



# The end of postsocialism (as we knew it): Diverse economies and the East

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## Abstract

This paper brings together two streams of literature which rarely enter into conversation: diverse economies scholarship and critical readings of postsocialism. Mobilising the cases of food self-provisioning (FSP) in Czechia and agricultural cooperatives in Kyrgyzstan as an empirical basis for our reflections, we pursue a two-fold aim. Firstly, we call for attention to the postsocialist East as fertile ground for the study of diverse economies. Secondly, we offer a postcapitalist reading of postsocialism as embedded and emancipated theorising, arguing that diverse economies thinking can support novel representations of this geopolitical area and open space to appreciate economic diversity on the ground.

## Keywords

diverse economies, postsocialism, ontological reframing, East, transition economies, postcapitalism, postcolonialism

## I Introduction

The untenability of an economy oriented on growth and accumulation is gradually becoming recognised not only in radical academic circles (Harvey, 2014; Kallis, 2011) but also by national and transnational governance actors (European Environment Agency, 2021; Krueger et al., 2018). Economic alternatives are discussed with increased realism, not least in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic (Büscher et al., 2021). Diverse economies thinking, initiated by Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006), provides a powerful tool in these reflections, enabling scholars and activists to identify and promote a range of diverse economic practices operating beyond the structures

of capitalism (Gibson-Graham, 2008; Roelvink et al., 2015). The postcapitalist shift in economic thought advanced by diverse economies scholars reframes and reclaims the economy – in the form of plural community economies – as a set of practices which sustain life instead of a system driven by the pursuit of continuous growth (Gibson-Graham and Roelvink, 2010; Schmid and Smith, 2021). The notion of

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community economies re-embeds economic practices in social and ecological contexts and recognises the fundamental interdependencies between human communities and non-human life (Miller and Gibson-Graham, 2019; Turker and Murphy, 2021).

In this time of growing relevance of critical economic thought, a curious blind spot remains in the geography of research on diverse economies. Apart from a handful of exceptions (Cima, 2020; Ichinkhorloo, 2018; Johanisova et al., 2020; North, 2020; Pavlovskaya, 2004, 2013; Smith, 2020; Smith and Stenning, 2006; Sovová, 2020), scholars identifying with this approach have shied away from an area which experienced one of the most turbulent transformations in modern history: the former Eastern Bloc or Second World – that is, the former Soviet Union (FSU) and parts of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). What we refer to as the (postsocialist) East<sup>1</sup> faced socioeconomic reforms of unprecedented scale throughout the last century, representing an exceptional context for the study of social change that is however largely neglected by diverse economies scholars.

Considering the central role of economic systems in the transformations experienced by the East, the disconnection between research on postsocialism and scholarship on diverse economies seems like a missed opportunity. We are convinced that the East can offer fertile lessons for the project of documenting economic diversity and expanding postcapitalist imaginaries. What is more, if scholarship on diverse economies seeks to encompass a wide array of economic experiences, the neglect of a whole region constitutes an epistemological as well as an ethical problem. In line with recent calls to attend to the geopolitics of knowledge production in the diverse economies research (Naylor and Thayer 2022) and the broader postcolonial pleas for ‘worlding’ social theory (Robinson and Roy, 2016; Roy, 2009), this paper conceives the East as a generative ground for theorisation (Jehlička, 2021; Trubina et al., 2020). At the same time, we believe that diverse economies thinking can provide a novel and much-needed perspective for embedded and emancipated theorising of a geopolitical area that is

tragically reasserting its global relevance.<sup>2</sup> With this two-fold aim, we seek to advance a cross-fertilisation between diverse economies research and critical readings of postsocialism.<sup>3</sup>

By the latter, we refer to a growing body of literature that argues against the dominant representation of postsocialism as a condition of permanent underdevelopment and transition (Jehlička, 2021; Kuus, 2004; Moore, 2001). In its initial use in the early 1990s, the term ‘postsocialism’ was (also) used to mark a purposeful departure from socialism (Müller, 2019), in a similar fashion to the way in which postcapitalism can be understood as a renunciation of capitalism (Gibson-Graham and Dombroski, 2020). It signified the uncertain and open-ended future not only of former socialist countries but of the entire world (Chari and Verdery, 2009). However, three decades after the end of the Soviet Union, its use has shifted and solidified: instead of denoting an ongoing and uneven process of transformation, ‘postsocialism’ designates a specific geographical area that supposedly presents an essential, static difference in relation to Western Europe (Kuus, 2004; Pickles, 2010; Tuvikene, 2016). This understanding obscures the great diversity of the East in its past and present. It suggests an essentialist and determinist reading of social transformation after the Cold War and thereby contributes to the stigmatisation of the region (Müller, 2019). It also suspends postsocialist subjects in a historical limbo; having seen an entire generation growing up without the immediate experience of state socialism, they remain defined by their past (Müller, 2019; Sakwa, 1999) and seemingly unable to ‘catch up’.

The discontent with the term postsocialism has inspired an ongoing debate on its pertinence (Humphrey, 2002a; Verdery, 2002), including calls for the abandonment of the term (Gentile, 2018; Müller, 2019). Müller (2018: 10) suggests substituting it with the notion of Global East(s) as an ‘ontological and epistemological category’ indicating the liminality of regions that do not fit in either the Global North or the Global South – the FSU, ex-socialist CEE countries, as well as parts of South America and Asia (Müller and Trubina, 2020). Others have proposed a deterritorialised

understanding of postsocialism. In urban studies, [Tuvikene \(2016\)](#) uses the term as a descriptor of specific aspects of urbanism that, while related to the historical experience of state socialism, can be applied geographically outside the fixed boundaries of ex-socialist countries. Another deterritorialised perspective sees postsocialism as an analytical device to make sense of a global condition that – similarly to the way postcolonialism affects not only ex-colonies – concerns not only countries that experienced state socialism ([Chari and Verdery, 2009](#); [Koobak et al., 2021](#); [Sakwa, 1999](#)). Here, postsocialism refers to the re-articulation of (local and global) relations and the possibilities for progressive politics after the end of the Cold War ([Fraser, 1996](#); [Pickles and Smith, 1998](#)).

