Seeds of hope, seeds of resistance: Cultivating food
justice and community economies through urban
agriculture

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Dedicated to my mother, my grandmother, and all my female lineage.
To the women who were, are, and will be, this is for you.

“Critical’ does not mean destructive, but only willing to examine what we sometimes presuppose in our way of thinking, and that gets in the way of making a more livable world’ (Butler, 2012).

Abstract

Grounded on the experiences and discourses of volunteers and members of Southern Garden located in the Southern suburbs of Wellington and Wesley Community Action in Cannons Creek, I explore the work these community projects to contest the current corporate agrifood system using ethnographic and participatory approaches. This thesis is an attempt to show the often unrecognised and underestimated revolutionary work community activist are doing through UA. This research seeks to advance the discussions around food justice, and community economies in UA in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand since the literature around these topics is limited. The main aim of this thesis is to open spaces for these conversations to happen both in academia and among grassroots groups in order to push forward for a more just system.

Using food sovereignty, food justice, community economies and the right to the city as my theoretical framework, I highlight the power of everyday politics to change and challenge the status quo without being complacent and uncritical about the limitations and contradictions of such work. Both projects open spaces of possibility and freedom where we can all build better futures to come. I have tried in this thesis to make justice to their work and to help move forward in search of more radical spaces of transformation.

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List of Acronyms

CRT - Critical Race Theory

GHG - Greenhouse gases

PAR - Participatory Action Research

PCOMS - Partners for Change Outcome Management System

PO - Participant observation

RPH - Regional Public Health

UA - Urban agriculture

WCC - Wellington City Council

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CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction

1.1. Contextualising this research

According to social and environmental activists and scholars (Joy, 2017, Lappé, 2010, Lobell & Burke, 2010), the industrial agrifood system is one of the major greenhouse gas (GHG) generators and one of the main drivers of the deforestation and biodiversity loss. To resist and contest this prevailing food model, sustainable food movements have emerged around the world claiming a more just food system. Within these efforts, urban agriculture (UA) has become one of the most commonly used strategies by grassroots communities to respond to the environmental crisis and to address food insecurity issues. There is an extended body of literature that explores the multiple social and environmental benefits of UA. Such benefits include its role in the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change (Lwasa et al., 2014; Game & Primus, 2015), social cohesion, community resilience (Bellows et al., 2003; Alaimo et al., 2008), mental health and wellbeing (Wakefield et al., 2007; Freeman et al., 2012), beautification, educational opportunities, job creation and ecosystem services (Clinton et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2015), among others. However, critical scholarship exploring UA roles and contradictions for social and environmental justice is less extensive, especially in Aotearoa New Zealand. Although UA can be a place of resistance and possibility, it can also become a place of exclusion and marginalisation, as I will explore in this thesis.

Most of the critical literature around UA comes from the United States, and there is astonishingly limited scholarship available in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. This research aims to expand the spaces to rethink the contributions and tensions posed by UA in Aotearoa New Zealand, building on this international literature. Critical food scholars have questioned the role of UA in advancing food sovereignty and justice. Academics such as Alkon (2012), McClintock (2018a) and Reynolds & Cohen (2016) have explored the how UA can foster the marginalisation and exclusion

of communities of colour and from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Similarly, McClintock (2014) has examined how UA is both a site where alternatives to neoliberalism are enacted and where they are reproduced. He and others (McClintock, 2018a; McClintock et al., 2018) also warn us about the potential of UA to become a driver of gentrification. In this thesis, I will explore these issues, bringing together debates around food sovereignty, food justice, community economies and right to the city. Acknowledging the need to support bottom-up UA initiatives, I follow Reynolds and Cohen's (2016) call to foster uncomfortable discussions in order to strengthen the contributions of UA towards food justice and systemic and local change.

1.2. Situating this research in theory

Urban agriculture is defined as 'the growing, processing, and distribution of food and other products through intensive plant cultivation and animal husbandry in and around cities' (Brown et al., 2003, p. 3). It includes small-intensive urban farms, rooftop gardens, schoolyard greenhouses, public space food production, guerrilla gardening, allotments, balcony and other initiatives (Nordahl, 2009; Redwood, 2012). One of the main functions of UA is to produce healthy and nutrient-dense food, especially in places with food insecurity issues or where access to fresh food is limited.

Food security is defined by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) (2001) as 'a situation that exists when all people at all times have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life' (p. 58). Food security is usually subdivided into three main components: food availability, food access, and food utilisation. The first one refers to the physical presence of food; the second one to having the means to acquire food through production or purchase; and the third one indicates the appropriate nutritional content of the food and the ability of the body to use it effectively (Lobell & Burke, 2010).

However, beyond being a useful concept for food politics, food security is also a paradigm that has been promoted by the neoliberal agenda. This paradigm focuses on increasing the production of food without considering other factors such as the ways in which food is produced or the living conditions of those producing it. Representing a top-down approach, food security has become recurrent rhetoric used by governments and international institutions to modify agricultural and market policies. Food security was used to explain the causes of hunger and its own solutions. To this end, the problem of hunger was framed in Malthusian terms, which means that overpopulation was cited as the leading cause of global hunger, followed by ineffective trade and poverty (McMichael, 2001; Jarosz, 2009b). These conceptualisations of food security put the countries of the 'Global South' as the main target of paternalistic agricultural policies that aimed to 'help them' to overcome hunger (Pachón, 2013).

As a response to this framework that focuses on individual choices and ignores systemic and structural issues, food sovereignty surged as an alternative to the neoliberal food system. Peasants, small-scale farmers, farmworkers, and Indigenous communities came together in the transnational agrarian movement called La Vía Campesina, arguing that the environmental crisis was the result of decades of destructive economic policies based on neoliberal, industrial and capital-intensive models of agriculture. Wittman et al. (2010) define food sovereignty as 'the right of nations and peoples to control their own food systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures, and environments, [this movement] has emerged as a critical alternative to the dominant neoliberal model for agriculture and trade' (p. 2). Following this definition, it is evident that food sovereignty goes beyond food security in the sense that instead of focusing on the availability, accessibility, and utilisation of food; it reflects on how, where, under which conditions and by whom food is being produced.

Recent scholarship has started to draw connections between UA in the 'Global North' and food sovereignty and food justice movements (Agyeman & McEntee,

2014; Heynen et al., 2012; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; Sbicca, 2012). These two movements are notably similar as both were born as a response to food insecurity and economic pressures that prevent people from accessing healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. Both movements recognise that the lack of access to 'good' food is both a cause and a symptom of systemic inequalities. Their main difference is that while food sovereignty has its roots in the 'Global South' and their fights are framed in that context; food justice was born in the 'Global North' and therefore is focused on industrialised contexts.

Like the food sovereignty movement, food justice also represents an alternative to the food security paradigm that argues that to face global food insecurity, we need to increase food production. This techno-corporate approach has been criticised by several scholars, activists, farmers, and NGOs who have shown evidence that proves that sustainable farming practices have greater social and environmental outcomes and they can also feed the 'growing population', especially if they get financial and policy support from the state (Carpenter, 2013; De Schutter, 2011b; Lappé, 2010). Food justice puts particular emphasis, on the one hand, on the need to understand the structural causes of food insecurity, and on the other, on the need to work within a social justice framework to adequately address this issue. Food justice can be understood as 'communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat [food that is] fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate, and grown locally with care for the wellbeing of the land, workers, and animals' (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011, p.5). Within this framework, the food justice movement aims for a more democratic process that distributes power more equitably, so that people can meet their food needs through equal access and opportunity to participate in these processes without been exploited (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011, Horst et al., 2017; Mclvor & Hale, 2015). In this sense, food justice engages with racial, economic, class, gender, and political inequalities associated with food systems and tries to create alternatives to contest such inequalities and create a more just food system that benefits both the community and the environment.

Food justice has also been a term used extensively by food activist groups in communities of colour to contest the mostly white, middle-class food movements that despite being well-intended are recreating and reinforcing colonial and paternalistic practices that foster further class and race inequalities and injustices (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011, McClintock, 2018a; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). Similarly, several scholars have recently explored how UA projects are becoming places of gentrification and displacement (McClintock, 2018b; Sbicca, 2019; Tolleson, 2013; Tornaghi, 2017; Meenar & Hoover 2012). However, as McClintock (2014, 2018a, 2018b) argues, UA can be a way to both reclaim the city and to contest the global neoliberal food system, and at the same time be a place where neoliberal and exclusionary dynamics are reproduced.

As a theory, food justice resonates and can work with other frameworks such as the right to the city, community economies, and environmental and social movements (Wekerle, 2004). All these frameworks have in common their aim for justice and equity, and are revolutionary and subversive in nature. Community economies theorists question neoliberal premises that we often take for granted like the assumption that humans are rational, individualistic, competitive and are always looking for the maximisation of utility (Coraggio, 2007, 2011). They also raise awareness about the danger of reinforcing capitalocentric discourses that position capitalism as the prominent and hegemonic economic system while dismissing any other type of economies and limit the horizons of action and transformation (Gibson-Graham, 1996; Laville, 2004)

Analysing community-based UA projects through the lens of community economies theory allows us to explore the hybridised nature of such initiatives, that in most cases aim to contest the industrial food system. UA projects are usually based on the principles of solidarity, sharing and volunteering. Community economy framework has both an economic and a political agenda. It aims to resist capitalist hegemony by reinforcing the already ongoing projects and initiatives that do not fully follow capitalist logic. From small non-monetary exchanges to social movements and cooperatives, there is a large variety of hybrid economies that co-exist with more

purely capitalist forms of economy. These hybridised economies are community-based, and they are founded on principles of solidarity, cooperation, and democracy, which are opposed to the principles of competition, profit maximisation, and exploitation that are the ethos of neoliberalism (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 2016; Gibson-Graham et al., 2017).

As many scholars have argued, the main problem of hegemonic capitalist discourse is that it puts ordinary people as passive consumers and victims of the systems, denies that they have any kind of agency, and ultimately silences and makes invisible other economic practices (Escobar, 2011; Cameron et al., 2013). This is especially relevant following Foucault's idea of the link between power and knowledge. According to him, knowledge is produced as an effect of power, and at the same time, power operates through knowledge (Braun & Wainwright, 2001). In this case, power relies on the hands of global neoliberal corporations, which through hegemonic discourses (that end up affecting peoples' realities) can decide what is relevant (formal economy) and what is powerless and not significant (informal and community-based economies). This dynamic guarantees that such corporations stay in power and keep reinforcing these power imbalances.

The primary purpose of community economies theory is to bring to light the multiplicity and diversity of economic practices that operate within the apparently hegemonic capitalist system (Gibson-Graham, 2005). Instead of looking at capitalism as the only way to do politics and economics, and as the best way, we can look at it as only a small part of how economies work and bring our attention to the traditional and widespread set of practices and relationships based on solidarity, sharing, borrowing, volunteering, and collective work (Gibson-Graham, 2005). These practices are not necessarily non-capitalist; in most cases they are hybrids where people exercise their agency and envision different worlds of possibilities, a more just and equal world. As the right to the city theory emphasises, these hybridised economic practices are not generally embodied within a revolutionary social movement. In fact, these practices are carried out by ordinary people with their daily

actions and narratives that contest the system and create spaces of freedom and possibility (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Shillington, 2013).

The 'right to the city' was first proposed by Lefebvre in 1968, who described it as the right of social production of urban space (Lefebvre, 1996). According to him, the right to the city was the creation of an oeuvre (a monument) that reflects the struggles of the ordinary citizen in their daily life (Butler, 2012, Lefebvre, 1996). Following Lefebvre's ideas, Harvey (2008) argues that the right to the city is 'far more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart's desire' (p. 23). According to him, this is a collective right, because changing the city requires collective action over the processes of urbanisation. Harvey emphasises on the negative consequences of neoliberalism on society and social justice. He states that the 'freer the market, the greater the inequalities and the greater the monopoly of power' (Harvey, 2003, p. 941).

The right to the city theory invites us all (ordinary people) to exercise our citizenship, which means our right to be part of the decision-making process and choose the kind of city we want to live in. In order to do so, we do not need to do anything extraordinary. As both Lefebvre and Harvey convey, it is in small and mundane everyday actions that one creates urban spaces. These daily actions are revolutionary in nature and show us that the lineaments of a new system are already latently present within the current one. Following Gibson-Graham (1996), when talking about the end of capitalism they argue that 'capitalist practice (exploitation of wage labour, distribution of surplus labour) cannot appear as the concrete embodiment of an abstract capitalist essence. It has no invariant 'inside' but is constituted by its continually changing and contradictory 'outsides'' (pp. 15-16). This idea resonates with Derrida's (1993) concept of *hauntology*, which refers to how all things that appear as 'being natural' are haunted, and potentially disrupted, by that which has been excluded. What has been excluded is also known as the 'constitutive outside', which on one side is a central component of the meaning and on the other side, has all the potential to destabilise the existing norms. This thesis is about those

‘constitutive outsides’ and the way they are changing the world with their everyday mundane actions. The projects I worked with are challenging the system and changing it from the inside. They are opening spaces of freedom and possibility.

1.3. Research questions

This research seeks to advance the discussions around food justice, and community economies in UA in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, since the literature around these topics is limited. The main aim of this thesis is to open spaces for these conversations to happen both in academia and among grassroots groups in order to push forward for a more just system. This thesis focuses in-depth on the experience of two particular UA initiatives in the Wellington region: Wesley Community Action in Cannons Creek, Porirua, and Southern Garden located in the Southern suburbs. Using ethnographic and participatory approaches, I explore the following questions:

- How are Southern Garden and Wesley expanding the horizons of possibility and transformation through UA?
- How do Southern Garden and Wesley engage with food security, food sovereignty and food justice issues?
- How do Southern Garden and Wesley deal with issues of inclusion and diversity?
- How does Southern Garden negotiate the neoliberal tensions and contradictions of UA?

1.4. Thesis outline

This thesis consists of eight chapters. After this introductory chapter, I explore the methodological approaches I used, the ways I (re)negotiated my positionality in the fieldwork and the ethical dilemmas I encountered and the ways I dealt with them in Chapter 2. I use Chapter 3 to introduce the case studies, and I provide a brief analysis of their work through a framework that explores the phases of urban food

production. In Chapter 4, I use food security and food sovereignty paradigms to examine the work of both case studies. Then, in Chapter 5, I dive into the critical food scholarship debates around UA, and I use Critical Race Theory (CRT) to evaluate the work of the projects that I worked with. I also engage in conversations about the potential of UA to become a place of resistance and the relevance of food justice work in UA. Finally, Chapter 6 presents the debates around the risk of UA becoming a gentrifying force and the neoliberal tensions that are inherent to urban farming. In this section, I also explore the community economies and right to the city literature in order to show how UA is a hybridised economy that is challenging and changing the status quo through the ordinary everyday actions of the people who practice it. Chapter 8 provides the conclusions for this thesis, bringing together its key findings and areas for further research.

CHAPTER 2

2. Methodology

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the journey of conducting this research. I spent countless hours reading methodology books from the library in order to find those epistemologies, methodologies, and methods that aligned the most with my own worldviews and values, and that were also appropriated for my research. This was a truly messy and ever-changing process. I wanted to have a plan and a clear idea of how I was going to do my fieldwork and carry on my research, but as most researchers know, the plan usually changes over time, and one needs to show one's best chameleonic skills of reflection and adaptation to change.

This chapter will inform the rationale behind the methodological approaches I chose and the decisions I made throughout my research. I quickly learnt that constructing knowledge is a truly challenging work that requires making hard decisions, sometimes confronting and context-based. I will also explore my positionality and how that informed and influenced my research. Finally, I will discuss some ethical considerations that arose through the research process and the way I dealt with them.

2.2. Epistemology

According to Crotty (1998), an epistemology is 'a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know' (p. 8). In the early stages of my research, I soon found out that positivist and post-positivist epistemologies did not align with my own way of seeing and understanding the world. From my point of view, there is no objective truth, and therefore there is not objective research, I believe that as our values and experiences shape the way we make sense of the world, they also

influence the way we present knowledge. The aim of this thesis was never to find an ultimate truth but instead to listen to the voices of the people who were part of this research and try to interpret and analyse their experiences and ideas through the literature and my own lenses. Instead of calling them 'participants'- a term that I found uncomfortable as it sounds too impersonal, passive and distant, overlooking the deeply interpersonal nature of research- I will refer to them as my research partners or as community activists.

2.2.1. Social Constructivism

My thesis has social constructivism as one of its epistemologies. One of the main reasons I chose this epistemology is that it embraces reflexivity and takes positionality into account. It acknowledges that my own story has shaped the way I see the world and therefore has an impact on the way I conduct and make sense of information gathered throughout the research. As Crotty (1998) states 'there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover it. Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with realities in our world' (p. 8). This means that knowledge is not discovered but constructed. Different people construct meaning in different ways. In this sense, the data and information that I gathered were shaped by the language used by my research partners who at the same time, make sense of their words through their own relationships and the social, cultural, economic, historical and situational conditions they live in (Fish, 1990).

When I was in the early stages of my thesis, I knew that I wanted to understand people's views on this topic as an attempt to unravel their motivations and worldviews, their ideas around UA, and the ways they interacted with the gardens. Following Crotty (1998) 'no object can be adequately described in isolation from the conscious being experiencing it, nor can any experience be adequately described in isolation from its object' (p. 45). In other words, we do not create meaning, but we construct it. This thesis, the decisions and the analysis that I made show that. It reflects the way my research partners have created meaning and also the way I have interpreted it and created meaning (or knowledge) from them. I do not claim that

what I present here is a final and ultimate truth, but I hope that it serves a useful purpose. I do not just want to not harm with the results of this research, but also to do good (Israel & Hay, 2006; McKenzie et al., 2007; Hugman et al., 2011), by challenging the current systemic structures that foster inequality and marginalisation. The purpose of this research is twofold: to contribute to an ongoing critical geography scholarship of UA, and to support the politics of engagement with the radical transformation of the food system.

