and on the other hand the politics of the *izquierda abertzale* have sought class-based solidarity as a colonized people, leaving aside the colonial white privileges Basques have benefitted from historically and today. As Mbe Bee Nchama, representative of the Spanish Panafrican Movement suggests, ‘It is very important to assume the antagonism between the Left and Anti-Racist politics, which does not make alliance impossible, provided that we recognize each other’⁸ (Bee Nchama 2020). Gandarias Goikoetxea describes this work in her space of collective action as a long process, requiring deep listening. And as the work of the *Parti des Indigenes de la Republique* (PIR) in France has emphasized, alliances with parts of the white left that have also experienced cultural discrimination like the Basques are important, but ‘the condition for a collaboration is its decolonial commitment’ (Schoebel 2020, 38).

The Union of street vendors, primarily of Senegalese descent explains this condition for alliance with Catalan leftist independentists in a way that also resonates with the Basque reality. They express their support for the right of self-determination, and share the criticisms of the Spanish state expressed by many leftist Basques, however in order for their full political engagement in an alliance with Catalonian leftists they launch a respectful

call for collective reproduction based on shared class consciousness over and above identitarian claims.

We are attentive to everything that is going on and although no one has asked us or invited us to be part of this historic moment, we migrants have invited ourselves; we are used to people thinking that we don't know anything, that we are not aware, that we are not citizens, that we don't vote, that we don't follow politics, but they are wrong. We have been fighting and resisting this colonial and racist Spanish government for years. It's been many decades and centuries since we've been the target of a war of extermination, yet here we are still alive. We are clear that as migrants we are here to stay, even though they try to threaten, imprison and kill us, because if anyone should leave this country it is the elite, the corrupt and the politicians⁹ (Sindicato Popular de Vendedores Ambulantes y Espacio del Inmigrante 2017).

In a way, building on the internationalist politics of the *izquierda abertzale*, Khiari's concept of decolonial internationalism offers a way forward: 'From now on, internationalism conceived as a relationship beyond borders must be replaced by domestic internationalism whose racial issue, in all its dimensions, is fundamental. In short, decolonial internationalism'¹⁰ (Khiari 2017).

7.3.3 What is the point of class struggle?

According to Bhattacharya's expanded notion of the working class, class-based alliances in the Basque rural context therefore clearly encompass the types of coalitions that *Etxaldeko Emakumeak* began articulating from its origins between agroecological farmers and feminism. Agroecofeminist farmers are attempting to reconnect farming and social reproduction as an anchor for efforts towards systemic transformation, and in so doing work on the ground by pushing the boundaries, as Bhattacharya and Barca do conceptually, of the revolutionary subject. As the previous section indicates, this framing of expanded class struggle also urges farmers to confront race relations and the complex relationship between Basque identity and coloniality, which represents perhaps more difficult political terrain, but initiatives like the safe house and the more recent activities of *Etxaldeko Emakumeak* represent important steps in this direction. Taken together these alliances attempt to build out the web of connection between capitalism's others.

The strategic power of narrowly defined waged workers in the ‘real economy’ is of course their ability to strike, thus withholding their labour and disrupting capital accumulation. Extending this same logic to social reproduction raises questions about the ability and utility of the strike in this sphere of often unwaged and life sustaining work. Though the women’s strike on May 8, 2018 saw a coordinated explosion of women setting down their brooms, aprons and cooking utensils and filling the streets across the Spanish state. The symbolic power of watching how much of daily life came to a screeching halt that day was certainly impactful, however the question remains, who is most impacted by such a strike? Is it a strategic way to disrupt capitalism? Or is it more likely to injure the individuals who depend on care for their survival before it even makes a dent in the apparatus that keeps capital accumulation ploughing forward? How do we apply social reproduction theory to political strategy?¹¹

I argue that such questions are misleading, obscuring from view a perhaps obvious and simple fact. Social reproduction ensures that life is sustained. Making sure that happens *is* strategic, full stop. Beyond the conceptual exercise of framing their work as care, Etxaldeko Emakumeak literally makes sure that other revolutionary subjects have food from a source that increases their autonomy vis a vis capital. It was no coincidence that the Durango congress made sure to source the food for the meals from agroecofeminist farmers, and the link with the World March of Women was forged initially by providing food and seeds to spaces of feminist organizing. Seen in this light, the way Etxaldeko Emakumeak politicized a shared breakfast at the safe house illustrates how this type of activity anchors expanded class struggle and practices collectivising social reproductive activities like eating and caring for children.