Our take on this debate is consciously ambivalent. On the one hand, we recognise postsocialism as a relevant analytical concept which can provide a powerful and emancipatory perspective on social realities worldwide, adding to the pluralisation of knowledge production initiated by postcolonial theory (see Section VI). On the other hand, we are concerned that such an understanding risks obscuring the specificities of localised experiences of state socialism and their continuing influence in particular geographical and social contexts. We thus align with [Stenning and Hörschelmann's \(2008\)](#) re-signification of postsocialism as plural, hybrid, radically open-ended and non-teleological. We mobilise the conceptual framework of diverse economies to acknowledge localised experiences while simultaneously avoiding ‘the twin dangers of essentialism (...) and determinism’ ([Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008](#): 323). Rather than suggesting that postsocialism can or should end, we call for an end of postsocialism *as we knew it*<sup>4</sup>: namely, a postsocialism theorised from what we argue is a capitalocentric perspective. Instead, we propose a postcapitalist approach which advances a more context-sensitive and empowering theorisation, as has long been striven for by critical scholars (e.g. [King, 2000](#); [Koobak et al., 2021](#); [Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008](#); see Section V).

Our theoretical claims are based on empirical research conducted separately by the authors in Czechia and Kyrgyzstan on, respectively, food self-

provisioning (FSP) in urban gardens and agricultural cooperatives.<sup>5</sup> The vastly different contexts and historical trajectories of the two countries enable us to illustrate the rich diversity of the East and to identify commonalities in the representations of postsocialist societies without assuming similarities of the lived realities. Both cases exemplify local practices which contribute to community livelihoods, but which become invisible due to ongoing stigmatisation of postsocialist subjects. In the next section, we use the representations of our case studies in academic literature and public discourse to first unpack dominant narratives of postsocialism, and then review existing critical readings, pointing to what we consider persisting problematic tendencies. Section III presents the conceptual tools of diverse economies that we find useful for a re-reading of postsocialism. We then illustrate, in Section IV, how we used these tools to rethink the local economies of our case studies. We conclude by detailing our proposal for a postcapitalist reading of postsocialism (Section V) and by discussing what diverse economies can learn from an engagement with the East (Section VI).

## II Current Representations of Postsocialism

### *I Postsocialism as transition towards capitalism*

Reform programmes in so-called ‘transition economies’ in the 1990s embraced a neoliberal paradigm prompting privatisation, market deregulation and state roll-back from production and welfare provision ([Pickles and Smith, 1998](#)). Structural reforms aimed at transforming economic relations but also at reframing subjects as democratic citizens, capitalist entrepreneurs and market consumers ([Alexander, 2004](#); [Humphrey, 2002b](#)). In Kyrgyzstan’s agricultural sector, reforms dismantled Soviet farm collectives, lifted state control on markets and privatised the means of production, including land ([Mogilevskii et al., 2017](#)). Collective institutions, such as service and marketing cooperatives ([Deininger, 1995](#); [Mathijs and Swinnen, 1998](#)) or water users’ associations ([Bichsel, 2009](#)), became part of rural

development programmes as means to support private agricultural production and to forge a new class of entrepreneurial subjects (Bichsel et al., 2010). In Czechia's retail sector, deregulation and diversification of food venues and products contributed to the reframing of subjects as consumers within liberalised markets. Consumer choice symbolised a transition to a Western normality (Smith and Jehlička, 2007), prompting an expansion of foreign retail chains in the country (Spilková, 2018).

These reforms rested on the assumption of neo-classical economics that changing macro-economic incentives would automatically steer individual behaviour in the desired direction and allow a smooth transition from socialism to capitalism (Bunce, 1999). However, the difficulties in accomplishing the transition reinforced institutionalist and evolutionary perspectives (Crawford and Lijphart, 1997). These recognised the embeddedness of economic relations within social, cultural and political structures by drawing attention to institutions as routinised systems of rules that evolve according to economic incentives as well as to social norms and cultural values (Cleaver, 2007). They opposed the linear teleology of neoliberal transition by emphasising the role of contextual factors in shaping diverse and open-ended paths of transformation (Grabher and Stark, 1997; Stark, 1996). The notion of path dependence suggested that local histories and reform decisions produce a field of more or less probable trajectories, limiting the range of possible outcomes without determining a unique inescapable destiny (Stark, 1992).

Subsequent work in both the institutionalist and evolutionary veins has tended to crystallise around the less sophisticated argument that habits and institutions inherited from the socialist past obstruct the accomplishment of a full transition to capitalism (Beyer and Wielgoths, 2001; Spies et al., in review). This simplified understanding of path dependence permeated widely across social science: socialist legacies became a common explanation for the difficulties encountered in the establishment of, for instance, collective marketing initiatives (Tisenkopfs et al., 2011) or community-based resource management (Sehring, 2009). These arguments also appear in accounts of the agricultural cooperatives

promoted in Kyrgyzstan by development agencies after 1991 (Lerman and Sedik, 2017). The prevailing view frames them as unsuccessful and explains this with a 'psychological resistance to cooperation' (Gardner and Lerman, 2006: 5) that farmers presumably inherited from their experience with Soviet cooperatives. This narrative is often reproduced by local actors, who present farmers as passive and lazy as a consequence of the (social and employment) security formerly provided by the Soviet state (Cima, 2021). By emphasising the influence of past (socialist) experiences on contemporary development trajectories, such analyses reinforce a determinist understanding of history. The focus on inherited rules perpetuates an essentialist notion of socialism as a uniform experience that dictates shared futures for the societies in question after its end (Anceschi and Schwab, 2021).

As a consequence, local practices framed (rightly or not) as legacies of socialism are dismissed as obstacles to modern development. Interpretations of FSP in CEE as a 'coping strategy' are a case in point. The tradition of FSP pre-dates state socialism and its cultural and social dimensions are well documented (Smith and Stenning, 2006; Trenouth and Tisenkopfs, 2015). Nonetheless, studies approaching this practice from the vantage point of post-socialist transition emphasise its economic function in overcoming the shortage of goods in planned economies while minimising other social functions (Acheson, 2008; Alber and Kohler, 2008). The discursive link with (post)socialism in turn depicts FSP as a residual practice which is to be gradually replaced by market-based food provisioning.

Although studies framing the socialist past as an obstacle to modernisation were promptly refined by more critical scholarship (see next section), they permeated public discourse, dictating that Eastern societies get rid of socialist legacies as quickly as possible (Burawoy and Verdery, 1999). At the same time, the essentialisation of the socialist past as a determining experience contributed to its reification and persistence. In this way, entire societies are trapped in a symbolic in-betweenness that is associated with failure and backwardness (Cima, 2021). In other words, the simultaneous stigmatisation *and* fixation of the socialist past

reaffirm the (post)socialist subject as other (Kay et al., 2012; Kuus, 2004), in spite of the convergence of Eastern politico-economic regimes to Western Europe (Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008).