2.2.2. Critical Theory

This research is not an objective piece of work. I put my own values and social justice ideals in place, in order to challenge social structures and beliefs and to ultimately create some change. From the beginning, I wanted my thesis to be critical of the status quo and to engage with issues of privilege, inequality, and marginalisation. From the beginning, I knew critical theory was also going to be part of my epistemologies. Critical theory comes from a Marxist heritage whose main aim is to critique and to transform. This epistemology believes that reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values condensed over time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The subversive character of Marxism lies in its criticism of the prevailing order, which perpetuates an unequal and unjust system (Johnson, 1984). Critical theorists put on the spotlight the power relationships within society to expose the forces of hegemony and injustice. However, critical inquiry is a cyclical process of reflection and action; it cannot be seen as an end itself. According to Crotty (1998), 'with every action taken, the context changes, and we must critique our assumptions [and the context] again (p. 157). In this way, the job of a critical theorist is a never-ending project.

Although the aims of critical theory (freedom, justice, equity) might seem utopian, trying is worthwhile. As Crotty (1998) reminds us, 'it could lead at least to a more just and freer society than we have at the moment' (p.157). While doing my research, I frequently asked myself how much impact my research could have? Would someone ever read it? Would it change anything at all? Although I still do not have the answers

to these questions, I know that at least I am trying my best to not harm anyone and that on the contrary, this research could lead to a change even if it is a small one, a change that can contribute to transform the status quo and bring more social justice to our society.

One of the main components of critical theory is praxis. As Freire (1972) stated, 'reflection without research is empty verbalism' (cited by Crotty, 1998, p. 147). This epistemology asks us to reflect and take action at the same time. Praxis could be understood as 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (Freire, 1972a, p.28). Reflection and action complement and illuminate each other, together they lead to what in Marxism critical theory is called conscientization. This term, introduced by Freire, refers to a deep understanding and critical self-insertion into one's own reality. In other words, it is the awareness of one's positionality in the world, one's privileges (or lack of them), and the understanding of oppression and its structural causes. This realisation leads to transformation; it leads to the understanding that we are not passive victims of the system, but that we have agency and the potential to change our realities. This requires praxis, it requires reflection upon one's own situation and to take action to transform it (Freire, 1972a).

Praxis was vital in my research and is crucial in my personal life. I am constantly confronting my own privileges and lack of them. This process of reflection is, at times uncomfortable; it is a lifelong process that requires a mind open to criticism and willing to deconstruct social and cultural structures that are embedded in ourselves. As a researcher, I found myself continually interrogating held values and assumptions, challenging conventional social structures and beliefs, and engaging in activism and community actions. Some of this activism and community activities were directly related to UA; others were not directly related to it, but also contributed to my self-reflection and broader understanding of social justice issues and oppressive structures and systems that lead to marginalisation, inequity, and injustices.

I do believe as most Marxist and critical theorist academics, that praxis is crucial to generate a real and tangible change. Reflection by itself or action without reflection is incomplete. They need each other, and together they are more robust and have more chances to challenge, disrupt and change oppressive structures. Critical theory emphasizes that the search for knowledge –or as social constructivist would say ‘its construction’-, should always be emancipatory knowledge. ‘Knowledge in the context of action and the search for freedom’ (Crotty, 1998, p. 159). As aforementioned, this epistemology does not see reality as a static entity; rather, it understands reality as a process of transformation, continually changing and evolving. I hope this thesis contributes to the academic debates around food justice and community economies and to challenge the social and cultural structures that perpetuate food injustice and insecurity.

2.3. Methodology

Crafting my methodology was a real journey. At the early stages of my research, I decided to work with an ethnographic approach, but as my research evolved, I realised I wanted to go a step beyond and be more critical and active. I did not just want to understand UA in Wellington; I wanted to advocate for its transformation, which presupposes a commitment not only of an epistemological order but also a political one. In my quest to find a more subversive methodology, I found Participatory Action Research (PAR). As my fieldwork advanced, I ended up using ethnographic and participatory approaches.

2.3.1. Taking an ethnographic approach

I chose to take an ethnographic approach because it aligned with the aim of my research. Ethnographers seek to understand the world and realities as experienced and understood by those who live such realities (Creswell, 2011). This methodology looks at the social, political, economic and cultural context too, which I was also interested to explore. Following these principles, I participated in the daily activities

the groups I worked with do regularly, which included volunteer in the urban farm/garden and engaged in their community events.

The main reason I chose this methodology was that I wanted to understand UA as it is experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who 'live it out'. I wanted to understand their worldviews and values and to do so; I needed to understand their context, experiences, and identities. As Crang and Cook (2007) state: 'identities are gendered, classed and coloured and, therefore, cannot be understood without understanding the histories and impacts of these and other categorizations' (p. 4). Ethnographies challenge the masculinist scientific stance which sees research as a process of objective collection of data and see the researcher as some sort of hero that is detached from the 'subjects of study' (Crang & Cook, 2007). This positivist approach has been criticised by several scholars (Bondi & Domosh, 1992; Haraway, 1988; Nast, 1994; Rose, 1993) who argue that both the researcher and the researched are interconnected and involved in changing political, cultural and social relations under study.

In light of this, not only the places where I was interacting with my research partners were relevant but also the social relations that we (re)arranged there. After all, research 'is always socially but also materially situated' (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 5). Using ethnographic approaches not only allowed me to understand the community activist's perceptions of UA, but it also helped me to engage critically with their stories by placing them in the broader socioeconomic, political and cultural context in order to understand their perspectives, the causes that lead them to think in the way they do, and the potential effects those perspectives might have.

2.3.2. Following some PAR approaches

PAR is a methodological approach that as its name suggests involves participation and action. It sees research as a tool to achieve social change by working with and for the communities in all the stages of the research from the design to the collection and analysis of the findings. (Kemmis et al., 2013; Lawson, 2015). This methodology

challenges the positivist science approach of subject-to-object research and instead promotes a subject-to-subject approach. One of the main aims of PAR is reducing the power imbalances between the researcher and the communities by sharing control in the decision-making process with the people involved in the research (Cameron & Gibson, 2005).

PAR challenges the notion of academic expertise; it advocates for the acknowledgement of people's knowledge. It recognises that the knowledge is not exclusive to the researcher and it tries to value diverse forms of knowledge, especially those that come from people who have historically been ignored, silenced and absent in academic research. Researchers using PAR should help collective grassroots processes to transform their social context. According to Fals Borda, one of the foremost pioneers of this methodology, research should be a continuous dialectical process, a process of learning and knowledge generation that leads to change (Fals Borda & Moncayo, 2009). The researcher should be committed to the social transformation; it should help to make visible power relations within society and enable forms of resistance and action.

In this sense, the work of Fals Borda (1981,1986) coincides with that of Freire (1972, 1993, 2005), who in his dissertations on the pedagogy of the oppressed states that knowledge should lead to the emancipation of people, not only their economic emancipation, but also social, cultural and political emancipation. In other words, the results of the research should help empower the communities that were researched in their own fights. This knowledge should have practical implications and go beyond sophisticated academic rhetoric. Similarly, Fals Borda and Moncayo (2009) highlight the importance of using praxis in research. They point out the need to 'affirm oneself in the environmental reality by linking thought with action' (p. 235). According to Fals Borda (1983), it is in practice that the knowledge necessary to transform society is derived.

As Fals Borda and Moncayo (2009) argue, we are subjects of change, and when we investigate, we also change ourselves. I can relate to this premise. I found myself

constantly questioning my views, values, and motivations, and continuously changing and evolving. I am not the same person who started this research a year ago; I am somehow different now. I have deconstructed many of the beliefs I had around race, class and the economy. I have evolved not only academically or professionally, but also as a human being. I think the best way to explain this feeling is by what Fals Borda used to call 'sentipensante', which does not have a proper translation in English but could be understood as thinking-feeling. This concept was used by the fishermen of San Benito Abad in Colombia and popularised by Fals-Borda who after researching with them incorporated it in his academic work. It means thinking with the heart and feeling with the head. It is using the heart and the mind to join action and thought, it means being subjects of praxis.

As I aforementioned, I decided to use some of PAR approaches because I wanted to go beyond understanding people's realities and the way UA worked in the Wellington area (which was what the ethnography approach helped me understand). I wanted to be more critical and advocate for structural and societal transformation in this area. However, my research did not follow all PAR principles. To start with, at the beginning of my thesis, the research questions and the theoretical framework I chose were mainly informed by academic debates in this area. Nevertheless, as I started to get involved with the communities I worked with, my interests and analytical angle were changing, adapting more to their concerns and needs. Nonetheless, I am aware that I was the one on charge of the decision-making process, and the one choosing and making the final decisions around the kind of questions and theories, and I ended up using. However, those decision were informed by my interactions with the community groups. Similarly, during the fieldwork, I was the one collecting information and data, not the communities I was working with, which also shows how I had more power during this stage of the research too.

However, I tried to shape my research in a way that challenged the current stereotypes of UA in Western societies. I wanted to privilege voices that are usually ignored, and in that way, I wanted to be disruptive and present a different perspective on this topic. At the beginning, I chose four case studies to investigate.

They were all community groups engaged with UA, and some of them had other projects around food security, food justice, and food sovereignty as well. However, I ended up working with only two of them. One of the reasons for this was to emphasise in-depth analysis over quantity of analysis, but also because these two case studies were less known, more unconventional and in some ways more subversive. I chose them because I wanted to show different distinct alternatives to do UA in cities. These two UA projects are notably different, but they engage in their own ways in social and food justice work. These case studies break the stereotypes of, on the one hand, the 'classic' white, middle-class urban farm whose primary purpose is to produce food and sell it in the market; and on the other hand, gardens lead by people of colour as being places of poor, unhealthy communities. The former ones are usually portrayed in a monolithic way that focuses on their deficiencies instead of their community strengths, assets, and resilience.

As Reynolds and Cohen (2016) suggest, academic research could be exploitative, which is particularly concerning when working with vulnerable populations. Usually, researchers gain an academic title or an academic publication that help them in their careers, but in contrast, the communities that take part in the research get nothing in return. Sometimes they do not even get a report of the research, and in the worst cases, they are misinterpreted and end up being presented in a way that disempowers and affects them negatively. In order to counterbalance that, I tried to make my research reciprocal. As a way of doing that, I promised to make a report once I finished the thesis and I also volunteered in both of the projects before, during and after my fieldwork. My role as a volunteer was quite simple and most of the time involved weeding, moving compost and help in general everyday work. In community spaces where most things run with volunteer work, and extra hand was always welcome, especially in winter, when volunteers are scarce. In one of the case studies (Wesley Community Action), I helped to translate some forms in Spanish for refugees. After my fieldwork with them ended, two Colombian refugees wanted to participate in a cooking class programme run by Wesley, and I decided to become their translator for the programme.

Although the power-sharing in the decision-making process of doing this research was limited, I came to the fieldwork with a student mind. I wanted to learn from the people who practice UA in their daily lives. However, I found myself at times as being seen as an expert. As some scholars (Piven, 2010; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016) argue, academics are usually granted the authority of knowledge, and this 'expertise' is often more valued than the lived experience of activists and grassroots leaders. In this sense, academic researchers have a significant privilege but also a great responsibility to advance social justice and anti-oppression work and to work with community-based projects to make them more visible (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016).

As Reynolds and Cohen (2016) suggest, doing research on social justice issues does not mean portraying food justice projects in an overly flattering way, which some researchers do because they want to support the food justice movement. Instead, they argue that 'it requires acknowledging research practices that create injustice as the first step to more productively engaging in research that contributes to advancing more socially just urban food and environmental systems' (p. 118). Academic research can be a tool to dismantle oppression in the food system if we (researchers) direct our efforts towards that end (hooks, 1994). Academic scholarship has the power to legitimise activities that are often marginalised by placing these small initiatives on the broader political, socioeconomic and cultural system, and by determining common frameworks that help us understand the role of UA in creating a more socially just food system (Reynolds and Cohen, 2016).

Following Gibson-Graham (2008), academic activity has the potential of advancing social and economic justice. In this sense, scholarship can be a tool to advance social justice. According to them, by stepping beyond merely documenting blatant injustices, a critical approach can help open spaces of freedom and possibility. Collaboration and good communication between researchers and communities require academic giving up their role as 'experts' and recognise that knowledge is co-created (Reynolds and Cohen, 2016). Although most of the decision-making process was not shared with the community-based activists, the results of this thesis are as

mine as are theirs, since this would not have been possible without their collaboration, inputs, ideas, and feedback.

I hope this research helps legitimise their work, and make their voices louder and more visible, so they can (in Freire's words) get their own emancipation by providing openings for freedom and possibility. I wanted to show the ways these community projects are changing the world by creating spaces for transformation that go beyond 'local, closed, small' groups (Palomino- Schalscha, 2012). This thesis aims to show the ways these groups are contributing to the creation of spaces for transformation, and are helping the expansion of debates around food justice and community economies.

I also tried to put into practice the *sentipensante* principle (thinking-feeling). As feminist researchers have stated, emotions and feelings play an essential role in doing research. Although Western thinking has generally considered emotions as an obstacle to rationality and objective knowledge rather than as a source of knowledge itself (Jaggar, 1989), feminist researchers such as Bondi (2003) suggest that reflecting on emotional experiences while doing research can contribute in a significant manner to the development of research relationships and the reflection on power and positionality. In fact, emotions played a crucial role in my research. They made me confront myself, reflect upon my own privilege, and also helped me keep motivated. Knowing that I had a great responsibility to the communities I worked with kept me going in times where my motivation was low. I was always aware that the biggest reason for doing this thesis was not getting a degree but using the opportunity to research a topic I was passionate about and to support grassroots initiatives to advance social and food justice.

2.4. Methods

For my methods, I chose to do semi-structured interviews and participant observations. As aforementioned, initially, I planned to do my fieldwork with four community groups that were doing urban farming, some of them exclusively and

others were involved in further social work and food justice activism. However, in an attempt to explore these cases in more depth, I chose to work with only two of them, the ones that were less recognised and somehow the ones that were doing things in a more disruptive and socially just way.

2.4.1. Semi-structured interviews

Interviewing has been one of the most used methods by ethnographic researchers to understand the contexts and contents of people's everyday social, cultural, political and economic lives (Crang & Cook, 2007). I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews because as Dunn (2005) states, these type of interviews '[have] some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the informant' (p.79). It was vital to me to have flexibility when doing the interviews, since I wanted to have more of an informal chat about the work the community-activist were doing, instead of a rigid set of questions that could make them feel uncomfortable. Also, I wanted to have space for them to unpack and bring ideas or topics that I could have missed. I did a semi-structured set of questions for the interviews, the questions were different from case study to case study and at times to one community-based activist to another, depending on their role in their communities.

I did a total of six semi-structured interviews, four in Southern Garden and two in Wesley Community Action in Cannons Creek. In Southern Garden, I interviewed two women and two men, most of them are core volunteers at the farm (which means that they are involved in the management of the farm and composting site and also get paid for their role) and others are regular volunteers. Three of them were in their mid-20s and one of them in their early 50s. In Wesley, I interviewed two staff members, one woman and one man in their late-30s-early -40s. The interviews were audio-recorded and took place usually at the organisation site or a cafe chosen by the interviewee and me, and they were about an hour and a half long.

2.4.2. Participant observation

Participant observation (PO) is also a core methodology within ethnographic research that has been used to 'understand the world-views and ways of life of actual people in the contexts of their everyday lived experiences' (Crang & Cook, p.35). More informally, Wogan (2004) describes it as a 'deep hanging out'. In the strictest sense of the term, participant observations require an 'objective' and 'detached' researcher that acts as an observer of the everyday routines of a given community without getting involved in such activities. From the beginning of my thesis, I knew I wanted to include PO as one of my methodologies since I wanted to engage with the communities that were part of my research on a more personal and informal level in order to have a better understanding of their context. However, I also wanted to reciprocate their time in some way, which is why during my fieldwork, although I was attentive to everything that was happening, I was also helping them with their day-to-day duties. I was not a mere observer but an 'active participant observer'.

Going every Sunday to volunteer in the gardens, and help with different community activities was the most exciting, confronting and rewarding part of my research. Doing participant observation allowed me to get closer to the people, to communicate better with them and to understand them and their context. It also helped me gain their trust, which later on, when I did the interviews made them feel more comfortable with me, asking them questions. I believe they would not have been as opened to me if they would not have known me from the gardening sessions. Also, thanks to participant observation, I could develop good relationships with these community-based activists and even become good friends with some of them.

In Southern Garden, I started to volunteer before I started my fieldwork with them, and before they decided to become part of this research. I went almost all Sundays and helped with gardening work, mostly weeding, but sometimes also helping plant some seedlings and getting the garden beds ready to be planted. When I started my fieldwork officially, my duties were pretty much the same, but I started to register the conversations and interactions during those volunteer sessions - that took place

between August and September - in my fieldwork journal. In Wesley Community Action, I did my fieldwork on the last two weeks of October, volunteering three times a week. I helped with different programmes, including the Food Bank, the Fruit and Vege Co-op (referred to as the 'Co-op'), the community garden, and the Real Good Kai (cooking classes). I also assisted to some of the team meetings as an observer and translated the food bank forms into Spanish since in Porirua some former refugees come from Spanish speaking countries. I also became the translator (after my fieldwork ended) of two former refugee women from Colombia who wanted to participate in the Real Good Kai programme.