Having farmers on the side of transformative politics means that the subsistence logic of the peasant household can be amplified to the network level, fortifying what Iles and Wit call relational sovereignty among groups differently but synergistically positioned in relation to capital. This broad conception of working class helps see how for some withholding of one’s labour power is the strategy for contributing to social

transformation. For others however, the strategic power is less about the ability to disrupt, and more about the ability to keep us alive, whether by feeding, caring or helping to regenerate natural and rural environments. In a sense, agroecofeminist politics invite us to project the kind of ecocodependent community relations embedded in CSA networks onto how we think about class struggle. Decreasing dependence on capital, and increasing dependence on nature and political alliance. Indeed, ‘movements may find that they can only become sovereigns by networking with others to support their respective sovereignties’ (Iles and Wit 2015, 492). If the disruptive politics is not coordinated with the regenerative politics, neither is able to maximize its strategic potential. And ultimately what is the point of disruptive class struggle if it is not deployed in the service of life and regeneration?

Notes

- ¹ Original text: ‘Debemos recordar que los territorios vascos quedaron subordinados a las instituciones españolas y francesas en el proceso de expansión de ambos estados y su evolución hacia formas imperiales de dominio, uno de los principales escenarios de despliegue de la modernidad colonial. La colonialidad nos afecta, por tanto, doblemente, por nuestra complicada relación histórica con los sujetos colonizadores. Euskal Herria ha sido forzada a una subordinación que emparenta con esa colonialidad pero a la vez nos hemos beneficiado de las relaciones coloniales de poder. Esto nos obliga a una reflexión rigurosa y valiente, que nos invite a mirarnos como pueblo subalternizado y a la vez implicado en dinámicas de rapiña y subalternización de otros pueblos.’
- ² Original text: ‘la lógica de la violencia colonial también se extrapoló a la península durante la revolución de Asturias y la guerra civil: la violencia desbocada de las tropas de Marruecos (legionarios y regulares) contra una parte de los propios habitantes de la metrópoli representó una inversión momentánea de las jerarquías coloniales y puso a prueba los posicionamientos anticolonialistas y antirracistas. Debe tenerse en cuenta que las lógicas racialistas eran también de consumo interno: la frenología, por ejemplo, servía para estudiar a los pueblos primitivos, pero también se aplicaba a las clases peligrosas locales, incluidas determinadas categorías políticas.’
- ³ Original text: ‘Algunas veces escuchamos a compañeras feministas enunciar que encarnan la interseccionalidad porque sufren opresión por razones de género, clase y condición nacional-lingüística. Pero muchas veces lo hacen desde la universidad, con papeles, o desde su estatus de clase media blanca occidental. Y

esas frases nos revuelven el estómago a las mujeres inmigrantes y racializadas, sobre todo cuando nos preguntamos si la mujer que les limpia el despacho o la casa habla euskera. Ya sabemos que las únicas ofertas laborales de la web de Lanbide que no lo exigen son las de limpiadora o cuidadora interna.’

- ⁴ Original text: ‘El movimiento feminista lleva en sus entrañas la búsqueda de un sujeto político inclusivo y plural. Y en Euskal Herria hemos demostrado, aunque a veces duela, que somos capaces de reconocernos y de cuestionarnos para seguir creciendo. Por eso, nosotras, las que llegamos a estas tierras expulsadas de nuestros territorios por un sistema que ha construido la abundancia del Norte a costa de la explotación de Sur, nosotras que aún no hemos asimilado que nuestras bisabuelas fueran esclavas, nosotras que tenemos muchas compañeras que viven hoy prácticamente como lo hicieron ellas, en un cuartucho en la casa del patrón, tendemos la mano para seguir construyendo un feminismo decolonial en esta tierra.’
- ⁵ Original text: ‘Las trabajadoras acuden solas a los domicilios y, por lo general, las casas no están habilitadas para tratar con personas con dependencia, lo que conlleva ciertos riesgos para la salud física de las empleadas como dolencias provocadas por mover mucho peso. Este tipo de dolencias no están reconocidas como enfermedades laborales ni tampoco enfermedades psicológicas como la ansiedad o la depresión. Los accidentes entre los servicios también están descartados en ese servicio. Cuestión que es preocupante en el caso de mujeres que se trasladan entre zonas rurales como son los caseríos de Bizkaia, donde las posibilidades de sufrir un accidente en el traslado son mayores.’
- ⁶ Original text: ‘Las políticas migratorias son consecuencia de la estructura colonial del sistema mundo. Los primeros territorios sobre los que ejerce poder es sobre cuerpos desposeídos y condenados, decidiendo quién debe ser admitida para vivir subalternizada, inferiorizada y a quién se deja morir en las fronteras fabricadas.’
- ⁷ Original text: ‘por eso apostamos por una ruptura no con el régimen del 78 sino con el régimen que se perpetúa desde 1492 que rompería con el racismo inherente en España.’
- ⁸ Original text: ‘Es muy importante asumir el antagonismo entre la Izquierda y el Antirracismo Político, que no imposibilita la alianza, siempre que nos reconozcamos mutuamente.’
- ⁹ Original text: ‘Estamos atentos a todo lo que está pasando y aunque nadie nos ha preguntado o invitado a ser parte de este momento histórico los migrantes nos hemos autoinvitado; ya estamos acostumbrados a que se piense que no sabemos nada, que no nos enteramos, que no somos ciudadanos, que no votamos, que no sabemos de política, pero están equivocados, llevamos años luchando y resistiendo ante este gobierno español colonial y racista. Hace muchas décadas y siglos que nos declararon su guerra de exterminio y aquí