These readings are not only epistemologically problematic; they also produce real-life consequences. In Kyrgyzstan, the idea that farmers' attitudes are a hindrance to the successful establishment of cooperatives contributed to the halting of governmental and donors' programmes for their promotion (Guadagni and Fileccia, 2009). Not only was material support such as privileged credit conditions or facilitated access to agricultural inputs reduced, but the revision of laws and regulations on cooperatives was left unaccomplished, resulting in a confusing and partially contradictory legal framework (Beishenaly and Namazova, 2012). In Czechia, the framing of FSP as an outdated coping strategy threatens FSP practised on publicly owned land in cities (Daněk et al., 2022). The flawed yet persistent association of urban allotments with the former regime is used as an argument for their abolition and the rezoning of the areas for development, which, in contrast, is seen as a tool of capitalist modernisation (Samec and Gibas, 2021). At the same time, newer forms of community gardening explicitly inspired by Western examples (Richtr, 2013) receive more policy support and media attention.

## 2 Postsocialism as open-ended transformation

While institutionalist and evolutionary approaches contributed to destabilising the narrow modernisation discourse of a linear postsocialist transition, this critique was most articulated by social geographers and anthropologists (Hann, 2002; Pickles and Smith, 1998). In contrast to models of individual response to incentives and to deterministic understandings of path dependence, ethnographically grounded analyses explored the variegated continuities and discontinuities of (post)socialism (Ghodsee, 2011; Hörschelmann and Stenning, 2008). They revealed the complex ways in which individuals rearticulate structural reforms and political change in the everyday (Humphrey, 1998; Verdery, 2003) through strategies of 'domestication' applied to postsocialist

reforms and, earlier, to socialist rules (Creed, 1998; Stenning et al., 2010). These critical readings advocated for an even more undetermined account of change, expanding on the open-ended, yet still limited and directional, trajectories of path dependence to radical uncertainty and surprise (Burawoy and Verdery, 1999; Humphrey, 2002b).

The numerous attempts to counter the homogenising gaze on postsocialism through the investigation of local difference made an essential contribution to recognising (post)socialism as a geographically and socially diverse experience (Creed, 1998; Pavlovskaya, 2004; Verdery, 1996). They also sharpened the theorisation of how economic transformation is embedded in multi-scalar cultural, social and political relations, challenging the formalist approach of mainstream economics in favour of a more substantivist perspective (North, 2016). Early on, these critiques began the process of investigation and re-signification of postsocialism that we aim to further with this paper.

Our contribution tackles three tendencies within this body of work that remain problematic in our view. Firstly, as already noted by Stenning and Hörschelmann (2008), even the most granular analyses have not been able to fully overcome a residual, even if implicit, form of historical determinism, since they tend to look for historical continuities to explain the peculiarities of postsocialist societies. Secondly, the continuities identified often concern features with negative connotations, such as corruption, patrimonialism, informality, black economy, malfunctioning markets or inefficient economies (Alexievich, 2017; Ghodsee, 2011; Gritzas and Kavoulakos, 2016).

Thirdly, although these critical readings embed the (post)socialist transformation in locally diverse cultural and social contexts, they often prefer the economic sphere as the entry point for analysis and hierarchically position economic institutions and motivations as guiding forces subsuming other dimensions of social life (Jehlička, 2021; Thelen, 2011). This is not surprising, since in the Cold War division of intellectual labour (Chari and Verdery, 2009), academic analysis of socialism was dominated by mainstream economics and political science. Both disciplines' sympathy for

modernisation theory profoundly influenced the work of social geographers and anthropologists and led to an otherwise uncommon adoption of economic concepts within these disciplines (Jehlička, 2021; Thelen, 2011). Concepts such as ‘economies of favours’ (Ledeneva, 1998) and ‘economies of shortage’ (Kornai, 1992) are still widely used to characterise (pre-)socialist regimes and to emphasise their continuities in the present (Howard, 2003; Verdery, 2003). The explanatory power attributed to economic factors is also no surprise, since economic arrangements are commonly considered the main point of difference between socialist and capitalist regimes (Pavlovskaya, 2004).

The excessive attention paid to persistent commonalities that can be ascribed to the (pre-)socialist past, the emphasis on their problematic aspects and the focus on the economic dimension as their determining factor all contribute to maintaining a framing of (post)socialism as a condition of deficiency. This also prevents the emergence of alternative perspectives. Increasing numbers of studies have recently sought to reverse this trend and to offer more hopeful visions. These studies are inspired by, among others, the postcolonial proposition to de-centre the Western dominance in knowledge production and to further more inclusive theories based on a variety of global realities (e.g. Roy, 2009; Spivak, 1988; for its application on postsocialism, see Jehlička, 2021; Müller and Trubina, 2020; Stenning and Horschelmann, 2008).

As for what specifically concerns our empirical focus, attempts to revalue (post)socialist experiences are multiplying in the geography and sociology of food and agriculture. They enrich debates over sustainable food systems with insights on small-holder farming (Visser et al., 2015), foraging (Jehlička et al., 2020) and a plethora of informal and semi-formal food provisioning networks (Aistara, 2015) that coexist with newly imported models of alternative food provisioning (Goszczyński et al., 2019; Smith and Jehlička, 2007; Trenouth and Tisenkopfs, 2015). These studies emphasise the cultural and social dimension of agricultural and food provisioning practices as well as other motivations that coexist with purely economic ones, such as generosity, solidarity, pleasure or environmental

concerns (Jehlička and Daněk, 2017; Sovová et al., 2021). Multiple dimensions and motivations, including spiritual (Samakov and Berkes, 2017) and affective (Velicu, 2015) ones, are also increasingly being acknowledged in relation to the collective management of forests (Vasile, 2019) or water (Féaux De la Croix, 2021) and to environmental conservation (Toncheva et al., 2021).