In both case studies, my PO helped me understand the work these projects do in a way that the interviews would have never done. It allowed me to put my hands in the soil, sense the smells of the garden (and compost) and be aware of the diversity and interconnection of the human and non-human ecosystems. While engaging in everyday duties such as weeding, I could understand the contexts, identities, and everyday lived experiences of the community activist who engage in food justice work and learn from them. In other words, I was able to do praxis by combining participatory action with theoretical reflection. On the other hand, the interviews enabled me to explore these community-based activist ideas, thoughts, reflections, opinions, and critiques about food justice, food sovereignty issues and urban farming in general at a deeper level. It allowed me to dig, as we do in the garden, into their minds and by doing so I was able to understand their struggles and concerns, and to make sense of their world, obviously through my own lenses and worldviews.

Those two methods complemented each other and combined helped me get a broader and more in-depth understanding of the food justice work that can be achieved through UA. I thank all the people who were part of this research both by actively have been in the conversations with me during the participant observations or through the interviews, and also to all the volunteers and people I encountered during my fieldwork whose names do not appear in this piece of work, but whose inputs are invaluable and contributed significantly to my final findings and general development of this thesis.

2.5. Analysis of data

After finishing my fieldwork, I found myself in front of the big and messy task of analysing the data I collected. I used the multiple stages approach proposed by Kitchen and Tate (2000) that enabled me to identify and create connections and common themes within my data. I drew upon all my interview transcripts, field notes and participant observation journal, and I read them and re-read them several times. As an old-fashion qualitative researcher, I used post-its, coloured markers and all kind of kindergarten materials to classify my data by common themes. Once I made such connections, I started the work of figuring out how to put all of these findings together.

Taking into account that qualitative data analysis is highly interpretative, I was continually reflecting on my positionality, and I tried not to deviate my interpretations from the evidence. However, as I stated in my epistemologies, I do not intend to present objective truths, since I do not believe they even exist. I know that although I tried to be as rigorous as possible with my analysis, my own worldviews and values have taken its place, but instead of seeing this as a weakness of my work, I see it as a strength, because it shows how my critical mindset that looks to advocate for structural change played an important place in the structure and writing style of this research. I did not seek to be a clinical observer or and 'objective' scientist; instead, I wanted to filter all the information gathered through my mind but also through my heart (be a *sentipensante* as Fals Borda would have said).

2.6. Positionality

During this research, I was continually reflecting on my worldviews and values, and in the way, they were influencing my research work. As Creswell (2011) points out, there is a constant duality and unity with the researcher and the personal self. There is extended body of literature that explores the importance of researcher's

positionality in the research process and in the way they interact with research 'participants' and the politics of representation (see Chacko, 2004; Jazeel and McFarlane, 2010; Mohammad, 2001; Skelton, 2001; Sultana, 2007). In this section, I will explore my positionality and which ways it affected my interaction with the community members that are part of this research.

I am 26 years old, middle-class, heterosexual (for now)¹, abled, tertiary educated, mestizo woman who was born and raised in the capital city of Colombia (Bogotá). My ancestral heritage is a mix between an Indigenous group called Guanes and Europeans descendants. I never reflected on my race before, since in Colombia, I am mestiza as most of the population, and I benefited from the privileges that bring being part of the majority group. However, since I moved to Aotearoa New Zealand, I realised my position in society had changed, I became part of a minority; I was a Latina immigrant that had English as her third language. I started to experience racial discrimination which was a genuinely confronting experience that led me to become interested in literature about race, and that ultimately drove me to write a thesis with a particular focus on racial discrimination. Although race was never an important part of my identity, it is now an essential part of it. My self-identification as a mix-raced person is informed by both the literature about race and my experience as a Latina immigrant, which has shaped the way people read me and interact with me, and in general my everyday life in Aotearoa.

However, the issue with my race is more complicated than it sounds. At first sight, I am not seen as a person of colour or as someone with 'Latino' or 'Indigenous' background. When people interact with me for the first time, they usually assume that I am a white person. Being taken as white has been quite uncomfortable for me since I do not identify myself as white and I have never had the privileges often white people have in Western societies. My skin colour is lighter than most people in my family, but I was never treated differently for that. Also in my country, racial

¹ Following queer theorist such as Judith Butler, I believe that sexuality is a fluid concept instead of a fixed category.

differences work in different ways than they do in Western countries, where there is a clear and more notorious distinction between whites (the majority) and non-whites, and the differences of privileges are more noticeable as well.

When I started my fieldwork, I noticed that those same assumptions around my race were made by the people I was volunteering with as well. Being seen as white was surprisingly confusing, frustrating, confronting and uncomfortable. Although researcher subjectivity and race has been explored in the literature, it has mainly focused on white researchers in 'Global South' countries, or in researchers working in their own countries (Chacko, 2004). There have been little accounts of hybrid racial identities. Fisher (2015) has been one of the few scholars who has explored this issue. Using her personal experience as a multiracial Western woman of New Zealand (Māori/Pākehā descent) who was seen as what she calls 'insufficient Other' in her home country and as a white person, or 'sufficient self' when conducting research overseas.

Fisher (2015) explains how positionality is informed by the changing subjectivities of racialised bodies as they interact in different contexts. She explores the way the different understandings of race contribute to the research subjectivity and how race also mediates the relationship between the researcher and the 'research participants'. She highlights how mix-race researchers have to constantly (re)negotiate their subjectivities and research performance, especially when they are researching in a different context from the one they are from. These (re)negotiations were particularly evident during my fieldwork in Wesley. Although all staff members and volunteers were truly friendly and welcoming from the beginning, I noticed a significant change in the way they interacted with me when they found out I was not an European woman, but that I was actually Colombian, a person from the 'South' (the 'Global South'). Most of the staff members and volunteers in Wesley are Māori, Pasifika and/or also immigrants. When they found out that I shared with them a colonial past, they became more open with me. They started to share personal stories with me while we were volunteering, and they become friendlier. It felt like they saw me less as an outsider and more as similar to them.

This change in their behaviour was noticeable, and it made my interactions with them more fluid and less formal. My experience shows how, as Fisher (2015) suggests, 'race and attendant preconceptions can be destabilized, at least partly, through research interactions informed by hybrid thinking' (p. 457). Being a mix-race (mestiza) woman in a context different from the one I was raised was a truly confronting and self-reflexive experience of how race plays a central role when doing research, and how mix-race researchers need to continuously negotiate their subjectivities and research performance.

Another unexpected confronting experience came from my work with two former refugees from Colombia. As aforementioned, I volunteered as their translator for one of Wesley programmes for eight weeks. Over time we came closer, and we shared some of our personal life stories both here in Aotearoa New Zealand and Colombia. We soon realised that our stories were notably different and that I was more privileged than them in many ways. I was perceived by them as a privileged person who came to NZ by choice and who never had to live war in her own flesh. This was one of the most confronting aspects of my research, and I will explore them in more detail in the ethical consideration section later in this chapter.

On the other hand, being a woman facilitated my interaction with other women both during the interviews and also while I was volunteering in both projects. I felt men were less comfortable and less open with me, as they were with other men in the garden/farm. Similarly, being a young person positioned me, in the context of Southern Garden where most people are in their mid-20s, as their equal. However, in Wesley, I was seen as inexperienced. In regards to my education level, I found myself at times as being seen as an expert, sometimes members of the community would ask me about what were the best solutions to this or that problem (especially in Southern Garden). That was quite uncomfortable for me since I never saw myself as an expert on this topic. This situation –that many researchers experience– reflects the way academics are often granted the authority of knowledge, and sometimes this expertise is even more valued than lived experience (Piven, 2010).

2.6.1. A reflection on privilege and agency

Another critical part when reflecting on my positionality was the role of my privilege and agency as an academic researcher. Getting embedded in critical theory readings and PAR literature, I became extremely aware of the power researchers have, since socially, they have been granted the authority of knowledge. Although I am aware of the privilege I have as a researcher, I am also conscious of the great responsibility I have with the communities I worked with. As aforementioned, I did not just want to follow the premise of 'do no harm' but also 'do good'. I wanted to use this thesis as a tool to make these projects more visible and show how they are challenging the corporate agrifood system with their daily actions, and by doing so, they are creating spaces of freedom and possibility.

At times, I felt a lack of motivation to carry on with my research, or I got overwhelmed by the massive amount of work that writing a thesis requires. Sometimes I got stuck with the academic formalities of time and structure and lost sight on the bigger picture and the real reason for doing all this work in the first place: the community-based activists that helped me shaped and (co)create this thesis. Going through my fieldwork journal and remembering our conversations over tea and food, reminded me of my real passion for social justice and the responsibility I have with them. This was what kept me going and enabled me to finish this thesis.

2.7. Ethical considerations

Following ethical behaviour while doing research is sometimes understood as following some institutional paperwork required by university ethical committees (Sultana, 2007). However, making ethical choices goes beyond filling some paperwork and following basic ethical principles. There are ethical dilemmas that might appear during the fieldwork that no one's ethics application form could have predicted. Being ethical is a fluid and context-specific process that ask us to be self-

reflective (Hopkins, 2007). It requires asking oneself 'what is the most respectful and least harmful thing that I can do in this situation?'

While doing my research I tried to do not fall in the role of 'expert', and instead, keep an open mind as I was eager to learn from the real experts: the community-based activist. I had to reflect upon my own preconceived ideas about UA and food justice activism and try to constantly (re)negotiate and question them. I also had to reconcile the way literature portrays urban farms and the differences and contradictions I found with the literature and my case studies.

2.7.1. Ethical dilemmas on the spot

There were two main dilemmas I had to face while doing my fieldwork. Both of them were confronting, and I had to deal with them on the spot, and be self-reflexive and ask myself 'what is the most ethical and least harmful thing that I can do now?'. I will explore those dilemmas and how I deal with them as follow.

2.7.1.1. Confidentiality

I decided to make the identity of one of the community groups I collaborated with confidential and change their name to the pseudonym 'Southern Garden'. I chose this name since this community group is located in the Southern suburbs of Wellington. I made that choice after an extensive deliberation process. Although I tried to make this thesis on the one hand, supportive and not-judgemental to the groups I worked with, and on the other hand, critical and not complacent to their work; I was afraid the strong critique and observations I did in this research could damage the reputation of this particular group. Following the principle of 'do no harm' and instead 'try to do good', I finally decided to create a pseudonym and try to describe this group in more general terms in order to protect their identity.

As Gibson-Graham (2006) argue, there is a great danger of being too critical with alternative projects that are trying to work inside a capitalist system. Instead of helping those projects, by objecting too much, we (as researchers) can undermine

them. Although I tried to make this thesis a space for critical reflection around issues such as systemic racism and inequality, as well as white supremacy and paternalism; I made notably harsh critiques of 'Southern Garden'. For this reason, I decided to take an 'affective stance', which is a term used by feminist geographers Gibson-Graham(2006, 2007), to refer to the support researchers should take to projects that are in their process of becoming. The main critiques that I raise are to the racist, classist, heteropatriarchal, capitalist, and colonialist system instead to one particular community group, and I do not want that these critiques affect Southern Garden's reputation.

I decided not to change Wesley Community Action's name since, as discussed in this thesis, the voices of organisations such as Wesley are usually underrepresented in academic spaces. In terms of research on urban agriculture, most of the study cases and voices that are privileged are from gardens and farms led by white, middle-class people while the voices of people of colour are marginalised (Reynolds and Cohen, 2016). It is the invisibility of these projects, which, to a large extent, supports the assumption that UA is led by 'white hipsters'. Indeed, most of the academic work on UA and urban farming in the 'Global North' focuses on white-led gardens and farms, reinforcing colourblind and victim-saviour narratives that encourage paternalistic dynamics and racial-Othering (I will discuss this in further detail in Chapter 5).

2.7.1.2. Confronting white privilege

While doing my interviews with Southern Garden, an urban farm where most of the volunteers and contractors are white and middle-class, I heard many times statements that came from a white privilege perspective and that were paternalistic in nature. I did not want to critic the people making those comments themselves, but I wanted to reflect on the structural causes and the cultural and socio-economical contexts that led them to (re)produce such discourses and practices.

Southern Garden is a community based urban farm whose main aim is not to maximize private benefit or profit but to promote community wellbeing. Following

Gibson-Graham and Cameron (2007), I decided to take an affective stance in order to support this community initiative that is trying to offer an alternative to capitalist economic practices. As Gibson-Graham (2006) argue, there is a great danger of being too critical with alternative projects that are trying to work inside a capitalist system. Instead of helping those projects, by objecting too much, we (as researchers) can undermine them. As Graham and Cameron (2007) suggested, 'it seems that a prerequisite for enacting economic alternatives to capitalism is an affective stance that will enable us, as authors, researchers, and activists, to be a condition of possibility (rather than impossibility) for the emergence of other worlds and other economies' (p. 20). They ask us to abandon the deep-seated negativity associated with critical and left-oriented activist and academics and to challenge our theoretical and emotional investments in order to advocate for a research practice that enables spaces of freedom and possibility.

Although my critical mindset led me to judge these paternalistic discourses at first, while confronting this ethical dilemma, I decided to take an affective stance and support and advocate for the work this community-based group is doing. I acknowledge that they are a work in progress. They are a 'reminder that the desire for a more just economy is never completely suppressed' (Graham and Cameron, 2007, p. 24). They represent the possibility of a better and more just future, of a different way of doing economy outside the neoliberal capitalist machine, and I decided to support them in this great work. This means that I want to open space for critical reflection that hopefully lead to conversations around privilege and paternalism. I tried to frame my work in a no judgemental way, but also, I was careful about not being complacent. Supporting community projects does not mean portraying them in an overly flattering way, but opening spaces for uncomfortable conversations that instead of harming, push forward self-reflection, transformation and ultimately social justice (Reynolds and Cohen, 2016).

2.7.1.3. Confronting my own privilege

As I previously mentioned, I volunteered some extra time outside my fieldwork as a translator for two former refugee Colombian women who wanted to take part in the Real Kai course in Wesley. Given that Wesley did not have the resources or capacity to have a translator, I decided to become theirs for eight weeks. I translated the recipes for the class and helped them during the cooking sessions. This was not part of my fieldwork anymore, but it was a way to reciprocate the time Wesley team gave me and also a way to use my privilege to help my compatriots.

After having decided to become a translator (something I have never done before), I started to reflect on the reasons why I made that decision. And that reflection became more profound as the time went by and I became closer to these two women (and some of their extended family), and as I learned more about their lives in Colombia and their lives now in Aotearoa New Zealand. I never anticipated that I would have ended up working with former refugees from own country and I started to realise how different my life was both back in Colombia and now in Aotearoa New Zealand in comparison to theirs.

I felt uncomfortable because I had to face my own privilege and I started wondering if I decided to volunteer to genuinely help them participate on a programme than otherwise, they could not have been part of, or if I volunteered to overcompensate my feeling of guilt for having more privilege than them. In other words, I was wondering if that decision was a selfless or a selfish one. After reflecting a lot about it, I think it was probably a bit of both. The most confronting part for me was seeing how I started to portray them as the victims of the system. I felt sorry for them, and I felt awful about having more privilege than them. After several tears and wonderful conversations with my thesis mates, I realised I was doing what I have always critiqued, I was labelling and essentialise them, I was seeing them as one thing and one thing only: as victims, and by doing so, I was taking away from them their agency, I was disempowering them. What I did was disrespectful but also was informed by feeling angry and upset about the systemic and structural injustices and inequalities.

Although the whole situation was highly confronting in many different levels, when I became aware of my patronising behaviour, I changed my perspective, and I started to see their incredible resilience and the powerful agency they had over their own lives and struggles. I also made peace with my own privilege, feeling bad about having it did not take it away, but instead, it made me feel guilty and paralysed. I remember the words of my professors and academics that I admire and I decided to use my privilege in the best way possible. In this case, it meant translating to my fellow Colombians some basic but delicious recipes and guide them through the cooking sessions. I learn some uncomfortable lessons about myself in the process that helped me push my self-awareness.

Although my research did not intend to engage with former refugees, I hope it helps to show how food justice initiatives and programmes as the ones Wesley offers, can help refugees to integrate into the community and help them transition into a new country and culture through food. Although critical UA literature engages in conversations about marginalised communities, there is an absence of former refugees in the debate, especially in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. I hope this research contributes to make this gap in the literature evident and promote further research on this issue.

2.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to portray my story of crafting a methodology, which involved navigating a wide range of theories around different epistemologies and methodologies. After reading several methodology manuals and dived into many academic theses, I came to the pillars of this research, which are inspired by social constructivism and critical theory. Together they informed the way I conducted my research and tried to make sense of my data. Given the nature of my research, I chose to take ethnographic and PAR approaches as my methodologies, and use semi-structured interviews and PO as my methods. I also reflect on my positionality and ethical dilemmas I had to face during my fieldwork, and I explore the ways I dealt

with them. In the following chapter, I will present the community projects that were part of this research, and I will explore the way they engage in UA through a framework that looks at the phases of UA food production.