estamos y seguimos vivos. Tenemos claro que como migrantes aquí nos quedamos, por más que nos amenacen, encarcelen o maten, porque si alguien sobra en este país son los de arriba, los corruptos, los gobernantes.’

¹⁰ Original text: ‘En adelante hay que sustituir un internacionalismo concebido como una relación más allá de las fronteras por un internacionalismo doméstico cuya cuestión racial, en todas sus dimensiones, sería fundamental. En una palabra, un internacionalismo decolonial.’

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TÍTULO DE LA TESIS: The Challenge of Generational Renewal in Post Industrial Farming Contexts: Regimes of Agrarian Social Reproduction in the Basque Country

DOCTORANDA: Zoe Brendt

INFORME RAZONADO DE LA DIRECTORA DE LA TESIS

(se hará mención a la evolución y desarrollo de la tesis, así como a trabajos y publicaciones derivados de la misma).

Esta tesis doctoral se ha desarrollado en cotutela entre la UCO y el International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University, Rotterdam (ISS-EUR). Se trata de una tesis que analiza la problemática del relevo generacional desde una perspectiva multidimensional, aplicada al caso del País Vasco y con una perspectiva feminista muy innovadora.

La tesis ha dado lugar a diversas comunicaciones en Congresos, así como seminarios invitados, y a la publicación de un artículo en la revista Environment and Planning.

La tesis supone un análisis muy innovador y fundamentado sobre las causas del problema del relevo generacional, desde una perspectiva multidimensional y multiescalar. Asimismo, presenta una componente histórica de cómo han ido evolucionando los factores que explican esta cuestión. Y, como elemento innovador, introduce la cuestión de la interseccionalidad en el análisis.

Los aprendizajes y resultados de la tesis suponen un aporte fundamental para guiar, tanto políticas públicas, como estrategias desde los movimientos sociales, con el fin de recuperar un mundo rural vivo desde las bases de la inclusividad.

Un elemento importante del desarrollo de la tesis ha sido el carácter internacional de la formación de la doctoranda, por las estancias realizadas y por el convenio de cotutela bajo el que se ha desarrollado.

Por todo ello, se autoriza la presentación de la tesis doctoral.

Córdoba, 25 de julio de 2022

Firma de la directora

Fdo.: M.^a Carmen Cuéllar Padilla



TÍTULO DE LA TESIS:

DOCTORANDO/A:

INFORME RAZONADO DEL TUTOR

(Ratificando el informe favorable del director. Sólo cuando el director no pertenezca a la Universidad de Córdoba).

This doctoral thesis has been developed jointly between the UCO and the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University, Rotterdam (ISS-EUR). It is a thesis that analyzes the problem of generational change from a perspective multidimensional, applied to the case of the Basque Country and with a very innovative.

The thesis has given rise to several presentations and guest lectures. Additionally, it has led to the publication of an article in the journal Environment and Planning. The thesis is based on a very innovative and well-founded analysis of the causes of problem of generational renewal, from a social reproductive lens. It also presents a historical component to explain this issue. And, importantly it introduces the issue of intersectionality into the analysis.

The conclusions and results of the thesis represent a fundamental contribution to guide, both public policies and social movement strategies in order to contribute to a more thriving and inclusive rural world.

For all these reasons, the presentation of the doctoral thesis is authorized.

Por todo ello, se autoriza la presentación de la tesis doctoral.

La Haya, 27 de julio de 2022

Firma del responsable de línea de investigación

Fdo.: _____