These more-than-economic dimensions are no longer seen as additions obscuring the real (economic) nature of the practices in question. Rather, these studies show examples of practices that can foster human and environmental wellbeing within or beyond markets, without a presumed marketisation trajectory. They open up space for identifying pre-figurations of sustainable, regenerative and convivial economies that have emerged in the diverse landscape of the East. With this paper, we continue the project of re-reading the East by offering a more hopeful view on postsocialism from a postcapitalist perspective. In the next section, we detail this perspective, drawing on Gibson-Graham’s notion of diverse economies and the rich scholarship that has emerged from it more recently (Gibson-Graham and Dombroski, 2020).

### III Diverse Economies for a Re-reading of Postsocialism

The reviewed readings of postsocialism differ in their degree of acceptance of the modernisation discourse. The narrow notion of postsocialist transition views market capitalism as a precondition for democracy, positioning it as the only alternative (Fisher, 2009; Gibson-Graham, 1996). Open-ended accounts of transformation feature (implicit) hierarchies which privilege economic motivations and formalised transactions over informal practices that entail more-than-economic meanings. We argue that all these interpretations share some level of capitalocentrism.

Following Gibson-Graham (1996, 2008), we understand capitalocentrism as a perspective that positions the economy as the key defining factor of social systems and that measures the economy against, or even equates it with, a single standard: capitalism. In Gibson-Graham’s famous iceberg metaphor (Community Economies Collective,

2001), capitalocentric narratives privilege the tip of the iceberg, that is, practices that are market-based, monetised and formalised. Hidden underwater remains the larger part of the economy, constituted by subsistence, care and reproductive work highlighted by feminist economists (Cameron and Gibson-Graham, 2003), as well as by noncapitalist forms of labour, enterprise, transaction, finance and ownership (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013).

The diverse economies project counters capitalocentrism through a double methodological move, condensed in the idea of 'reading for difference rather than dominance' (Gibson-Graham, 2008: 11). Firstly, it destabilises the singularity of the capitalist economy, or the tip of the iceberg, by showing that it is not self-contained but complemented and even sustained by the diverse economies underwater. Secondly, it expands the economic imaginary by drawing attention to the diversity of practices that regenerate the conditions for (more-than-)human survival. Following a logic of multiplication (Van Dooren and Despret, 2018), it thus decentres capitalism as the ordering principle of economic activity and instead pays attention to the variegated ways in which resources can be shared, managed and generated within diverse economies.

Reading for economic difference requires a commitment to weak theory (Gibson-Graham, 2014). Capitalism, modernisation or postsocialist transition are examples of strong theories, or 'powerful discourses that organise events into understandable and seemingly predictable trajectories' (Gibson-Graham, 2014: 148). Through their assumptions about the dominant forces that order the world, strong theories limit the range of interpretations and tend to confirm what we already (assume we) know (Brown et al., 2011; Sedgwick, 2003). In contrast, weak theory, coupled with thick description (Geertz, 1973), invites a more open-ended stance that, while humbler in its conclusions and predictions, allows scholars to account for the complexities of life. It constitutes a 'reparative motive that welcomes surprise, tolerates coexistence and cares for the new, providing a welcoming environment for the objects of our thought' (Gibson-Graham, 2008: 7). This in turn opens up space for interpretations that do not follow

predictable trajectories but have the potential to change the status quo.

Building on poststructuralist and feminist theory, Gibson-Graham's postcapitalism collapses the distinction between ontology and epistemology and acknowledges that the way in which we interpret lived realities has the power to shape those realities (Brown et al., 2011; Gibson-Graham, 2008). Even anti-capitalist scholarship and activism might unwillingly reproduce capitalocentric imaginaries by portraying capitalism as society's main driving force (Gibson-Graham, 1996). Marxism itself presents socialism as capitalism's other, as its alternative, evolving from it (Bhattacharya, 2019).

The discursive confirmation of the dominance of capitalism works performatively as a self-fulfilling prophecy, rendering other types of economic relations unimaginable (De Sousa Santos, 2004). Acknowledging this performativity opens up the possibility of creating new imaginaries and realities by changing the way we frame them. Research is thus revealed as a political project, one that has the power to decentre the discursive dominance of capitalism in a way similar to how feminist, queer and postcolonial theories challenge patriarchal, heteronormative, Western epistemologies (Healy et al., 2020). Sharing similar performative intentions as well as ethical coordinates, these approaches seek to expand the realm of possibilities for ethical and sustainable ways of living together (Healy et al., 2020; Fickey and Hanrahan, 2014).

Such a move, we believe, can be highly useful in the pursuit of a more hopeful and future-oriented reading of the East. Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist approach can contribute to sharpening the postcolonial critique of development as a linear, evolutionary progress towards Western capitalist modernity (De Sousa Santos, 2004; Escobar, 1995) by revealing the narrow conceptualisation of the economy that underpins the notion of modernity (Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2005; Liu et al., 2020). Refusing to take this conceptualisation for granted allows us to counter the narrative of postsocialist transition as a shift between two distinct and uniform economic systems. Furthermore, the commitment of scholars of diverse economies to identifying and fostering heterogeneous and site-specific economic

difference makes this approach promising for the study of the transforming economies populating the East.

This potential is best articulated in Pavlovskaya's (2004, 2013, 2015, 2020) research on post-Soviet Russia and Stenning and Smith's (Smith and Stenning 2006; Stenning et al., 2010) work on postsocialist Poland and Slovakia. Both contributed to the critical readings of postsocialism outlined in Section II.2 by applying diverse economies' tools. Pavlovskaya insists that both state socialism and capitalism are heterogeneous and always incomplete arrangements constituted by a plethora of diverse practices – for instance, diverse forms of transactions (Pavlovskaya, 2004) and property practices (Pavlovskaya, 2013). She highlights their complex transformations at different scales and in different spaces, within what she calls 'other transitions' (Pavlovskaya, 2004). Smith and Stenning (2006) disrupt the capitalocentric interpretations of transition by spelling out the multiple economic practices – from migrants' remittances to care work and black economies – that sustain communities in the 'nested geographies' of postsocialism.