CHAPTER 3

3. Getting to know the projects involved in this research

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will introduce both of the organisations I did this research with: Wesley Community Action in Cannons Creek and Southern Garden located in the southern suburbs of Wellington. I based my descriptions off their official website information and reports, as well as my interviews and participants observations. In the first part of this chapter, I will describe the general work of these community projects. In the second part, I will analyse their work through the phases of UA food production. They are land access, cultivation and animal breeding (which include access to knowledge and skills and decision-making process), sharing and trading the harvest, and cooking and eating.

3.2. Southern Garden

Southern Garden is an Urban Farm and Community Composting organisation located in the southern suburbs of Wellington. The farm was created by a group of people interested in gardening, some of whom had great expertise in sustainable farming. It was established around 2015 and since then has gone through different phases; from delivering green smoothies and lunches to offices around the Wellington, to being a productive farm and well-known composting site in Wellington. However, using regeneration principles to build up healthy soil that helps create resilient and happy communities has been their ethos from the beginning (see Figure 1). They are located on public land under a ten-year lease arrangement with the Wellington City Council (WCC). The farm is divided into two main components: the urban farm and the composting site. Southern Garden follows some permaculture and biodynamic principles to grow food productively in the city while working with nature to

regenerate soil and ensure the production of nutrient-dense food. For their composting side, the compost collection is bicycle powered and operates in Wellington City, which means that they provide a composting service that is free from carbon emissions. They offer weekly pickups from homes, offices and small businesses.

Figure 1: Southern Garden Urban Farm. Source: Southern Garden Website (2019)

Although they are still working out their model of food distribution, 50% of the food they produce goes to community kitchens or Kaibosh Food Rescue, a food rescue organisation that collects food that is still good to eat but no longer considered sellable and distributes it among community groups that support people in need. The remainder of the produce is usually sold to local restaurants, although recently they started a pilot programme offering 'vege boxes'. Also, some food is shared with the volunteers of the farm. Additionally, Southern Garden recently became a part of A group an organisation that supports urban agriculture in New Zealand and promotes urban farms as climate change infrastructure. From carbon sequestration to hyper-local food production and community collaboration food production and community composting hubs, the organisation believes urban farms are vital for a climate-ready

future. Through this organisation, Southern Garden is collaborating with other land-based projects around the country by sharing their resources and knowledge.

Southern Garden runs mostly through the work of volunteers. There are core volunteer members (approximately 15) that work on the farm during weekdays, but most of the volunteers visit the farm on Sundays, during 'working bee' sessions. The number of volunteers changes depending on the season; during winter, the numbers drop, but in summer more people join. Most of the volunteers are young, white and middle-class people. Some members of the farm get paid, mostly those who collect the compost, but also those who do administrative work. Recently they hired a Farmer's Manager who works part-time. The garden produces mostly vegetables (leafy greens), herbs and edible flowers. However, there are a few patches of kamo kamo, Indigenous corn and rongoā paths.

In terms of the funding, Southern Garden receives funding from the council for waste minimization and also applies for grants throughout the year. However, they are working towards being self-funded. One of their main sources of income comes from the users of the composting collection service. This money mainly goes to the salaries of the people who collect the compost and is also re-invested into the project. They also receive some income from the produce that is sold. This money goes to pay the salary of the Farmer Manager and to buy farming supplies such as seeds, natural fertilizers and general tools and supplies.

Southern Garden offers various educational workshops throughout the year. These range from seed sowing and propagation, garden design and preparation, to compost building and maintenance. They believe urban farms have a high potential to offer varied benefits to society that come from positive environmental outcomes, such as being climate change infrastructure and a biodiversity oasis; and social outcomes like being a place where the community can become stronger and more resilient. Additionally, being a place where people can enjoy contact with nature which can also have positive mental health outcomes.

Southern Garden works with the help of volunteers and five part-time contractors that are responsible for the operation of the farm, compost collection and management. The organisation is based on a 'holacracy' model, which is a non-hierarchical management and organisational governance method, in which authority and decision-making are distributed throughout self-organising teams rather than being vested in a management hierarchy. The roles are divided in circles of activity and each circle has autonomy of action and decision making. There is a general meeting held fortnightly where each circle reports back to the whole group regarding the work, concerns and decisions they have made.

Southern Garden core members are politically active and engaged with important debates around food security, food sovereignty, and food justice. They are highly critical of the current food system and want to make this farm an alternative model of how food can be grown in the cities. They strive to become an example of a thriving urban farm and use this site to advocate for urban farming policy changes. They are currently pressuring their local government to invest more in these kinds of projects by demonstrating the benefits of urban farms. They aim to become a role model, receive enough funding to continue their work, and promote urban farms around the city. They dream of having these gardens and composting hubs every kilometre in the city.

3.3. Wesley Community Action - Cannons Creek

Wesley Community Action was established in 1952 by the Methodist Church with the aim to promote social change through different programmes with a community-led and a social justice approach. They work with communities throughout the Wellington region. Their work is based on what they call the 'Wesley Way', which is a strength-based practice that encourages people's ability to be their own agents of change. The approach involves creating conditions that enable people to identify and mobilise their strengths and capacities to generate a change in their lives (Wesley Community Action Website, n.d). The House is run by several paid staff members,

approximately 10 of whom work part-time and one who works full-time. A significant part of the work is also done by volunteers who participate in different programmes that Wesley offers.

Wesley Community Action has been operating in Cannons Creek (Porirua) for over 20 years offering a range of different programmes, activities and services focused on food and financial security. They are located on private land and are funded through various organisations, foundations and Trusts (Wesley Community Action Website, 2020). Cannons Creek has a population of around 17,170 people (Deloitte, 2018). As shown in the Figure 2, its population is younger on average, with lower income and homeownership rates and higher unemployment rates compared to Porirua city and the general New Zealand population. Also, the population is predominantly Pacific people (61%) and Māori (25%), which is also significantly higher than the average in New Zealand. These populations make up a disproportionate amount of those suffering from obesity and nutrition-related chronic disease (Deloitte, 2018). Similarly, the demographic groups that predominantly use Wesley's services are mostly Pacific and Māori people, and a few former refugees.

Figure 2: Statistics of Cannons Creek. Source: Deloitte (2018)

Wesley Community Action in Cannons Creek has a variety of programmes that aim to help people achieve food security and financial stability. According to one of the

staff members at Wesley, East Porirua and Cannons Creek are both ‘food deserts’ and ‘food swamp’ areas. This means that there is a lack of places where people can access fresh and healthy food since there are no major supermarkets within an easy walking distance. Instead, there are various takeaways shops and convenience stores with processed food options. In light of such landscape, Wesley House in Cannons Creek has developed different initiatives and services with the community to face those issues. Below I will provide a brief description of these programmes. Through this thesis, I will analyse the contribution that Wesley does in terms of food security, food sovereignty and food justice by looking at its work in these programmes. However, I will not focus on their other programmes - the Men’s Group, the Timebank, or the Good Cents course - since their focus is not on food and their work goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

3.3.1. The Food Bank

The food bank opened in 1992 as a response to food insecurity in the area. They became the first food bank in Cannons Creek. According to one of the staff members, at the beginning, the service was quite popular, especially in the late 2000s when the foot traffic of people coming through the food bank was considerable. Over time, the number of users of this service has dropped but it is still used and needed by some people in the area. The food provided comes mainly via donations from supermarkets, churches, and philanthropic organisations, but is also complemented with the produce from the community garden leftovers of the Fruit and Vege Co-op.

The forms that people requiring this service have to fill have changed over time. In the early stages, the forms were more detailed in order to collect statistical data, which was useful for applying for grants and funding. The following is a description of one of the staff member of why they decided to change the forms:

‘Anybody can come, if they can rock up, they don’t need to show any identification at all. We don’t want people to come and feel they lost their dignity already. So we know some on them would come with their

community service's card ready to show it to us, some of them would come with a whole list of letters to say that their food grant has pretty much been exhausted, or they have various other things, so they feel like they need to come with a lot of proof, and so we don't look at any of that at all. In fact, we even changed our food bank forms, so that it is more of a conversation starter rather than collecting statistics from them to generate reports to get funding. Cause I think they have enough of clinical forms everywhere else where they go to' (Female staff member at Wesley in her early 40s).

In response, Wesley changed from their previous detailed format to just asking for basic information such as name, number of members in the family and address. They do not ask for any proof of need because they know that the food bank is a last resort for most people, and some of them feel ashamed for asking for help. Therefore, they are trying to make this process as easy as possible, even if that means not having statistics that are often required by donors. Having fewer questions in their forms makes people feel more comfortable since they do not feel judged and alleviates them of needing to give explanations about their private lives.

3.3.2. The Community Garden

Staff and volunteer members at Wesley realised that the food bank was working on a 'charity model' and that people often felt embarrassed and ashamed. As an attempt to address these issues and try to make the experience of coming to Wesley House more reciprocal and empowering, they created the Community Pantry, the food bank and the community garden being its main components. According to a report on the development of the Community Pantry pilot project:

'The Pantry has a view of food as not only an end in itself but also a means to achieving broader goals of empowerment, environmental awareness, and health [...] It focuses on community food security (across the board access to good food) rather than just the nutritional intake of individuals and families that food banks traditionally focus on' (Wesley Community Action, 2012, p. 4).

As a part of the Community Pantry, the community garden started in 2011. The project was born from a conversation with the community using Wesley's services. From that conversation, people manifested that they wanted to have a community garden. The garden was built with the help of a Men's Group (another programme that I will explain below) who worked around Wesley House digging the soil and creating the garden. The food bank evolved into a community food centre (The Community Pantry) where people could come to grow fruit and vegetables, share their gardening skills, and strengthen their ties with the community. Figure 3 shows the outcomes Wesley intends to achieve with this project:

Outcomes model of the Community Pantry project

Figure 3: Expected outcomes from the Community Pantry. Source: Wesley Community Action (2012).

The idea of the garden was to help people take ownership and encourage them to participate. The garden was a visible and open call for everyone to come and take what they needed or plant what they wanted. It was a way to provide an opportunity for people to share their skills, to feel useful and part of a community. Also, it was a way to get nutritious, fresh, and culturally appropriate food (many of the crops are traditionally used by Māori) to the community that complemented the donations received by the food bank, usually packaged, processed and imported food (See Figure 4).

Figure 4: Community garden in Cannons Creek. Source: Cannons Creek Community Pantry Facebook Page (2019).

They also provided support to families that had their own gardens at home, and mentorship to ones who showed an interest in gardening. People who already have knowledge around gardening shared such wisdom and skills with other members of the community. Wesley received some donations of gardening tools that were distributed amongst members that required them. The community garden helped people to gain some control over their food; it gave people a sense of food sovereignty and also feelings of ownership and dignity (I will explore this in further detail in Chapter 4). Besides, according to the staff members at Wesley, the garden has made the community stronger and more resilient. As pointed out by one of the volunteers, the gardening skills gained can be transferable and replicated at home and shared with family and friends.

There is a wide variety of crops in the garden, among which many are traditionally Māori, such as pūhā, silverbeets, kamo kamo, and potatoes. In 2016, 14 different types of fruits/vegetables were harvested, with a total of 172,5kg of food produced (Deloitte, 2018). There is an average of 150-200 of volunteer hours a year, and there are currently two schools that regularly participate in the garden. There have been opportunities to cook at the schools using the produce grown in the garden. In general, the produce goes to the volunteers that contribute their time and effort,

while some of it also goes to the food bank and the Real Good Kai programme (explained below).

In sum, the community garden as part of the Community Pantry initiative has become a project that has contributed to guaranteed food security in the area, but has also empowered people and given them sovereignty over the type of food they want to eat (Wesley Community Action, 2012). It has changed the emergency need-based model of the food bank into a more reciprocal and empowering model that has brought multiple benefits to the community. The skills that have been developed through the programme are valuable and transferable, which gives participants useful skills that can be used in their own homes. Additionally, the garden has great environmental impacts as it contributes to carbon sequestration and biodiversity. As for the community, it has made it more united and resilient.

3.3.3. Fruit and Vege Co-Op

Following the successful development of the Community Pantry, the Wesley team turned their attention to investigating the possibilities of establishing a food cooperative to further assist low-income families in accessing cheap, healthy food. The team visited the Christchurch Food Co-op model that started as a way to provide fresh food after the earthquakes, and it currently delivers over 2,000 fruit and vegetable packs per week (Deloitte, 2018). Returning to Wellington, by the end of 2014, the Porirua Fruit and Vege Co-op was established as a pilot programme to improve the affordability and access to fresh fruit and vegetables for the residents of Cannons Creek and Waitangirua (See Figure 5). In the words of one of its coordinators:

‘The Fruit and Vege Co-op packs is taking from a model from Christchurch, post-earthquake, where people again didn’t have accessibility to fresh food and veges, so the Co-op came about. So, with the Co-op, we found that people love the whole idea of getting good and affordable fruit and veges at a much lower cost. People like the whole concept of it and being able to access it on food as well. Cause we tried to have a hub within 2-kilometre radius of one another’.

Figure 5: Packing site of the Fruit and Vege Co-op. Source: Porirua Fruit & Vege Co-op Facebook Page (2020).

The pilot programme started as a collaboration between the Regional Public Health and Wesley Community action with the support of The Salvation Army and Corinna School. The Co-op has so far achieved positive health outcomes. There has been a significant increase in the consumption of vegetables from 33% to 62% among the members of the programme (Deloitte, 2018). It has become a great alternative to those who did not have easy access to fresh produce, and has helped them access fresh fruits and vegetables at low prices. The programme was developed to support the work of the Community Pantry towards achieving food security in the area. This initiative has been well-received by the community and has benefited them in various other ways, as the Deloitte survey shown in Figure 6 describes:

Figure 6: Reasons why people join the Vege Co-op and in which ways has the co-op helped them. Source: Deloitte (2018).

3.3.4. Real Good Kai

Although Wesley House in Cannons Creek has always had some form of cooking happening, it wasn't until the start of the Fruit and Vege Co-op programme that the team officially launched an official cooking class programme. When first started, the Co-op was notably popular, but people did not always know what to do with the produce they were getting. The conversation around this issue led to a partnership with the Regional Public Health that had a nutritionist team, which helped set up the recipes according to the items in the packages each week (See Figure 7).

Figure 7: Real Good Kai session. Source: Cannons Creek Community Pantry Facebook Page (2019).

Wesley House started the pilot programme. Initially, the course was set up for four weeks, but over time it became an eight-week block class. The food used for the cooking classes comes from the Fruit and Vege Co-op packs, and it is supplemented by some garden produce and bulking food like chickpeas, beans, and lentils. The recipes promote the intake of vegetables and fruit and are designed to cook cheap, nutrient-rich food. Over time, the cooking classes started to use some principles from the Good Cents programme (explained below), essentially the Partners for Change

Outcome Management System (PCOMS) model of evaluation. PCOMS is a way to collect data and provide feedback on the participants' experience during the course. It was originally a behavioural health outcome management system for counselling and therapy services. In the context of the Real Good Kai course, on the one hand, this model helps the participants to measure their own goals (goals that they set in the first weeks of the course) and keep track of them as the course advances. On the other hand, it rates the class sessions, which provides useful feedback that helps the Coordinator of the programme see if there are things that can be done better, as well as plan future cooking classes based on this feedback.

Based on the goals of each participant and on the feedback that the team receives from the PCOMS, the courses are designed to meet the needs of participants and to help them reach their goals. They are usually around having healthier eating habits, including more vegetables in their diets, learning how to cook new recipes, and cooking on a budget. They have become a complementary way to help people have food security and healthier lives. Although most of the recipes are vegetarian, Wesley does not try to encourage people to become plant-based eaters; on the contrary, they respect people's food preferences and choices based on their taste and culture. They simply show ways to eat more vegetables in delicious ways, which is especially important for people who are not used to intaking many vegetables or do not know how to prepare them.

3.3.5. Good Cents

Good Cents is an eight-week course aimed at building financial capability, decreasing debt and helping people reclaim control over their financial wellbeing. The programme has been running for over eight years, and approximately 200 people have participated. It runs in block classes that attempt to help people who are not in control of their money, feel stressed and ashamed of being broke, and feel isolated. According to Deloitte (2018), the participants have reported a 40% improvement in financial wellbeing. 28% said they were making different decisions about their money and now had a feeling of control and confidence.

The programme was born given the correlation between poverty and poor financial management. Good Cents supports community awareness and a culture of change in a community where debt can mean interest rates of 400% or more. The close work with the facilitators, the sharing of participant's experiences and the common cultural attributes provide a strong sense of group support and participation. In fact, participants have reported having a greater understanding of the social and emotional elements of spending, including how it may affect others (Deloitte, 2018). The programme uses the PCOMS evaluation model (previously explained) and provides community-based support and education in order for people to gain more control over their personal finances. One of the main goals of the programme is to help empower people to regain control over their own finances and lives.

3.3.6. The Timebank

The Porirua Timebank started around a year and a half ago and has approximately 50 members. The Timebank works with a time-based currency, which is an alternative currency to money and works as an exchange system where the unit of account is time. Everyone's contributions are valued equally, which means that everybody's time is worth the same. In practice, when one person volunteers to work for an hour for another person, they earn one credit, which they can redeem for an hour of service from another volunteer. People usually trade services, and in the case of Porirua, most people ask for help in home duties.

The Timebank is based on values like reciprocity and has the aim of strengthening communities and making them more resilient. In the case of Porirua and more specifically Cannons Creek, where there is a prevalence of low socio-economic contexts, the Timebank has been truly useful in providing services and/or help that otherwise people would have had to pay for. Many of the members are part of the Men's Group. According to some staff members, volunteering in the Timebank represents an opportunity for people to feel useful and valued.