Few other diverse economies scholars have ventured into postsocialist spaces. Economic alternatives that are promoted as seeds of postcapitalist futures, even if presented as universal, are often implicitly located in Western contexts (Jehlička and Daněk, 2017). Some of the rare mentions of diverse economies in the East present signs of a persisting implicit essentialisation of this region. For instance, Gritzis and Kavoulakos (2016) structure their review of types of diverse economies into four categories: while two (alternative food networks and alternative exchange networks) are defined by their content and are supposedly non-contextual, the third (post-socialist informal economies) is presented as essentially different and defined by its geopolitical context.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, while the few existing accounts of diverse economies in the East contribute to revealing the complexity of local economic practices, they tend to emphasise their negative aspects. For instance, Smith and Stenning's (2006) inventory mentions grey and black economies while omitting other less controversial alternatives such as the pre-socialist

cooperative tradition in CEE (Johanisova et al., 2020). This and later work (Stenning et al., 2010) recognises the importance of self-provisioning and care work, but it mostly discusses the power relations in these practices, which reproduce inequalities based particularly on age and gender. In contrast, similar realities elsewhere have been theorised in a more affirmative manner as family tradition, inter-generational learning and care (Belk, 2010), or the positive integration of children into domestic work (White and Williams, 2016).

We are well aware that other-than-capitalist economies can be as exploitative as capitalism (Fickey and Hanrahan, 2014; Gibson-Graham, 1996). Indeed, the focus of diverse economies scholars on 'possibility' and 'difference' has been criticised for failing to address real-life issues of power (Fickey and Hanrahan, 2014; Naylor and Thayer, 2022). Striking a balance between critical and hopeful stances or, as Naylor and Thayer (2022) put it, paranoia and possibility, is an ongoing challenge of the diverse economies scholarship, which we argue also features a geopolitical asymmetry. On the one hand, over-celebratory accounts of diverse economies could learn from the more critical approach common in studies of postsocialism. On the other hand, the attention paid to the problematic aspects of the diverse economies of the East seems disproportionate, and – despite the efforts to avoid strong theories – appears to echo the essentialism and stigmatisation so deeply rooted in the representations of (post)socialism. The re-reading of our case studies is not intended to romanticise the practices we describe. On the contrary, as we detail in the next section and further at the end of Section V, making them visible as legitimate components of local economies allows us to identify both their positive and negative aspects, so that the latter can be addressed and the former can be nurtured to become part of postcapitalist futures.

## IV Re-reading Eastern Economies

Taking diverse economies as a theoretical vantage point in our engagements with, respectively, Czech gardeners and Kyrgyzstani farmers entailed putting on hold the strong theories and previous scholarly



accounts that framed their practices as failed, residual and path-dependent. Instead, we engaged in thick description<sup>7</sup> and ethnographically mapped these practices, exploring their roles in local economies. We aimed thus to repopulate our imaginary with the multiple and plural practices that make up community economies and that remain invisible from a capitalocentric perspective.

The study in Czechia challenged the characterisation of the local foodscape as dominated by supermarkets with slowly proliferating trends towards conscious consumerism (Spilková, 2018). The research revealed instead the relevance and variety of gardening and food sharing as provisioning practices. In the households that were studied, home-grown fruit and vegetables covered on average one third of the total consumption, and other non-market sources (gifts, exchanges and foraging) another 10th. Twenty percent of participants' garden harvest was shared with extended families, friends, co-workers and random acquaintances. These informal networks harboured varying degrees of reciprocity and multiple social meanings, commonly centred around conviviality, care and appreciation of home-grown food (Sovová et al., 2021; see also Jehlička and Daněk, 2017).

The empirical observations in Czechia also countered the narrative of FSP as a coping strategy: enjoyment of the practice and appreciation of home-grown food were mentioned as the main motivations for gardening, in line with the results of national surveys (Sovová et al., 2021). Far from being a residual practice, FSP was revealed as a significant source of food which also influences broader food provisioning strategies. Interviews with gardeners unveiled a hierarchy of food sources opposite to the marketisation trajectory assumed in the discourse of postsocialist transition. Taste, freshness, healthiness and transparent origin were qualities attributed to home-grown food, while food from supermarkets was referred to as 'chemical', 'artificial' and 'tasteless', and used as a last resort.

The study in Kyrgyzstan destabilised the narrative of failed cooperatives in the country. While it confirmed that most cooperatives did not carry out collective activities in line with their statutes, it identified numerous collective practices that

intertwined with formal cooperatives in complex ways. Rather than constituting a 'failure', the frame and meaning of the cooperatives were creatively renegotiated by farmers and adapted to their needs. For instance, some members used the cooperative's legal status to access agricultural inputs or loans, resources which they then shared with other villagers. Farmers also organised shared use of scarce agriculture machinery and routinely exchanged labour during the most demanding field activities. Bartering or gifting of agricultural inputs and produce was common practice: in some households, more than three quarters of the harvest was consumed at home or shared. Farming thus constituted not only an important source of revenue but also the primary source of food and of exchange goods that are crucial for nurturing extended social networks.

The significance and variety of cooperative practices observed counter the characterisation of Kyrgyzstani farmers as incapable of organising collectively and unwilling to engage in collective activities. Instead, the solid networks of mutual support showed that farmers collaborated effectively and on a long-term basis to ensure the continuity of agricultural production (Sabates-Wheeler, 2007). Also in this case, the prescribed trajectory towards marketisation and formalisation (Steenberg, 2016) fails to capture the relevance of cooperation practices that stretch across both market and non-market, formalised and informal relations and that are held together by socially established expectations of reciprocity (Botoeva, 2015).

The re-reading of our case studies from a postcapitalist perspective allowed us to reveal the existence of consolidated, long-lasting practices that sustain life. FSP in Czech cities (re)connects people to their sources of sustenance and broadens their provisioning options and economic subjectivities beyond the role of consumers (see also Kosnik, 2018). As a form of localised food production, FSP delivers environmental benefits sought by more conscious, yet often market-based, alternative food networks (Sovová et al., 2021; Vávra et al., 2018). Social networks of cooperation in Kyrgyzstani villages represent a central resource for adaptive agricultural production, thereby lowering villagers' dependence on markets and

monetary resources. They also form a reliable and effective safety net in the event of need, such as sickness, an investment gone wrong or a particularly bad harvest. Finally, in both the Czech and Kyrgyzstani cases, the collective and food-sharing activities foster social ties, thereby strengthening the sense of community belonging and resilience (Jehlička et al., 2019).