The Porirua Timebank has highly active members. Most of them have plenty of credits, but they haven't redeemed them. There are some technical barriers like access to a computer to exchange the credits that have been earned, although there is a mentor who helps them in the process. People usually earn time credits by volunteering in the different programmes that Wesley offers, such as the community garden and the packing of the fruit and vegetables for the Co-op. The Porirua Timebank is more of a community Timebank; most of the members know each other and help each other anyway. Still, the Timebank serves as an incentive to promote community exchanges and as a vehicle to make people that, due to different reasons like old age, do not feel as engaged in the community or feel that their skills are no longer useful, to feel valued and part of a community.

3.3.7. Men's Group

Wesley House in Cannons Creek has usually had a men's group. However, the most recent one started around April 2019. The programme was created as an attempt to provide a space for men who are usually 50 years old and older, retired, widowed and/or sometimes lonely, in which they can create friendships with other men and do activities they would otherwise not have had access to. There are approximately 20 men that come on and off, and there is a consistent group of 8-10 men who come regularly. Some of these men also belong to other men's groups in the area. As one of the staff members told me during an interview:

'I had a list of based group to start with, cause they are more happy to come across to us here at Wesley, so I started on a Friday, and then just slowly shortly people heard about it, started bringing their mates' (Staff member at Wesley in his/her early 40s).

The Men's Group meets up every Thursday and they go to different places and engage in a wide variety of activities. The activities are set up according to the men's interests. For instance, recently they have been to Te Papa Museum, taken a first aid course, gone on field trips to different sites and have been to a rugby league game at

the stadium. At the end of my fieldwork, they had planned to go to a yoga class. They also play board games, do some gardening, or help some of their friends through the Timebank.

After reviewing the general ethos of Southern Garden and Wesley, and some of the programmes that are run by Wesley House in Cannons Creek; I now will explore their work in more detail using a framework that looks at the phases of UA food production.

3.4. Exploring the work of Southern Garden and Wesley through the phases of urban agriculture food production

To fully understand the impact of community-oriented work on food, it is crucial to dig into all of the phases of urban food production, from harvesting to sharing and eating. Following Tornaghi (2017), there are four main stages in the urban production of food: land access, cultivation and animal breeding (which includes having knowledge and skills, and also involves the decision-making process), sharing and trading the harvest, and cooking and eating. I will use this framework to explore to what extent UA contributes to achieve food justice, linking the literature with the work that both Southern Garden and Wesley Community Action in Porirua are doing.

3.4.1. Land access

One of the main barriers for UA is the scarcity of potentially cultivable land. Even when land is available, urban food production is generally not prioritized by city planners. Abandoned brownfields are usually the terrains that are given to food growers through a temporary lease, especially in post-industrial cities (Tolleson, 2013). Typically, green projects in cities are focused more on the beautification and in giving an 'ethnic touch' to the city. Therefore, public spaces such as parklands and street verges are often used for ornamental but not edible plants, using horticultural methods heavily reliant on chemical inputs such as herbicides, fertilisers, and

pesticides (Tornaghi, 2017). Long-term land tenures are usually not available or agreed upon with commercial leases only, which means that they are charged at unaffordable market rates, discouraging community-led attempts to grow food at larger scales.

The issue of land availability is not relevant for Wesley since they are located in a private property. However, for Southern Garden, land access is crucial. They currently have a community garden license granted by Wellington City Council (WCC) that has to be renewed every ten years. When asking volunteers and Southern Garden core members about the main barrier they face, the issue of land access came up as one of the major ones.

‘There is a shortage of land in the cities and especially Wellington. I kind of disagree to an extent, I think it’s just how we use the land, there is a lot of green spaces, especially in Wellington, but it just that urban agriculture and composting isn’t prioritized at the moment, [...] there is a lot of land, it just tied up in other uses and council currently doesn’t have any way of making that available for other uses, such of what we do with our projects’ (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s)

‘Especially as land becomes more scarce in the city, land becomes precious, and the first thing to go are things like the community gardens, so it’s really important that we lay the foundations and to make essential that it survives, so I hope that the council always defend it, its right to be there’ (Female volunteer at Southern Garden in her mid-50s).

Southern Garden dreams with having food hubs every kilometre in every city in the country. The food hubs are urban farms with composting systems at the service of people in the community. In the words of one of the volunteers:

‘Food hubs where everyone’s foods scraps from that area turn into high-value compost and into healthy soils, which grows food. These places employ people; they are mental health and biodiversity oasis, which have insects, bees; they do all of these things, and they are climate change ready infrastructure’ (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

Southern Garden wants to become an example of how a successful urban farm can be in order to get the support and the funding from the City Council to expand their project and create more urban farms around the city. They believe in a decentralised network where not all urban farms have to be large, rather, where there could be a small composting hub on a compact plot of terrain and a big farm where there is more land. According to one of the volunteers I interviewed, the idea is to become a network that works throughout the city. However, the issue of land scarcity and the lack of prioritization of UA in policy makes it difficult for them to build up that network. This is why they are having conversations with the local government and are pushing for a policy change.

In Wellington, the local government does not have a designated strategy and policy for UA. The policies that the city council currently use to support UA are land policies such as The Community Garden Guidelines, the Reserve Management Plans, and the Reserves Act (Adams & Chicca, 2014). At the moment, Wellington's planning framework and its implementation are relatively permissive. The (WCC) community garden coordination strategies are directly relatable to UA and local food, particularly the allocation of land in response to community groups' requests. The WCC has developed guidelines for community gardens and a process for dealing with applications from community groups. The successful applicants get a lease for the land and they can apply for funding. Support is given by connecting people in the sector, as well as guidance in the process of setting up a community garden. There are currently 16 community gardens and 4 urban farms in Wellington (Marlik-Neale & Green, 2018). However, although WCC has a broad environmental policy, they do not mention food within their annual and long-term plans (Duignan, 2011).

According to a recent report on sustainable food in Wellington, the Planning for Growth and the Urban Growth Strategy is likely to bring in new tensions and more competition for space between residential and commercial land-use, the natural environment and public infrastructure (Marlik-Neale & Green, 2018). Land availability has been identified as one of the main barriers to UA in Wellington, which is also limited by the topography of the city. However, as Reynolds and Cohen (2016)

and Hoover (2013) highlight, even when land is available, it usually goes to non-community members or to gentrifiers. This removes the control of communities over their own land and is particularly worrying when these lands are communal or Indigenous lands. Additionally, from an environmental justice perspective, accessing clean soil is challenging in areas with mixed industrial and residential uses where the soil is highly contaminated. Such areas are usually populated by communities of colour and low-income residents (Sze, 2007; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016), which demonstrates how the racial-capitalist system works to marginalise and exclude people by race and class.

3.4.2. Having the knowledge and skills to practice UA:

Another main barrier to harvesting is the lack of knowledge and capacities. This issue extends from the lack of knowledge on current policies around UA and the resources available such as land and grants; to the lack of financial resources and skills to maintain soil and crops health. The latter is particularly important because having the skills to achieve sustainable farming breaks the dependency from the agrochemical industry (Tornaghi, 2017).

3.4.2.1. *Southern Garden*

When conducting my interviews with Southern Garden participants, one of the main issues raised by its members was the lack of knowledge and expertise in UA. As one of its core members said when I asked him about the main barriers or the farm:

‘There is not much knowledge around urban farming, because it’s so new no one knows how to do this stuff, so we are kind of just try to teach ourselves, and there is a lot of good support like the national network [from the organisation of urban farmers]. They are providing a lot of that support, knowledge advice, but there’s a massive lack of knowledge. We’ve spent the last 6 months looking for an urban farmer to come and run it, and there is no one, and we’ve just found someone. But yeah, a lack of skilled people who can do this, which is again why there is this skill

provision here, this is like skill job creation pathway. So hopefully, we will have lots of urban farmers around the country who can do the stuff, that can come and set up an urban farm and have all the skills to be able to do it from start to finish, you know, the gardening, the composting, the planning, the relationships, community building, all of that'. (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

Although Southern Garden has struggled at times due to the lack of personnel with expertise in urban farming, they have developed a set of skills and knowledge from practising UA and learning along the way. In fact, they have developed various workshops where they have shared their experience with the broader community. Such workshops are usually free entry or koha. Now that they are a part of an organisation of urban farmers, they have access to the expertise of other urban farmers around the country, which has helped them both in the development of their project and in sharing their knowledge (especially about composting) with the network. However, there is still a lack of skills and technical assistance in conducting evaluations and documenting the positive outcomes of the farm (such as carbon sequestration) which could help them to prove to the City Council the value of their work and could build a stronger case for them when applying for funding.

Something that Southern Garden could do as a way to face their limited expertise on urban farming, while simultaneously working towards dismantling the idea of UA as a white-led movement, is to partner with immigrants who have been gardening for many years (before urban farming and community gardens became mainstream). Such migrants carry a vast knowledge in how to garden in city environments. This could be particularly useful with the variable weather conditions of Wellington. As expressed by some scholars, when reflecting on their fieldwork with communities of colour that practice UA, many of them agreed that urban agriculture is a 'white invention' (Hern, 2016). People have planted food for generations in urban settings due to food insecurity issues, or as a way to have an extra (sometimes primary) income for their households. Thus, allying with these invisible experts could be a great way to learn from their knowledge and skills and to acknowledge their work as pioneers of the 'movement' that has completely unsighted them.

3.4.2.2. Wesley

In regards to Wesley, the team has found that in many cases, people who get involved already have gardening skills. This is notably helpful since they then help those who do not have such skills to develop them. Following a report made by Wesley about their Community Pantry:

‘Home vegetable gardens used to be commonplace in Cannons Creek and the loss of food growing skills has been within a generation. [People’s] knowledge in gardening has been identified, and from this group have emerged individuals with natural leadership qualities to help drive this initiative. Those participants who have limited skills and knowledge, work alongside others more confident and gain these skills’ (Wesley Community Action, 2012, p. 6).

Wesley provides the tools and technical support to the volunteers on gardening and composting, and also in cooking (through the Real Good Kai course). They also run skill-building programmes around gardening, composting and cooking. All training sessions are free for the community. According to one of the staff members, what is most valuable about these skills is that they can be transferable. People can transfer these skills to their friends and family, and they can also use them at home, which gives them a sense of independence and empowerment.

3.4.3. Decision-making process

Similarly, the decision-making process of what is planted (from the type of seed to the kind of crop) and the way it is going to be harvested, is a primary issue that is also worth considering. The decisions made at this stage, even the values that the project is following, reflect the voices inside the garden or urban farm of those that have been privileged. This issue is particularly relevant in neighbourhoods with communities of colour and/or with a refugee background. In some ways, in this phase, we can see which voices are included and which ones have been left out. Also,

we can evaluate to what extent urban farms or community gardens are following food sovereignty principles.

3.4.3.1. Southern Garden

As stated previously, there is a dilemma around the type of crops that Southern Garden should or should not have. There is a tension between sowing Indigenous plants that are culturally appropriated for Māori people and planting foods that are highly demanded in ‘fancy’ restaurants such as organic lettuce and edible flowers. Although Southern Garden is still working on how to manage this dilemma, there is something that they are sure about – that is, the type of seed they are using, which are open pollination, non-hybridized, from heritage seed lines, and when possible, organic. Furthermore, they use sustainable agricultural practices and avoid the use of chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.

At an organisational level, they work with a system called holacracy, which as explained above, has a more horizontal organisational approach. This is why they chose to use this organisational system, according to one of Southern Garden volunteers:

‘The idea with holacracy is that it shouldn’t be a massive need to keep discussing with the wider group that if you can delegate out the obvious day to day role actions then they can just be autonomous with what they do, but at the higher level where decisions need to be made, ideally will occur through a consensus. Still, there is no one at the top leading any decisions, or no one has the final say unless it’s explicitly in their role, then they can do what they like’ (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

Holacracy has been the method Southern Garden has found to have a horizontal approach in their decision-making process, where everyone in the group has a voice. Also, the system allows decisions to be made faster by trusting the smaller circles that have specific functions and duties. In this way, Southern Garden challenges the

mainstream vertical structures promoted by the neoliberal system. I will explore this topic in greater depth in the next chapter.

3.4.3.2. *Wesley*

The following is a description made by one of the staff members of how the community garden started in Wesley House:

‘So lots of social workers here had clients who they work with, men in particular who were very disconnected from one another, who were highly isolated, who were not very connected to the community but were here because they wanted to be close to their families, and so some of them were sleeping in cars, some of them were lonely up to a point of where they would come here to this community house and hang out with the social workers. So the social workers at the time decided to pull a men’s group together, and so the men’s group with some other community members were the ones that dug up the garden and created a community garden, so it wasn’t done by staff, it was done by the people here, so they started to cave around the area of the back of the house first [...] So pretty much the community of men were the ones who did the garden outside and what was planted was based on what people said they wanted to eat, so yeah that’s how the community garden started was as a result of people who came through the food bank and said and named the solution and then the men’s group was formed. The gardens pretty much were created by them. The food that was grown went to people who came for the food bank, and they reciprocated by planting things in the garden, and the crop was added into the food bank as well’ (Female staff member at Wesley in her early 40s).

The community garden was born as a community initiative. There was someone hired by Wesley to make a study and find out ways to expand and improve Wesley’s work. She did a survey and talked to the food bank users to find further ways Wesley could support them to achieve food security. Many of the community members said that it would be great to have a garden, and that was how, with the help of the men’s group, the garden was created. In terms of what is planted and the decision-making process to choose what to sow, it is also consulted with the community. This is how the process manifests, according to one of the staff members:

‘I’m meant to be the facilitator but what that actually means is I go like what you wanna eat, what you wanna cook, what you wanna see here, just to see what uptake is, come and help me plant this, oh you like this? Pūhā patch? Sure, you can start it. So in terms of one level is what do people want to see in the garden, what do they want to learn to plant, we host schools groups as well, and various other groups that come through, so that’s the consultation part [...] what we want to do is to say to people ‘this is what can be grown here right now, you can replicate that at home’ and we try to keep it as low cost as possible. In terms of the planning of the garden, on the one hand, we do ask people, but on a second hand, we do say that this is also what you can do as well in your home garden, so we have that transferable knowledge thing going on here’. (Female staff member at Wesley in her early 40s).

Most of the plants harvested in the garden are traditionally used by Māori people such as silverbeets, potatoes, kumara, kamo kamo, and pūhā. They also allow members of the community to come and plant whatever they want to in the garden, and they provide them with the tools and skills support if necessary. As stated by one of the staff members:

‘The main purpose of the garden I’d say [is] that people can also have their own sovereignty in growing their own food’ (Staff member at Wesley in her early 40s).

Wesley provides a space for people who are suffering from food insecurity to plant their own food, from their personal preference, and that is culturally appropriate for them. The garden has become a great tool through which people become empowered without becoming dependent on Wesley’s help. This community garden is an excellent example of how UA can work in advancing food sovereignty and how it can be a tool to decolonise the food system. However, although people of the community are active members in the design of the programmes, there are still power relations in the process and Wesley has more power in making the final decisions.

In a world where fast and processed food is mainstream and promoted by the media and the low prices in the supermarkets, planting indigenous plants and reclaiming the use of these plants in people's diets (and in some cases in their medicines) is a way of revindicating Indigenous' culture and knowledge. Following McClintock (2018a), the practice of UA by Indigenous people can be a great way to work towards self-determination and decolonisation. Growing food in the city can help people to (re) connect to their Indigenous and non-European foodways and to forge bonds of interdependence both between the members of the community and the non-human world (Bang, 2016; Thomas, 2017; McClintock, 2018a). Similarly, UA can help Indigenous communities to regain their capacity of being self-sufficient by being able to provide their own food, medicines and even their own clothing (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). McClintock (2018a), elaborating on Tuck and Yang's (2012) work, warns us that 'decolonization is not simply a question of reconnecting to the land, but also of regaining control of it' (p. 8). UA can be a great tool in the settler-colonial city to do decolonising work, empower communities and change the system from the inside.

3.4.4. Sharing and trading the harvest

UA is often associated with food provision, food security and (in some cases) with job creation; however, a closer look at the distribution of the produce gives us a good sense of how they are engaging with food justice work (Tolleson, 2013). There are different models of distribution that depend on the type of urban farm or community garden (allotment gardens, business-led urban farms, grassroots-led projects, charitable owned gardens and so on) (Tornaghi, 2017). In this section, I will discuss how Southern Garden and Wesley share and/or trade their harvest through the lenses of food justice.

3.4.4.1. *Southern Garden*

As discussed before, Southern Garden donates 50% of their harvest to Kaibosh Food Rescue and community kitchens, and the other 50% is sold to local restaurants. Also, they give away some of the produce to volunteers. However, they have been struggling with the fact that they were producing food for prestigious restaurants in Wellington, which meant that they were providing food for the upper-class of the city. This fact made some of the members of the farms uncomfortable because they felt they were creating more inequality, but at the same time, they needed to pay the bills to keep running. During the completion of this thesis, Southern Garden created a new way of selling their produce. Instead of selling it to 'fancy' restaurants, they are now selling affordable 'vege boxes' of seasonal organic vegetables and herbs for the community and they have been notably popular. I will further explore these tensions and the way Southern Garden is trying to survive in a capitalist-driven economy in Chapter 6.