The practices we observed certainly present problematic aspects too. The personal networks that are so important for rural livelihoods in Kyrgyzstan are built on rigid hierarchies that favour local elites and the older, male members. This leaves little room for change, innovation, but also self-determination for many, especially young women. While FSP is a widespread practice across income groups and educational levels in Czechia (Jehlička and Daněk, 2017), the division of food provisioning labour in relation to gender and age (see Stenning et al., 2010) and the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in collective gardening spaces merit further research. It is also important not to assume that collective or convivial practices are unproblematic from an environmental perspective. For instance, agrochemicals are still used by many Czech gardeners and Kyrgyzstani farmers, although in both cases an interest in natural growing methods can be observed (Ruppert et al., 2020; Sovová et al., 2021). We hope that future scholarship and practice can shed more light on these aspects, while remaining open to the relevance of diverse Eastern economies for post-capitalist imaginaries.

## V For a Postcapitalist Postsocialism

We made it clear in section II that many readings of postsocialism tend to centre on the economic sphere and to conceive of human behaviour as guided principally by economic motivations. FSP is understood as an optimisation strategy within imperfect markets (Jehlička, 2021); cooperatives seek to establish cooperation through systems of economic incentives (Baerlein et al., 2015). The deeper engagement with our case studies shows that ‘more-than-economic’ (Wynne-Jones et al., 2017) motivations and values shape everyday relations and decisions, as also demonstrated by many other

studies in other fields (e.g. North, 2016; Ocaklı and Niewöhner, 2022; Vasile, 2019). The representation of postsocialist subjects as deficient results from the neglect and/or devaluing of the plurality of motivations and behaviours that deviate from those predicted by economic models.

A postcapitalist perspective allows us to further sharpen this critique. If postsocialist subjects are framed as ‘failed’, it is because the definition of ‘success’ is based on a capitalocentric understanding of the economy (Cima, 2021). In Kyrgyzstan, the model of ‘successful’ cooperatives requires that farmers act as entrepreneurs, resorting to the market for their transactions. The model does not consider either farmers’ informal, non-monetised practices or the consumption of agricultural produce within households and reciprocity-based networks. In Czechia, FSP is negatively evaluated against the ‘successful’ model of food provisioning, which assumes commercialised sources to be the most efficient means of delivering food to individualised consumer subjects. This starting point is largely maintained even in the realm of ‘food alternatives’: campaigns on sustainable food provisioning promote certified organic food or short supply chains, but rarely challenge the logic of market transaction and consumer subjectivity (De Hoop and Jehlička, 2017; Sovová et al., 2021).

A postcapitalist approach opens up the possibility of reframing success in terms of sustaining local livelihoods and caring for more-than-human communities. Such reframing aligns with Gibson-Graham’s (2006) mission of reclaiming the economy beyond its capitalocentric definition. In the Czech case, we noticed a tendency in gardeners’ narratives to downplay the productive function of FSP and its financial benefits, while highlighting instead its leisure component and limited monetary pay-off. We interpret these accounts as rhetorical strategies gardeners apply to distance themselves from the representation of FSP as a coping strategy. A more appreciative, non-capitalocentric perspective allows the economic dimension of FSP to be acknowledged without stigmatisation. In a similar vein, seeing informal cooperation as a legitimate way of supporting rural livelihoods in Kyrgyzstan brings a

sense of empowerment and opens up new avenues for the flourishing of community economies.

The openness to unimagined futures, central to the diverse economies project, is rare in representations of postsocialism. A postcapitalist perspective contributes towards balancing this bias not only through a refusal of capitalocentrism but also through its commitment to an anti-essentialist logic of multiplication (Gibson-Graham, 1996; Van Dooren and Despret, 2018). If there is no unitary capitalism or socialism, but only capitalisms and socialisms as always partial realisations of contingent negotiations, there cannot be a postsocialist transition (Pavlovskaya, 2004, 2013). Instead, diverse practices and subjectivities can be identified in the present as parts of postcapitalist prefigurations worth nurturing (Zanoni et al., 2017). In this sense, a postcapitalist perspective allows us to overcome the last remains of historical determinism we identified in Section II, by radically refusing to identify path-dependent trajectories but instead actively opening them up to the unexplored.

This brings us back to the debate on the relevance of the term 'postsocialism', in which we have sought a balance between stereotyping and sensitivity to shared experiences. While we sympathise with the re-signification endeavours which view postsocialism (or rather, 'Eastness') as a global condition of geopolitical liminality (Müller, 2018; Müller and Trubina, 2020), we are concerned that deterritorialisation only shifts the problem of essentialisation to another spatial scale.<sup>8</sup> We believe that social theory should not neglect the specificities of regions that experienced state socialism. Therefore, a form of critically informed strategic essentialism, which temporarily suspends difference and compiles heterogenous marginalised groups under a common banner for the sake of their emancipation (Müller, 2018; Spivak, 1988), seems necessary. Our proposition to read postsocialism from a postcapitalist perspective, we believe, enables this endeavour while avoiding the most perilous aspects of essentialism.

One of these aspects is the (explicit or implicit) assumption of a uniform experience of state socialism across the East and, consequently, shared path dependencies. Our comparison of two countries

as different as Czechia and Kyrgyzstan under the label of postsocialism might conceal a similar supposition. Being aware of this risk, the main commonality we want to highlight is not an essential characteristic, but rather a condition of marginalisation, a shared position(ality) within global hierarchies of valuation and knowledge production (Jehlička, 2021; Kandiyoti, 2002; Trubina et al., 2020). In addition, our empirical work could suggest that both cases share what are considered the typical features of postsocialist societies (Theesfeld, 2019): predominance of informal arrangements over formalised institutions or importance of exchanges within kinship and friendship networks. While we acknowledge these commonalities, we refuse to read them as determined by, and determining, path-dependent trajectories. Instead, through the proposed strategic essentialism and the consideration of a shared experience of repeated large-scale political and economic reforms across postsocialist countries, we invite researchers to interrogate the complex ways in which these features articulate with the peculiarities of each community.<sup>9</sup>

Deconstructing and, especially, abandoning the capitalocentric lens through which we are used to making sense of the world is not an easy task. Capitalocentric biases connected to the ideals of Western modernity are deeply rooted in our own and our research partners' subjectivities.<sup>10</sup> As Liu et al. (2020: 445) note, '[just as] the ravages of colonialism are the greatest in people's minds [...], so too does modernisation and development colonise our minds in the postcolonial world'. The decolonisation of minds through the cultivation of more hopeful subjects is key for an emancipatory postcapitalist project (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Liu et al., 2020). The formulation of postcapitalist representations of postsocialism is not only a necessary correction of the epistemological biases of current ones; it is also part of a political project that, by drawing attention to practices that already contribute to living well on our planet, nurtures more hopeful subjects.