3.4.4.2. *Wesley*

The following description gives a broad picture of how Wesley distributes the food that grows in the garden:

'So, the garden is a community pantry essentially. The food bank is also a community pantry, so in terms of distribution anyone can help themselves really, we've got fruit trees around too and so when they are ripening, and they are abundant is very visual, so the garden essentially is a visual billboard, sort of speak, to say to people come in, come serve yourself, there's kai here, there's food here, come join us with the mahi here, we love you, we want you to be part of the whanau, and so don't feel like you are getting the hand up on stuff, but actually, there is an exchange going on here' (Female staff at Wesley in her early 40s).

As explained in the previous chapter, part of the food harvested in the garden goes to the volunteers that helped to sow, plant, and take care of the harvest, but it can also go to anyone in the community. Some of the produce is used to supplement the

food bank, and some of it goes to the Real Good Kai course. Sometimes there is some communal cooking, for example, in apple season. Although Wesley does not sell any of the produce that comes from the garden, they do sell fresh vegetables and fruits through the Vege Co-op programme. Many people that come to Wesley for different programmes such as the Good Cents or the food bank become users of the Vege Co-op once they gain more financial stability. The Co-op also helps them access fresh and healthy food at a reasonable price without having to rely on the food bank anymore. When there are leftovers from the Co-op, or when people forget to pick up their order, the food is redistributed both into the food bank and into the Real Good Kai programme.

As shown both in the community garden and in the Fruit and Vege Co-op, the sharing of the food in Wesley is done in a highly communal and reciprocated way. From my fieldwork, I noted that most people who take part in the harvest of the garden have been involved in Wesley volunteering in some way, although this is not a requirement. Similarly, the Fruit and Vege Co-op was established to offer affordable fresh food. Both programmes seek to become alternatives where people can access fresh food in a non-charitable or paternalistic way. In the case of the community garden, it requires some reciprocity, and in the case of the Co-op, purchasing food at an affordable price.

3.4.5. Cooking and eating

At the final sphere of the chain is the actual transformation of produce into edible food. This last phase is usually ignored in the academic debates around food justice and UA. This issue has two main sides; on one hand, food waste, and on the other, the lack of cooking skills to transform fresh food into delicious and culturally appropriated food. In regards to food-waste, the statistics are breath-taking. According to FAO (2013), approximately 1.3 billion tonnes of food gets lost or wasted every year, worth around US\$ 680 billion in industrialized countries and US\$310 billion in developing countries. The contrast between 'Global North' countries and 'Global South' countries is tremendous. As an example, the amount of food wasted

annually (around 222 million tonnes) in 'rich' countries is equivalent to the entire net food production of Sub-Saharan Africa, that is, approximately 230 million tonnes (FAO, 2013). The issue with food waste is not the waste of food itself but the squandering of resources such as water, land, energy, labour, and capital that on top of that produce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) that contribute to climate change.

From an environmental perspective, food wastage's carbon footprint is estimated at 3.3 billion tonnes of CO₂ released every year worldwide. The methane emissions from landfills are also massive and one of the most harmful for the environment (FAO, 2013). Furthermore, such estimations do not take into account the emissions generated by transporting food from the distributor to the supermarket or the energy used to store food both in the supermarkets and at home. Similarly, it is estimated that around 250km³ of water that is used each year to produce food (that ends up in the bin) gets wasted. In terms of land, approximately 1.4 billion hectares of land (28% of the world agricultural area) are used to produce food that goes to waste (FAO, 2013). In Aotearoa New Zealand, around 157,389 tonnes of food is thrown away each year, which is the equivalent of 271 jumbo jets charged with food. All of this wasted food is worth about NZD\$1.17 billion per year (Love Food Hate Waste NZ, 2020). This is particularly concerning when looking at the statistics of food insecurity in the country. According to the University of Otago and Ministry of Health (2011), more than 7% of kiwi households are living with insufficient food. Additionally, the latest Child Poverty Monitor report (2019) shows that one in five children under the age of 15 in New Zealand experience moderate-to-severe food insecurity.

Household food waste is partially the result of a lack of knowledge surrounding how to cook and store food. Following Tornaghi (2017), the lack of cooking and food-management skills are a part of what she calls 'food disabilities', which refers to the almost inexistent literacy on food cultivation and preparation, and the lack of spaces to learn those 'abilities'. According to her:

‘for food justice to be achieved in the long run we need a greater investment in the creation of urban environments that nurture a re-skilling culture in which everyone has plenty of opportunities and incentives to learn, value, engage and take full control of his/her own nutrition as part of a normal living experience’ (pp. 791-792).

Having cooking skills is vital in the fight against the corporate food system. If people can transform fresh and nutritious food into tasty and diverse meals, they can overcome the appeal of cheap, processed, non-seasonal, fast and unhealthy food.

3.4.5.1. Southern Garden and Wesley

Southern Garden does not have any cooking programme, in part because their focus is on food growing and composting. Besides, they do not have the facilities, nor the time or the skilled team to run such programmes. Meanwhile, Wesley counts staff members with the expertise on healthy cooking and the resources and space to give this service to the community. The Real Good Kai, their programme that offers cooking lessons, was also born from a conversation between Wesley members and the community who together identified that even when people were accessing fresh food, they did not know how to prepare it and turn it into a tasty meal. The idea came initially from the Vege Co-op team who found that people did not know what to do with the produce that was delivered in the packs and therefore, there was a lot of food wasting. From that realisation and conversations with the community, they started a partnership with the Regional Public Health that counted with a team of nutritionists and dieticians that helped to create the recipes according to what was delivered each week in the packs. According to one of Wesley’s staff members, the primary purpose of the course is:

‘I think nourishment is one over the joy of eating and cooking and the skills that come with that, not only for the individual but for a whole family, a whole neighbourhood. To be able to cook for yourself and your family and not to rely on takeaways, not to rely on someone else to cook for your family, again is a whole empowerment, sovereignty thing to have those. And secondly, to be able to pass those skills on to the family, cause

that's kind of where memories are developed. It's the sense of, again if we are talking about food literacy and being able to do that for yourself and your family. If you can access food that provides some kind of security, you know what to do with that, and add your own creativity and spin to that. That's another level of security, and you can do that for your family, then again it adds another level. So that kind of nourishment is not just what you put in your plate. But also, what you pass for yourself and the next generation as well' (Female staff member at Wesley in her early 40s).

According to Wesley, having cooking skills goes beyond having the ability to transform raw food into a tasty meal. For them, it is about strengthening community and family ties, about gaining skills that can be passed to the next generations and to empower people to not be dependent on fast, processed and takeaway food. However, Wesley does not judge people's foodways as many white-led food organisations do due to a lack of understanding of people's contexts (such as limited food choices) that is fuelled by colourblindness and white supremacy (Guthman, 2008; Pulido, 2015; Bonds & Inwood, 2016). There is huge respect toward peoples eating habits, and although the classes are focused on cooking meals that are healthy and, on a budget, they are flexible with the recipes so people can adapt them according to their wishes and cultural background.

Although Wesley acknowledges the systemic issues that led people to adopt 'unhealthy' diets, they encourage people to include more vegetables and fruit in their diets and teach them different ways they can prepare them (and also harvest them) since sometime people do not know how to transform 'boring vegetables' into something delicious that everybody in the family can enjoy. Following Tolleson (2013), no stigmatising and stereotyping people for their food choices is a way of working towards food justice and enhance anti-oppression work. In fact, all Wesley programmes work as judgement-free spaces since some of the people who engage with Wesley are burdened with feelings of shame and judgement. They often feel shame because of financial distress, resulting in the need for food parcels. Wesley provides some support and help through their programmes while acknowledging the agency of the recipients of such programmes.

As explained in the previous chapter, Wesley shapes their cooking classes according to participant's feedback, needs, and wishes. According to one of the staff members, the main reasons why people engage with the programme are: (1) people want to learn how to cook using more vegetables, (2) they want to improve their health (usually advised by their GP to have a healthier diet), (3) they want to cook on a budget, and (4) they get cooking skills that they can share that with their family and friends. The course structure is co-designed with the participants, and it intends to help people gain confidence in their skills and expand their eating options. Similarly, Real Good Kai allows participants to (re) gain control over their food choices, because they can decide what to cook and how to cook it when they have the skills to do it. In other words, it helps them to be more food sovereign. In general, the course work with food justice principles, the classes are free, and people who could not afford to pay for cooking lessons get the opportunity to develop their cooking skills.

As aforementioned, the Real Good Kai programme was born from a conversation within the Fruit and Vege Co-op team. In the beginning, with the collaboration of the RPH, the recipes that were created were based on what was in every week's pack, printed and delivered within the food bags. However, as one of Wesley team members explained me:

'We stopped doing that because I was getting bags back the next week and the recipes were still and there, so now those recipes are available online, the regional public health, their website, they have a whole Fruit and Vege Co-op page, where you can go into each Co-op and have a look and stuff, but yeah they got all the recipes that we always used to do anyway, and plus we can always pop them up in our Facebook pages if anyone asks' (Male staff member at Wesley in his early 40s).

Often someone from the team will post on the Porirua Fruit and Vege Co-op Facebook page about what is in the next week's pack, usually putting recipe ideas, so that people can do their shopping around that. This is another way that Wesley

engages with the broader community in giving them ideas and step-by-step recipe instructions that are quite easy to follow and that are also low-cost.

Although those are the most structured and official ways Wesley works in the final chain of UA, which is cooking and eating, they are always sharing food in the House. Every meeting, every event, gathering or celebration includes food. They believe food is a great way to make people and communities closer, more empowered and resilient. In sum, Wesley is a remarkable example of a food activist organisation that engages from the beginning to the end of the food chain. They work with food justice and food sovereignty principles (even though they do not call it that way), and engage with anti-oppression work in their daily practices (which will be explored further in Chapter 4 and 5).

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced the community groups that are part of this research. I made a general description of their organisations and their ethos. I also explored their work through the phases of UA food production as an attempt to dig deeper into their values, their outreach, and even their limitations and contradictions/tensions. In the following chapter, I will explore how both the Southern Garden and Wesley engage with food security and food sovereignty work through the lenses of the literature around these topics.

CHAPTER 4

4. It's not all about producing food

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the food security paradigm, and I explain how the food sovereignty movement was born as a response to the policies this paradigm was promoting. I analyse the ways both Southern Garden and Wesley engage with food security and food sovereignty in light of the central debates of the literature around these topics. Finally, I mention some of the tensions Southern Garden faces, which I would explore in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.2. The food security paradigm

The concept of food security has evolved during the last thirty years due to the changes in national and international policies and the pressure of grassroots movements around the world (Heidhues et al., 2004). During the post-war period, agricultural development and food self-sufficiency became mainstream worldwide, which put food productivity at centre stage (Pachón, 2013). During the World Food Conference in 1974, the first official definition of food security was given: 'Food security is the availability, at all times, of adequate global food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices' (United Nations, 1975). This first definition focused on food supply, which encouraged governments to increase their food production as a way to combat hunger but did not acknowledge the systemic and structural issues that created hunger in the first place.

Following a top-down approach, food security became recurrent rhetoric used by governments and international institutions to promote the neoliberal agenda (Pachón, 2013). One of the main ways this agenda was implemented was through the Green Revolution that was boosted by the food security discourse (Pachón et al.,

2016). The main goal of the green revolution was making agriculture more efficient to alleviate the world's hunger. However, in practice, this process led to higher corporate control over food chains (Kula, 2016). This corporate-centric and anthropocentric approach influenced the way food security was seen in the mid-'80s (Shiva, 2012). In 1983, FAO expanded the concept of food security beyond mere access to food. This new definition paid attention to the balance between demand and supply, a notably neoliberal way to frame food security. Similarly, the World Bank definition of food security in 1986 emphasised the ability of people to buy food (Jarosz, 2009b).

These conceptualisations of food security were aligned with the neoliberal development discourse in the 80s and 90s where the free market was promoted worldwide, and the global food system became increasingly corporatised and industrialised (Jarosz, 2014). This paradigm emphasises individuals' buying power in a free trade, globalised, industrialised and corporatised food system (Curtin, 1995; Jarosz, 2014). In other words, it promotes industrial food production, distribution and consumption as the best ways to meet the demands of food in an overpopulated world, and as a way to alleviate poverty (Kula, 2016). By early 2000, the FAO defined food security as: 'a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life' (FAO, 2001). This definition, as the previous ones, gave justification for food aid programmes that fall into paternalistic and colonial understandings of agricultural development (Curtin, 1995; Jarosz, 2014).

Food security debates and definitions have remained notably similar over time. Following Maye and Kirwan (2013), it includes two main goals '[...] first, that food production needs to increase by 50% by 2030 to meet rising demand; and second, that food production needs to double by 2050 to feed a world population of 9 billion' (p. 1). Under the food security concept, the origin of food is not relevant, nor the way food is cultivated, nor the farmer's living conditions, nor the environmental impacts of conducting such intense agricultural production (Pachón, 2013).

The food security paradigm serves the neoliberal economy and its attempt to privilege the free market under supposedly good intentions of helping ‘the poor’, ‘underdeveloped’ countries to ‘catch up’ with the more industrialised countries; while the inequitable distribution of resources and uneven relations of power remain. However, as history has shown, this has not been the case: although hunger has decreased, it has not been a consistent change. Instead, issues as starvation, undernourishment, and obesity have become the main problems related to the current global food system (Pachón, 2013). As a response to the failure of this paradigm, peasant and Indigenous peoples (predominantly from the ‘Global South’) created a new framework to understand and address the issue of food insecurity. This framework is known as food sovereignty, and I will explore it below.

4.3. A counter-proposal from the South: Food sovereignty

The concept of food sovereignty was developed at the beginning of the nineties as an alternative to neoliberal policies and the global corporate agrifood system (Pachón, 2013). Such neoliberal policies encouraged governments to reduce and/or remove agricultural subsidies and in general, prevent national governments from intervening in the market. Instead, there was a significant focus on high-tech scientific approaches, investment in GMO crops, and liberalisation of the food production and trade. These policies were enforced and supported by organisations such as the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the United Nations (UN) through the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) (Wittman et al., 2010).

In opposition to this context, peasants, small-scale farmers, farmworkers and Indigenous communities organised a transnational agrarian movement called La Vía Campesina in 1993. The movement argued that the food, economic and environmental crises are the result of decades of destructive neoliberal policies based on industrial, capital-intensive and corporate-led models of agriculture

(Wittman et al., 2010). La Vía Campesina represents 182 organisations from 81 countries and has become one of the most influential voices of radical opposition to the industrialised and neoliberalised model of agriculture that has only brought food dependency, malnutrition and food vulnerability in developing countries (Laroche & Postolle, 2013).

In 1996, La Via Campesina gave its first declaration on food sovereignty (Jarosz, 2009b; Jarosz, 2014), defining it as:

‘The right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity. We have the right to produce our own food in our own territory. Food sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security’ (La Via Campesina, 1996).

Food sovereignty has become an approach that contrasts with the food security paradigm. In some ways, it is an alternative. Through food security lenses, the main goal is to increase food production to combat global hunger through the implementation of neoliberal policies, which have been a spectacular failure in reducing poverty and eradicating hunger (Wittman et al., 2010). These policies do not pay particular attention to how, where, and by whom food is produced. On the contrary, food sovereignty focus on improving the quality of life for peasants, Indigenous populations and, in general, rural inhabitants. It also considers the way food is produced and the environmental and social impacts of such production (Pachón, 2013). Food sovereignty aims to guarantee people’s food security by giving them the power and the right to choose, based on their cultural heritage, the kind of food they want to eat; instead of those choices being made by corporate food industries; as is the case within the food security model.

In 2007, La Vía Campesina gave a broader and more detailed definition of food sovereignty during the Forum for Food Sovereignty in Nyéléni, Mali (see Figure 8).

‘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. Food sovereignty prioritizes local and national economies and markets and empowers peasants and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal – fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social and economic classes and generations’.

Figure 8: Forum for Food Sovereignty in Nyéléni. Source: Declaration of Nyeleni (2007).

Food sovereignty challenges the basis of modern society based on capitalist principles that have led to the divorce between farmers and their rights over the food they produce, and to a disconnection between people and food, which is now monopolised and traded under free-market dynamics. Rather than regarding food as mere goods that are traded in the market; the food sovereignty approach demands the recognition of the social connections inherent in producing, consuming and sharing food. Although food sovereignty does not negate trade, it promotes the formulation of trade policies that protect the rights of peasant and Indigenous peoples. It encourages people to rethink their relationship with food, agriculture, the environment, and to one another (Wittman et al., 2010).

Food sovereignty prioritises local agricultural production and promotes the access of peasants and landless people to land, water, seeds, and funding. Therefore, this movement draws attention to the need for land reforms, and the rejection of GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms). It also supports the importance of changing gender relations by ensuring gender equality, respect and freedom from violence for

women; since food sovereignty is only possible if it takes place at the same time as political sovereignty of peoples (Wittman et al., 2010).

Although the food sovereignty movement was created by peasants and Indigenous movements across the 'Global South', grassroots activists from the 'Global North' are also using this framework among communities of colour and from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Alkon & Mares, 2012). Food sovereignty has become especially relevant in urban contexts, as most of the global population is living in urban environments. This framework is essential to urban contexts since the production of food is embedded in the global food system, and urban farms and community gardens can choose to be part of this industrialised, vast and unequal system or to become an alternative model by adopting food sovereignty principles in their agricultural practices (Block et al., 2012; Hoover, 2013). Further, producing food in the cities could help people to reconnect with food and their local farmers, and lead to positive environmental outcomes such as reducing food miles (Jansma et al., 2012; Mok et al., 2014).