We thus invite scholars to embrace a postcapitalist perspective on postsocialism, committing to a decidedly anti-essentialist re-signification of the practices we observe in the East. In our case studies, acknowledging and revaluing more-than-capitalist

practices of FSP and agricultural cooperation is the first step towards amplifying their benefits and tackling their problematic aspects. In concrete terms, this entails at least reconsidering policies that disadvantage them: stopping the eviction of food growers from public land in Czech cities and adjusting legislation on cooperatives and their taxation in Kyrgyzstan to a more supportive model. At most, this would allow, for instance, the integration of FSP as a supported land use in urban planning, or the development of tools that can facilitate both existing cooperatives and more fluid forms of cooperation. Amplifying FSP in Czechia (and beyond) can foster an alternative to globalised, environmentally unsustainable and socially alienating modes of food provision. Strengthening diverse forms of cooperation among small farmers in Kyrgyzstan (and beyond) can curb land concentration among large producers and agribusiness and thus protect farmers' autonomy and self-determination. The epistemological move proposed by this paper can thus enable real political outcomes which we believe are highly relevant in the context of the pressing unsustainability of the global economy.

## VI Learning from the East for a Postcapitalist Future

While a diverse economies reading enables a more open-ended theorisation of the economic realities of the East, we argue that insights from the East can similarly enrich the theorisation of postcapitalist futures. From an empirical perspective, we see the need to fill the knowledge gap on the economic diversity thriving in the East. If the diverse economies project aims to pluralise the notion of the economy, disrupt the image of Western capitalism as an evolutionary necessity and make visible the multiple ways in which people sustain their communities, it needs to take a position of epistemological inclusivity, and consider the widest possible range of examples. We align with Naylor and Thayer's (2022) recent appeal to diverse economies scholars to consider the uneven geopolitics of knowledge production and move beyond the theory's own geohistorical provenance. More geopolitically diverse empirical insights create grounds for more

nuanced theorising. Without intending to essentialise the 'Eastern experience', we believe that this context offers fruitful ground for the study of several topics, some of which we list in this section.

Firstly, we see the East as a relevant space to explore the fluid relations of community economies to the state. This question is seldom investigated in the diverse economies scholarship, which often takes an interest in grassroots initiatives operating on the margins of formal governance structures.<sup>11</sup> Both our cases point to the ambiguous role the state can have in shaping community economies – be it through spatial planning in the case of FSP (Samec and Gibas, 2021), or development projects and support structures (or lack thereof) in the case of agricultural cooperatives (Baerlein et al., 2015). While cooperation and self-provisioning often thrive in the grey spaces unseen by the institutions, they remain under the influence of the broader political-economic landscapes. For instance, Mincyte et al. (2020) argue that practices of agricultural care in Lithuania are sustained through a relatively generous welfare system, particularly parental leave and pensions which allow specific population groups the time to engage in non-market provisioning. Further investigation of such dynamics is needed to nuance the stereotypical notions of informality and mistrust in overbearing governmental institutions as features of postsocialism.

Secondly, the East offers relevant insights into the dynamics of coexistence of diverse economic forms, which – while present globally and across history – have been made explicit through the experience of the so-called transformation. While the dominant narratives of postsocialism present this transformation as a straightforward evolutionary process, people on the ground continuously negotiate the spectrum between market and non-market economies, while taking into account more-than-economic motivations such as personal values and social norms (North, 2016; Pavlovskaya, 2004, 2013; Rekhviashvili and Sgibnev, 2020; Smith and Stenning, 2006). In the search for alternatives to neoliberalism, the experience of state socialism should not be romanticised, but neither should it be dismissed (North, 2020). Furthermore, understanding how practices of self-provisioning, sharing and

informal cooperation persist in the face of sweeping neoliberalisation can provide hopeful lessons for postcapitalist futures (Pavlovskaya, 2013).

Thirdly, taking the geopolitical inequalities into account, our encounters with the East teach us to pay attention to the provenance of postcapitalist economic models. The increasing interest, in the Global North, in alternatives to neoliberalism, reflected in recent debates about alternative exchange networks (Gritzas and Kavoulakos, 2016), alternative food networks (Rosol, 2020), the sharing economy (Holmes, 2018) or novel forms of commoning (Morrow, 2019), should not obscure the plethora of traditional noncapitalist economies operating around the globe. Even the divulgence of ‘good practices’ is at risk of reproducing the unequal knowledge production dynamics, as we have seen in the case of service cooperatives in Kyrgyzstan or West-inspired community gardens in Czechia. The propagation of postcapitalist visions should support, not displace, endogenous economic diversity. Diverse economies scholarship can play a role in recognising and, if needed, revaluing local economic diversity, while paying attention to the interaction between ‘imported’ and endogenous practices.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, diverse economic landscapes of the East offer an opportunity to theorise the production of (economic) subjectivities. The East reveals processes of multiple otherings. For instance, Kay et al. (2012) noted that postsocialist ruralities are affected by a ‘double othering’ mechanism: they simultaneously represent the (post)socialist Other and the rural Other, in contrast to the West and the Urban, respectively. Mutually reinforcing layers of exclusion, shaped by dichotomies such as tradition-modernity, nature-culture and indeed noncapitalism-capitalism, can be traced in the case of Czech FSP (Jehlička, 2021; Sovová and Krylová, 2019). In the case of Kyrgyzstani farmers, the multiple exclusions are further reinforced by the fact that the Central Asian region remains marginalised even within the scholarship on postsocialism, which is mostly centred on CEE (Kandiyoti, 2002).

As already recognised by critical scholars of postsocialism, postcolonial theory offers useful tools to pinpoint the mechanisms through which the (post) socialist subject is othered: as determined by

socialism as a uniform past experience (Kay et al., 2012; Tlostanova, 2019), as lagging (Chari and Verdery, 2009), fixed in a present of backwardness and unable to evolve towards a modern future (Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008), and as a perennial learner and recipient (Jehlička, 2021; Müller, 2018). The multi-layered relations of dominance and oppression in the East, however, present both similarities to and differences from the more commonly theorised relation between former colonies and former colonial powers (Escobar, 1995; Said, 1979). The East is excluded from the ‘theory-generating axis’ connecting former metropolises and their colonies (Jehlička, 2021: 11). It ‘falls between the cracks’ (Müller, 2018) of the North-South binary, forming ‘neither mainstream nor part of the critique’ (Tuvikene, 2016: 7). This in-between position presents an interesting terrain for deepening and nuancing the postcolonial theorisation of domestication and othering but also of emancipation and resistance – processes which are strongly shaped by distinctive political imaginaries of the East (Gagyi and Slačálek, 2021).