4.4. Understanding urban agriculture through the lenses of food security and food sovereignty

Food security was a topic that was well-known and central to both of the case studies I worked with. In this section, I will explore how, although both projects have food security as one of their main goals, they go beyond this paradigm and engage with food sovereignty work (even if they did not use that specific term). I will examine these two projects separately, since the organisations have notably different contexts and ways to approach these frameworks.

4.4.1. Providing food where it's needed: Wesley Community Action - Cannons Creek

As aforementioned, Porirua and particularly Cannons Creek is a vulnerable area (see Chapter 3). Food insecurity is one of the main issues discussed and addressed by Wesley House in Cannons Creek. Following the definition given by the Report for the Obesity Action Coalition on food security for Pacific peoples in NZ, Wesley understands food security as 'having easy access to enough, healthy, culturally acceptable food every day [that] must be culturally and socially acceptable' (Rush & Rusk, 2009, p. 9). Based on that definition, they have developed different programmes that have evolved over time to face this issue. The first initiative was the food bank that was created in 1992. Although the number of users of the food bank has decreased over the years, it is still used, and needed, in the area. According to one of the staff members, in 2019 an average of 56 families accessed the food bank each month. However, the Wesley team acknowledge the need for facing food insecurity to go beyond having a food bank. Therefore, throughout the years, they have developed different programmes in partnership with the Cannons Creek community to provide a more comprehensive response to local food insecurity. Their programmes include a community garden, a Fruit and Vege Co-op, cooking classes (Real Good Kai), and the Good Cents course (for further explanation of these programmes see Chapter 3).

Along the way toward developing solutions to food insecurity with the community of Cannons Creek, Wesley realised that the food security paradigm was limited and did not engage with further issues like food sovereignty, community and environmental resilience, social justice, people disempowerment, and systemic issues that lead to structural poverty (Wesley Community Action, 2012). The Wesley team recognised that by only providing food (as they were initially doing when they started the food bank), the issue of food insecurity was not addressed appropriately. According to one of the staff members, the food bank reinforced paternalistic dynamics, and it was disempowering people by making them dependent on a service. From my fieldwork and interviews, I could see how everyone working in Wesley was aware of the

systemic issues that lead to food insecurity like the high rates of unemployment, precarious government assistance, and high prices for rent (Wesley Community Action, 2012).

Some of the staff members in Wesley expressed that some people who come to ask for the services that Wesley provides feel a sense of shame. In order to overcome this, they foster an environment of reciprocity, trust, and relationship building. They are aware that although there are systemic issues that need to be addressed, there is also work that can be done locally daily. One of the main focuses is building community and environmental resilience. People suffering from food insecurity are often also facing financial issues. Wesley aims to work toward financial and food security, assisting people in sustainable and empowering ways. The projects they develop go beyond the concepts generally associated with food security, discussed in the literature as focusing only on providing food to people, without thinking about other issues such as how food is produced, by whom, and in which way.

Instead of taking a neoliberal and paternalistic approach, they decided to work with the community to find solutions to the issue of food insecurity together. Thus, most of the programmes that Wesley currently offers have been created in partnership with the community. Wesley House has gone beyond providing food and has focused on broader issues such as the environmental and social outcomes of local food production. Instead of solely focusing on food production, their programmes engage with food preparation and community sharing as well (Wesley Community Action, 2012).

4.4.2. From seed to plate: Food sovereignty in Wesley Community Action- Cannons Creek

As aforementioned, Wesley has evolved into a community food centre where people can grow and harvest fruit and vegetables, share their skills and learn about gardening, composting, cooking and healthy eating while building social skills, confidence, and strong community links (Wesley Community Action, 2012). Under

the Community Pantry project, Wesley House aims to grow food for the community focusing on the needs of low-income families and individuals, since the team has identified that the main barrier to food security in Aotearoa New Zealand is poverty. They are aware that the food bank is still needed, as long as the adverse economic conditions, the high rates of unemployment and the limited government assistance prevail. However, they have created programmes to help people to achieve financial stability through the Good Cents Course which was created as an attempt to teach people how to manage their finances, and how to regain control over their economic lives; which interlinks with a more holistic approach to food security.

The Community Pantry, which involves the food bank and the community garden, works with a long-term base management structure. They usually apply for long-term funding that pertains to all of Wesley's programmes since they complement each other. In the words of one of the staff members:

'you need long-term funding plans for people, not a short one, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, because and then what? you know. So, when we look at the whole generations of people that we work with, that we need long-term funding plans as well' (Female staff member at Wesley in her early 40s).

According to the staff members at Wesley, throughout the creation of the community garden, people felt a sense of ownership and reciprocity. They were giving their time and skills, and in return, they were receiving fresh and healthy food. As the Declaration of Nyéléni (2007) states: 'Food sovereignty is only possible if it takes place at the same time as political sovereignty of peoples' (p. 5). In this sense, the garden has become a tool through which people have recovered a sense of sovereignty, since they have autonomy over the food that is planted and the way it is grown. According to the Wesley team, this has been particularly important for Māori people who have reconnected with the land and, further, with their food and culture.

The Community Pantry views food ‘not only as an end in itself but also as a means to achieving broader goals of empowerment, environmental awareness, and health’ (Wesley Community Action, 2012, p. 4). The project does not focus on providing enough food for the people who are struggling with food security, but rather on giving the tools and support people need to regain control over their lives. The programme provides multiple benefits to the community; such as education in horticulture, food preparation, and home economics. It minimises dependency by allowing people to participate in the community and by helping them gain financial stability through the Good Cents course that teaches them how to manage their money and how to budget. The programme also limits community isolation (which is particularly prevalent among older populations) by encouraging people to leave their homes and build relationships with other members of the community through the programmes that Wesley offers.

Although the food bank keeps operating because it is still needed, Wesley has tried to have a food bank that does not have long waits, intrusive needs testing, or a lack of choice in food, as traditional food bank models tend to have. Instead, Wesley has developed different programmes with the aim that eventually the food bank would no longer be needed. These alternative initiatives were (co) designed with the community to help people gain power over their food choices from seed to fork; meaning, from what people want to plant in the garden to how they want to prepare it and eat it.

4.4.2.1. Planting the seeds of resistance: The community garden

One of the primary purposes of the garden is to help people reconnect to the land and the community (Wesley Community Action, 2012). When describing the community garden, one of the staff members at Wesley said:

‘[is a] billboard of abundance, of saying to people you can have some food sovereignty and that is essentially a food bank outside [...] people

can have their own food sovereignty in growing their own food’ (Female staff member at Wesley in her early 40s)

In terms of what is planted in the garden, it depends on what people want to eat. The most demanded and planted crops are silverbeets, potatoes, and pumpkins. There are other fruits and vegetables, and many of them are traditionally Māori crops like pūhā and kumara since there is a considerably large Māori population in the area. This is particularly relevant given that these crops, especially the Indigenous ones, help to connect people with their own culture and traditions. In a context where Indigenous seeds, traditions and ways of life have been diminished, marginalised and replaced by Western values and lifestyles, it gives people sovereignty over their food choices. Following Wittman et al. (2010), there is an ‘inextricable connection between food, culture, and democracy’ (p. 5). The simple act of planting a seed that is not commercially produced is an act of rebellion; it is a way to resist colonial and neoliberal dynamics.

In a world where food has become commoditised, planting Indigenous seeds and eating traditional food is a subversive act. The current food system privileges mass production of food, GMO ‘technology’ and the use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers that have had dire consequences on the environment and the local communities (Shiva, 2012). Food is a way people preserve and express their culture and traditions (Shillington, 2013). The invasion of industrialised food in the markets is another way of colonisation and cultural alienation. Reclaiming the use of traditional plants like pūhā is a truly powerful way of reclaiming food sovereignty, especially in a context where often the only access to food is takeaways and convenience stores full of processed and unhealthy food options.

4.4.2.2. Connecting with the food on my table: The real good kai course

The Real Good Kai was created as a way to teach people how to use the produce they were getting from the Fruit and Vege Co-op. However, it has become a way to help people in general (most participants are not members of the Co-op) to learn how to

cook more healthily. According to one of the staff members, the primary purpose of the course is:

[...] the nourishment is one over the joy of eating and cooking and the skills that come with that, not only for the individual but for a whole family, a whole neighbourhood. To be able to cook for yourself and your family and not to rely on takeaways. To be able to cook for yourself and your family is a whole empowerment, sovereignty thing that the course brings (Female staff member at Wesley in her early 40s).

These knowledge and skills are called by Wesley 'food literacy' that refers to the ability to cook for yourself and the ones you love, which provides food security and a sense of independence and empowerment. One of the greatest things about the course according to one of their facilitators is that the knowledge and skills that the participants earn can be passed on to the next generations. Wesley believes that food is a way to connect to our loved ones, and a way to create memories, traditions, and culture. The recipes are based on affordable food that people are likely to already have in their pantry. Wesley teaches people how to cook affordable, healthy food from scratch. The recipes are always flexible and can be adapted according to people's tastes and cultural backgrounds. This is also a way of giving people freedom over their food choices, they do not have to follow the recipe strictly, but adapt it to their own wishes and budgets.

The course is developed and evaluated through the PCOMs, which give Wesley live feedback that allow the team to plan the course according to people's goals and needs. According to one of the staff members, 'the course is not developed independently, but it's developed with the people, it's almost a co-designed course, so the PCOMS it's pretty much just a measurement to see how we can improve things and to see whether we hitting them up or missing them up with them' (Females staff at Wesley in her early 40s). Based on the feedback and the need of the participants of the course, they develop the class content (for more information about the PCOMS system see Chapter 3).

4.4.2.3. *Addressing systemic issues*

Wesley House in Cannons Creek acknowledges that there are systemic issues that perpetuate poverty cycles and that keep marginalising vulnerable populations like the one in Cannons Creek. The long-term support that Wesley provides to the community is

‘[a] vehicle for policy implementation on food system issues and health promotion activities by giving policymakers real-world examples of problems and opportunities to address campaigning for better policy [....] through taking local action the Pantry will continue to gain experience that will provide a valuable contribution to debate about national policy barriers to food security’ (Wesley Community Action, 2012, p. 14).

Although most of Wesley’s work is community-led and on-site, they also advocate for policy change; especially in food insecurity and poverty issues. From the conversation I had with the staff members during my fieldwork, it was evident that they are aware that although their work is valuable it is the result of a broken system that oppresses the least privileged. They know that without structural change, it is difficult to create a significant difference in people’s lives.

Being aware of the systemic issues that marginalise people of colour and from low socioeconomic backgrounds into areas where there is no access to fresh, healthy and culturally appropriated food, relates to some of the core values of the food sovereignty movement, that was born as an alternative to the capitalist food system based on neoliberal policies that deepen structural inequalities and food insecurity and injustice (Pachón, 2013). Based on this understanding, Wesley developed a range of programmes that are alternatives to this broken system and that aim to view food not only as an end in itself but also as a means to achieve broader goals of empowerment and health. They also advocate at local and national government level for the creation of more inclusive and holistic policies that help people gain financial and food security.

4.4.2.4. Reconnecting with my land in a foreign land: urban agriculture for former refugees

While doing fieldwork, I spent many hours talking to Wesley staff and volunteers. During one of these conversations, I remember talking about the connection between food and culture, and how difficult it was for me to get used to the limited fresh food variety in Aotearoa when compared to the endless availability of fresh food in my homeland Colombia. From that, we started to talk about how difficult that is for migrants and especially for former refugees. One of the staff members, who have lived in Cannons creek all her life, told me about how immigrants, especially from Asia, were particularly pleased when they got houses with a backyard area. Having a piece of land to grow food allowed them to have some small crops that were culturally appropriated for them which helped them maintain their food traditions to some extent.

Many of these former refugees had a rural background, which means that they knew how to work with the soil. Having the opportunity to plant the food that they traditionally eat, and to sometimes gain income by selling their crops in local markets, helps them not only to adapt to a foreign land but also to maintain their food sovereignty by choosing what they wanted to eat, the way they wanted to plant and how they wanted to prepare it. This example is relevant to this debate, given that food sovereignty is often associated with rural contexts since their origins come from peasants and Indigenous movements that lived in the countryside. However, due to the increase of urbanisation, we now live in a world where most people live in urban settings and where the demand for food in the cities has increased. UA has become a mainstream alternative that offers food that is locally produced, usually following sustainable principles and providing positive environmental and social outcomes.

Following Shillington (2013): ‘food is implicated in the most intimate and necessary human-nature relations [...] if we value the right to self-determination in respect to how we sustain and nourish ourselves [...] then we have to consider the right to produce one’s food –which includes the right to engage with nature and to grow your

own' (p. 104). There are plenty of examples of how people have been able to reconnect and to maintain their culture in a foreign land through urban gardening, by having the choice of planting what they want and what is culturally appreciated for them (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). Even in war contexts, for example in Colombia, people who have been displaced by armed conflict and have moved to cities have been able to reconnect to their lands and costumes, and they have also been able to heal through UA (Uribe et al., 2009; Valenzuela & Martínez, 2017). Most of the examples in the literature come from the Latino and African American communities in the United States (Alkon & Mares, 2012; Hoover, 2013; Tolleson, 2013), but there is a need for more research on this topic, especially among refugees.

4.4.3. Engaging with food security work: Southern Garden

Southern Garden has evolved over time, from offering healthy smoothies in local markets, to having an organised compost collection system and productive urban farm. As those changes were taking shape, the purpose of the farm was also changing; however, food security was always at centre stage. It could be said that providing food security to the local community has been the ethos of this urban farm. In fact, from the beginning, they have shared 50% of the produce to Kaibosh Food Rescue and Community Kitchens. It has always been a central purpose for Southern Garden to provide healthy and nutritious food to people that cannot afford or access this type of food.

Although the recipients of such donations do not necessarily know that the food they are receiving comes from this urban farm, and there is not a strong connection to the farms or its volunteers and staff members, as there is in Wesley, Southern Garden is also trying to contribute to guaranteeing food security; going beyond the food security paradigm that has been promoted and implemented by international organisations and local governments. While it is true that Southern Garden is an urban farm, and as such one of their aims is to produce food, their main goal is not food production or the provision of food itself. They do not only want to produce healthy, locally produced food, but, further, to do it in a sustainable way. This means

not only having good environmental practices, like refusing the use of chemical pesticides and fertiliser and basing their agriculture style in some permaculture and biodynamic principles, but also in a way that empowers the community and contributes to the wellbeing of the farmers.

At the moment, they are working toward building healthy soil and a sound compost system that can be resistant and resilient, and also as a way to build up climate change infrastructure. Regarding the wellbeing of urban farmers, Southern Garden pays living wage to the staff members, although it relies on volunteers' work as well. They also run workshops on UA and soil health, believing that everybody can contribute to change the current food system into a more sustainable one, and acknowledging that we need as many people on board as possible to make this change.

Similarly, to Wesley, the core members of Southern Garden recognise that there are systemic problems that lead to chronic poverty issues and food insecurity. They believe the current global food system, which is based on neoliberal ideas, is primarily responsible for these problems. They also acknowledge that national and local governments are also system accomplices by implementing policies that disempower peasants and that promote unhealthy food choices. As one of the volunteers at Southern Garden said when talking about food sovereignty:

'I think those conversations will develop and it's interesting, applying a lot of the food sovereignty stuff, which traditionally comes from the peasants' systems. The peasants' systems have been undermined, when you come from a different perspective of influence effectively using public land to grow food, yeah it's a different context, but I mean in a way western society is the least food sovereign because we have no control of any of our food systems, but we don't stand to lose anything because we have already kind of lost all of our commons. We need to have those conversations within the group [...] and see where it goes and see where we fit in there in terms of our voice but also our actions. Like what are we doing to ensure that our seed stock is secure and healthy' (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

Southern Garden has been particularly active in pressuring the local government to change its policies around UA, and in doing so has more government support and funding. They are trying to show how UA is not only a great solution to tackle food insecurity, but it also contributes to achieving social cohesion and environmental and community resilience. In the words of one of the core volunteers:

‘[we are] kind of banned up by archaic policy and stupidity to imagine a better future, and that is the long game, is pushing for that’ (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

In sum, although food security is a core part of the work Southern Garden has been doing, they have gone beyond the food security paradigm. They have engaged in different debates that go beyond the mere production and provision of food. For instance, they have questioned the global food system, and they have tried to create ways to challenge it and to propose alternatives to this ‘evil giant’ as one volunteer commented. The core members have engaged in conversations around farmers’ wellbeing and environmental agricultural practices since they care about the way food is grown and the social and environmental impacts of the urban agricultural systems.

4.4.4. An environmental approach to urban farming: Food sovereignty in Southern Garden

Southern Garden core members believe that UA is one of the best ways to address a myriad of issues in our society. From an environmental point of view, urban farms are excellent infrastructure for climate mitigation and resilience, since they help to sequester carbon, promote biodiversity, help to clear the air, and they are places where food waste can be reused and transformed into healthy soil for the farm. From a social perspective, urban farms help to achieve food security in cities, promote social interaction and therefore community resilience, they promote a good

environment for mental health, they are places with educational opportunities, and they could be job generators.