In this sense, theorisation from and through postsocialism can illuminate social processes well beyond the borders of ex-socialist countries. In its global meaning, postsocialism can represent ‘a critical standpoint on the continuing social and spatial effects of Cold War power and knowledge’ worldwide, in a similar way to how ‘postcoloniality had become a critical perspective on the colonial present’ (Chari and Verdery, 2009: 11; see also Koobak et al., 2021). In what could be termed a postsocialist postcapitalism, the perspective of the East offers postcapitalist scholars and activists an additional analytical tool to destabilise and rethink concepts such as market, democracy, development and political struggles (Hörschelmann and Stenning, 2008; Müller and Trubina, 2020).

To mention just one example of such destabilisation– or ‘queering’ (Tudor and Rexhepi, 2021) – the complex temporalities of the East add to postcolonial scholarship on the ecology of temporalities (De Sousa Santos, 2004) and its questioning of the linear time of Western modernisation. While postsocialist countries are seemingly stuck in the past, their trajectories confuse the developmentalist temporality even further,

since their point of departure is not the ‘backwardness’ assigned to the Global South but another type of modernity – the Soviet modernity (Tlostanova, 2019). As (Groys, 2008: 154–155, quoted in Tlostanova, 2019: 172) puts it, ‘the post-communist subject travels [their] route not from the past to the future, but from the future to the past; from the end of history [...] back to historical time’. Our cases reveal the performative power of developmentalist temporal framings, which cast certain practices as backward and residual based on their association with the socialist past. Although such narratives emphasise socioeconomic turmoil and historical ruptures (Müller, 2019), the community economies described in this paper reveal continuities whose future relevance can be amplified by a postcapitalist reframing (St Martin et al., 2015). This supports an understanding of postcapitalism not as something chronologically following the (seemingly inevitable) experience of capitalism, but as something always already co-existing. Such an understanding reinforces a shift from utopia to ‘nowtopia’ (Smith, 2020) – the empowering recognition that the seeds of better worlds are already here.

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### Notes

1. Within the scope of this paper, we use the term ‘East’ to refer to the FSU and those countries of CEE that experienced Soviet-style state socialism in the last century. This term is inspired by Müller’s (2018) proposition of the ‘Global East’, which attempts to herald an emancipatory connotation similar to that in the original idea of the ‘Global South’. In contrast to Müller, we maintain a territorial understanding of the East. In line with recent critical scholarship (Jehlička, 2021; Müller and Trubina, 2020), we use the term ‘East’ in a strategic essentialist move (Spivak, 1988), with an awareness of its Eurocentrism and the risk of homogenisation of the countries it designates – issues we discuss further in this paper.
2. While we were reviewing this manuscript in spring 2022, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine reminded us in the most atrocious manner of the continuing and often troubling significance of postsocialist histories and their territorialised dimension.
3. Both areas of study owe much to postcolonial theory and contribute, each in its own way, to decolonising imaginaries of modernity, development, capitalism and transformation. This renders the lack of dialogue between them even more surprising – and our ambition to foster this dialogue even more relevant. A more meticulous exploration of the relationship between diverse economies, critical readings of postsocialism and postcolonial theory would require a larger format than the present paper. We refer to Healy et al. (2020), Liu et al. (2020) and Naylor and Thayer (2022) for a discussion of the potential synergies between diverse economies and postcolonial theory and to Koobak et al. (2021) and Kumar and Narkowicz (2021) for reflections on the connecting points between postsocialism and postcolonialism.

4. This phrase is a nod to [Gibson-Graham's \(1996\)](#) seminal book 'The end of capitalism (as we knew it)' in which the authors propose a deconstruction of capitalocentric representations of the economy in order to open up the imagination for community economies. Following in their conceptual footsteps, we seek to decentre capitalocentric representations of post-socialism to create space for more hopeful theorising.
5. Lucie Sovová wrote her doctoral dissertation at Masaryk University and Wageningen University on FSP in Czechia, collecting qualitative and quantitative data among urban food growers during 2017. Ottavia Cima wrote her doctoral dissertation at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, on agricultural practices in Kyrgyzstan, having conducted ethnographic fieldwork between 2014 and 2017.
6. For the sake of completeness, the fourth type is the Spanish Mondragon cooperative, presented as a stand-alone case.
7. The scope of this paper only allows us to share our findings as very brief illustrations of our theoretical points. For more empirical details, see [Cima \(2020\)](#) and [Sovová \(2020\)](#).
8. [Müller's \(2018\)](#) endeavour to deterritorialise the East into the Global East tends, once applied to concrete examples, to reduce 'Eastness' to features (or people) related to specific territories (such as the design of a Soviet glassware or Russian-speaking diasporas in North America and Western Europe). [Müller and Trubina's \(2020\)](#) praiseworthy attempt to recentre the 'Global Easts' within global urbanism ends up providing a list of separate, territorialised, 'Easts'. These range 'from the Middle East to the European East, once known as the Eastern bloc, to the Asian East' ([Müller and Trubina, 2020: 628](#)), passing through the 'postsocialist East' ([Trubina et al., 2020](#)) and hopefully not forgetting Central Asia and South Caucasus despite the lack of 'Eastness' in their labels.
9. Both of us provided detailed insights on these articulations in the respective case studies elsewhere ([Cima, 2020](#); [Sovová, 2020](#)).
10. For instance, the pervasive presence of development programmes in Kyrgyzstan strongly shaped local subjectivities. Interviewed farmers reproduced the narrative of failed cooperatives, dismissing their own practices within the frame of a developmentalist teleology. Such self-devaluation was much less marked among gardeners

in urban Czechia, where international development programmes have been less present.

11. As exceptions, see [Morrow's \(2019\)](#) discussion on institutionalisation, commons and risk governance and [Eskelinen et al.'s \(2020\)](#) contextualisation of community economies in the Nordic welfare states. In the Eastern context, [Pavlovskaya's \(2013\)](#) work offers a unique insight into the privatisation and persistent diversity of property practices in Russia.
12. See [Fendrychová and Jehlička \(2018\)](#) for an example of such an endeavour.

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