4.4.4.1. Addressing systemic issues

Southern Garden members are critical of the current food system. When asking them about the reasons behind donating food to Kaibosh Food Rescue, one of the core members of the farm said:

‘if we know the food system is broken and we know the food in the supermarkets lacks nutrition, then we are able to supplement with what we believe to be a higher quality food’ (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

Southern Garden does not want only to produce healthy food but to become an alternative to the current industrialised, corporate-driven food system. They want to become an example of how UA can be done, so it could be replicated around the city. They want to practice agriculture in a sustainable way, (re)using the food waste and transforming it into living soil that is used in the garden. However, they dislike using the term waste, according to one of the volunteers:

‘I don’t really like the term waste diversion because I prefer waste is never waste, it’s kind of reimagining what we’ve got’ (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

As a way to become a stronger voice that advocates for a structural change, they have become founding members of an organisation that supports UA. This collective of what they call ‘regenerative agriculturalists’ in different sites across Aotearoa New Zealand. The network enhances the development of Climate Change Ready Infrastructure (CCRI), and it is a hub of experts on climate change-ready food growing and local living compost hubs. They aim to share this collective knowledge with the broader community in the near future. Southern Garden has already been sharing their expertise and knowledge through workshops that they run about soil health, plant growing, and other topics around UA.

As aforementioned, Southern Garden has advocated for policy change by pressuring local government to change its policies around public land use and UA. They want UA to be a community-led project but funded by the government, so they can survive in the wild capitalist system we live in. Now that they are co-founders of an organisations that promotes UA, this pressure has become stronger and has gone beyond the local level, and now they pressure national policy change as well.

4.4.4.2. Facing neoliberal tensions

One of the main critiques that Southern Garden has of the system is the neoliberal policies that have led to an unfair and unequal food system, a system where food is not valued by their nutritional and cultural benefits but is seen as a priced commodity, subject to market conditions, which has changed our relationships with food, land, and space (Wittman et al., 2010). One of Southern Garden members said:

‘We are so disconnected from food, we have removed ourselves so far from what is healthy soil, what is good, healthy, nutrient-dense food, how its grown, where is growing, what are the foods that have been eaten in this country for a long time’.

The current globalised food system distances consumers from the people who produce food and from the places where food is produced. The more industrialised, processed and distant food is, the less connected the consumer becomes. This lack of knowledge shapes our relationship to our food, taking away meaning, cultural significance and even appreciation of our daily meals (Wittman et al., 2010). Although they aim to be an alternative project based on community and environmental values, they have struggled to keep being a social project while surviving in a capitalist economy. According to their core members, they would like to have more Indigenous and traditional crops such as kumara, potatoes, pūhā, and kamo kamo, but they are also aware that they cannot compete with the market prices and that some of these crops are not easy to sell. In fact, most of the crops on

the farm are leafy greens, eatable flowers and highly valued produce that is highly demanded by local restaurants.

There have been discussions among the core members about this issue because they do not want to become an enterprise or a business, they want to be a social project; but they find it truly difficult to survive as such in a neoliberal economy, especially due to the limited support and funding they get from the government. They are a young project, and they are still finding their way while trying different strategies that allow them to keep being a community project while having enough money to pay the bills and pay the staff members on the farm a minimum wage. I will explore these neoliberal tensions in further detail in Chapter 6.

4.4.4.3. Enacting seeds' sovereignty

Southern Garden has a firm policy when it comes to seeds. They use open pollination, non-hybridize, and, when possible, organic and heritage seed lines. They are trying to build a strong plant genetic by remaining away from hybridised seeds. Although they would like to have more native plants, they only have a few Indigenous crops, like kamo kamo, rongoā and recently some Indigenous corn. For them, seed sovereignty is essential to provide quality food and to maintain the local ecosystem balance. There is a push from some of the core members to have more traditional and local plants, instead of growing trendy vegetables or highly demanded plants like eatable flowers, but as aforementioned before there is also a need to be profitable so they can keep going and they can fund further projects.

The garden is trying to reclaim seed sovereignty with their urban farm. They are highly aware of the importance of having heritage seed lines and of being aligned with Te Ao Māori; in fact, their kaupapa is built on Te Ao Māori. It was clear from me from my fieldwork that they are notably reflexive of their own work; they have debates around what should be they growing? What kind of practices and values do they want to stand for? Should they be growing lettuce or pūhā?

Although they have no definite answers to those questions, they are working within a food sovereignty framework on their farm. As one of the volunteers told me:

‘we need a huge conversation about seeds, where do they come from and who controls them. Maybe that would be the next [workshop] we run’ (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

Southern Garden has engaged in the food sovereignty debates, not only because they care about how, where and by whom food is produced but because through their work they are trying to connect people with the land and with their food. They are trying to build a strong community as they are trying to build up a resilient soil and environment. From their administrative structure that is quite subversive and democratic, to their food production, distribution and environmental and social wellbeing, they engage with food sovereignty values. However, they also face tensions in regards to their economy model (which would be explored in Chapter 6), and some contradictions with their work in terms of inclusion and diversity (which I will explain in greater detail in Chapter 5).

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the literature around food security and food sovereignty, and I presented how both Southern Garden and Wesley work at the light of such paradigms. Throughout my analysis, I showed that both projects engage with food sovereignty principles and values in their own unique ways. While Wesley has a broader range of programmes focused on food and financial security, Southern Garden is more focused on delivering positive environmental outcomes. I mentioned some of the tensions both projects face (especially Southern Garden), which I will explore in greater detail in Chapter 5 and 6. The next chapter will explore the food justice scholarship, having a particular emphasis on issues around race and tangentially around class. The following chapter will explore the ways Southern Garden and Wesley deal with the tensions and contradictions presented in the food justice literature.

CHAPTER 5

5. Enacting food justice in urban agriculture

5.1. Introduction

Recently, academic scholarship has started to draw connections between urban agriculture in the 'Global North' and food sovereignty and food justice movements (Agyeman & McEntee, 2014; Heynen et al., 2012; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; Sbicca, 2012). Food sovereignty and food justice are closely connected, both criticize the industrial food system, and both aim to build a more equitable and environmentally viable food system. However, these movements have different roots. While food sovereignty was born in the 'Global South' with the fight of rural peasant and Indigenous communities, the food justice movement has its origins in the 'Global North'. Following Cardieux and Solum (2015), both movements 'advocate for greater control over the food production and consumption by people who have been marginalized by mainstream agrifood regimes' (p. 3). The goal of greater control involves increased independence from food corporations, more attention to social and environmental issues, and the creation of alternative networks that work towards people's wellbeing. In other words, both movements look to undermine exploitative social and economic structures and emphasize equitable access to 'good' food (Cardieux & Solum, 2015)

The food justice movement has its origins in social justice grassroots groups that were working on food insecurity issues; and that have seen food as a tool to achieve justice in domains that go beyond food insecurity and the food system itself (Mares & Peña, 2011). These groups -that have been organised sometime before food work became a movement- have been a loud voice that has denounced institutionalised oppression, power imbalances, and paternalistic dynamics (Alkon, 2007; Hoover, 2013; McClintock, 2008; McClintock, 2018a; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; Slocum, 2006, Tolleson, 2013).

5.2. So, what is food justice?

There is not a consensus of what food justice is. There is a great debate among academics and grassroots activists around the dangers of confining to one definition, as it can limit the reach of the movement and it risks falling into policing. Some argue that what food justice means should be a local decision, and it should come from local knowledge and lived experience rather than from academic 'experts', who are often disengaged with local struggles and create definitions that usually ignore diverse cultural contexts and further obscure people who are already marginalised (Seanhk-Ka & Axtell, 2007). One of the main issues of defining food justice or social justice, in general, is that what it means and how it is pursued is a process that involves different perspectives based on what people experience and consider unequal relations of power (Cardieux & Solum, 2015).

Others have argued that ideals such as rights, justice, and sovereignty, that are considered universal, only become meaningful when people make sense of them within their own social and physical realities (Pratt, 2004; Escobar, 2001). Following this line, several scholars have offered some definitions of food justice. Alkon and Agyeman (2011) define food justice as a movement that encompasses both food access and food sovereignty. They describe food justice as food activism arising mainly from communities of colour that seek to contest the norms within the mostly white, middle-class dominant food movement. Slocum et al. (2016) provide a more extensive view as follows: 'as an ideal, food justice is a radical critique of capitalism, neoliberalism, colonialism, exploitation, systemic racism, and patriarchy through different but related registers of food sovereignty, food democracy, food solidarity, feminist food justice, and fair trade' (p.3).

Food justice has an intersectional approach that analyses the different ways institutionalised oppression is perpetuated (Allen, 2010; Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Slocum et al., 2016). These forms of oppression sustain unequal power relations within the current food system that is driven by 'capitalocentric', racist, hetero-patriarchal, and colonial dynamics that generate further marginalisation, disenfranchisement, and disempowerment among communities of colour, low

socioeconomic groups, gender minorities and ethnic groups (Slocum et al., 2016; Turner et al., 2016; McClintock, 2018a; Miller, 2019). To address these issues, the movement provides practical support for environmentally sustainable alternatives that can provide economic empowerment and access to environmental benefits in marginalised communities (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011).

The food justice movement is closely related to the environmental justice movement that claims that low-income communities and people of colour bear a disproportionate share of environmental degradation. Evidence shows that low-income people and communities of colour are more likely to live in neighbourhoods where pollution levels are higher, and where pollutant industries are more present which leads to adverse public health outcomes (Mohai and Saha 2003; Petersen et al., 2006). According to this movement, this disproportionate exposure to toxic environmental burdens is the result of neoliberal policies and institutionalised racism (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011).

5.2.1. The role of urban agriculture in the food justice movement

UA has become one of the many alternatives to foster food justice and one of the most visible ones as well. There is an extended body of literature that points out the multiple benefits of UA for communities and the environment. However, critical geographers have recently showed that despite well-intentioned efforts of urban farmers and community gardeners, UA projects often reinforce the systemic inequalities and injustices of neoliberal urban environments driven by racist, hetero-patriarchal, colonial and capitalist policies and values (Hoover, 2013; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; Turner et al., 2016; McClintock, 2018a; Miller, 2019). I will focus my analysis mainly on race and tangentially on class, connecting broader discussions around these topics to the organisations I worked with.

5.3. Urban Agriculture as a racialised space

Urban agriculture imagery in the 'Global North' is steeped in the sustainable food movement that is opposed to the dominant agrifood system and that supports

sustainable ways of food production and consumption, such as permaculture, organic food, home and community gardening and in some cases, vegetarian and vegan diets. Usually, it is portrayed as a new emerging activity driven by young, white, middle-class people who are either entrepreneurs that support small-scale urban farms or hipsters embedded in the do-it-yourself (DIY) culture (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). The movement has been criticized for being elitist and inaccessible. It has also been said to be based on white values and white privilege, focusing on individual change instead of paying attention to the systemic problems that cause the issues they want to address such as food insecurity and injustice (Turner et al., 2016).

UA has become notably popular in recent years, and there are plenty of research and policy papers that emphasize its multiple benefits; from providing fresh and sustainable food to increasing green spaces and fighting climate change. These benefits extend to public health, community development, beautification of the city and in some cases, it has been seen as a great way to enact social and environmental justice. Residents benefit from UA even if they do not garden themselves since they consume the food produced by these urban farmers (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). However, the connections between UA and the structural roots of inequity and injustice in the food system -such as racism, classism, heteropatriarchy, and colonialism- are often less discussed.

5.3.1. The issue of representation

The sustainable food movement ignores the fights and struggles of people of colour and working-class urban residents, who have practised UA for decades. These people are usually immigrants from the 'Global South' or First Nation's people who have been growing food primarily to meet their dietary needs (Hayden-Smith, 2014; Lawson, 2005). This issue is reflected in the lack of representation of communities of colour and low-income people in public forums and the media. This phenomenon is common in Western countries - New Zealand being no exception -, where the popular imagery of urban farmers is young, middle-class and white people, who are

seen as pioneers in this activity. The lack of representation of people of colour and working-class populations in UA is particularly dangerous because, as Reynolds and Cohen (2016) warn us, '[it] reproduces colonialist mentalities in which imported white culture should be used to 'tame' Indigenous peoples' (p. 7).

In both academic and grey literature on UA in the 'Global North' (and more specifically in New Zealand), most of the work focuses on white-led projects. Similarly, within my own experiences of public forums and conversations around this topic, most of the gardeners, experts, and volunteers of community gardens and urban farms that participate in such conversations are white. In this way, UA is portrayed as carried out almost exclusively by young, middle-class, white people who are seen as innovators and entrepreneurs who are reclaiming vacant land to start small agricultural projects. They are presented, in many cases, as 'rebels' and 'activists' that are challenging the industrial system. However, the lack of attention to race, class and other dimensions of the movement (such as gender, sex and ethnicity) can, in fact, perpetuate inequities and injustices that many supporters of the movement hope to address in the first place (Reynolds and Cohen, 2016).

The increasing attention to the entrepreneurial UA projects led by young, middle class, and usually educated whites is linked to the idea of the 'creative class' developed by Richard Florida (2005), who describes white people as the creative and innovator class. This idea ignores existing and equally important innovations carried out by people of colour (Yakini, 2013). The portrayal of UA as a white, middle-class activity reinforces white privilege and white dominance in UA systems (Reynolds, 2014, Hoover, 2012). Although most of these UA projects have well-intentioned social justice goals, the underrepresentation of racially and economically diverse groups in these discourses (and in the actual gardens and farms), and the lack of awareness of race and class dynamics, has reinforced the inequities these groups claim to be addressing.

5.3.2. How does structural oppression work?

To understand how UA works against (or towards) a more socially just agrifood system, we need to study frameworks that explain the multiple ways oppression is perpetuated. As aforementioned, oppression is an intersectional process, which means that to understand how people are oppressed, we need to examine multifaceted identities; looking at issues of race, class, gender, ethnicity, spiritual beliefs, sexual preference, and region of origin (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). In this section, I will explain how oppression works through the lenses of race, using critical race theory (CRT) for the analysis.

CRT emerged in the United States following the civil rights movement as a counter-discourse to racism within legal structures and practices (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1989). According to this theory, race is a 'set of material and discursive practices that perpetuate power relations between populations presumed to be essentially different' (Anderson, 2001, p. 72). Racial inequities, therefore, grow from racial biases that come from institutional policies to individuals' personal racist beliefs. CRT states that there are four main ways of racism: internalised racism, interpersonal racism, institutional racism, and structural racism (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). For the purpose of this research, I will focus my attention on institutional and structural racism.

Institutionalised racism refers to specific institutional policies and practices that when practised regularly (re)produce inequitable outcomes for communities of colour while privileging whites. Structural racism, for its part, refers to the systemic racial bias that is embedded within society and perpetuates inequalities and disadvantages among people of colour. Structural racism is a reflection of collective, subconscious beliefs that are the root of many social, economic and political injustices, such as a lack of supermarkets or farmer's markets in suburbs where the majority of the inhabitants are people of colour, under the assumption that people of colour do not value or do not have the purchasing power to buy fresh and healthy food (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). These assumptions have often led to phenomena

such as food deserts and food swamps in neighbourhoods mostly inhabited by people of colour and low-income residents.

Following feminist theorist Young (2013), oppression has five primary forms: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. These forms constitute what she calls a 'system of constraints' that works even without the intention of the 'oppressor' to 'oppress'. The result of such systematic oppression is a lack of power or 'absence of choice' (hooks, 2000) that is experienced by the 'oppressed.' CRT enables us to understand how people experience oppression due to their race, and emphasises that issues that often prevent people of colour from accessing fresh and healthy food -such as financial instability- are not individual problems, but instead the result of systematic and institutionalised racist policies. These policies, alongside the intersection of multiple levels of oppression, perpetuate social injustices and inequities and reproduce racist dynamics on an ongoing basis.

5.3.3. Racialisation of space

Recent scholarship has examined the interconnections between race and space, and more specifically, the way white supremacy works spatially (Pulido, 2015; McClintock, 2018). Following Bonds and Inwood (2016), white supremacy 'describes and locates white racial domination by underscoring the material production and violence of racial structures and the hegemony of whiteness in settler societies. The concept of white supremacy forcefully calls attention to the brutality and dehumanization of racial exploitation and domination that emerges from settler-colonial societies' (p. 716). I use the framework of white supremacy and not white privilege since the former refers to the taken-for-granted benefits white people have upon their skin colour and not to the institutional and systemic practices that generate those privileges in the first place (Smith, 2012; Cacho, 2014; Pulido, 2015).

The spatialisation of race has its roots in the colonisation process where European colonisers classified people according to phenotypic features and attributed them certain 'inherent' characteristics that have been reproduced over time. As Richard

Peet (1985) has explained, aboriginal people were routinely labelled in colonial territories as 'primitive, 'uncivilised', and 'backward;' in contrast to the 'civilised' and 'modern' colonial settlers. This process was and continues to be inherently both dialectical and geographic. Europeans mapped colonial territories as 'inhabited' or 'lands of no one,' authorising the mapping of resources without any reference to the activities, practices, or connections Native peoples had with their land; while simultaneously portraying inhabitant of these lands as non-humans and salvages, which helped to justify their subjugation and the appropriation of their lands (Anderson, 2001; Demeritt, 2001; McKittrick, 2006; McClintock, 2018a). This discursive separation facilitated the exercise of colonial state power, through the exploitation, cultural assimilation, and sometimes extermination or segregation of Natives on small reserves (Demeritt, 2001; HoSang et al., 2012).

The process of differentiation and stereotyping carried by European settlers established a racialised and hierarchical relation to land that is still prevalent today. Race scholars have called this process 'racial Othering,' which refers to the distinction of 'race' made by white people and that label others as 'not-us' (Alkon & McCullen, 2011; Ramirez, 2015, McClintock, 2018a). In other words, it defines and secures one identity (in this case, whiteness) as a positive identity through the stigmatisation of an 'other' who is considered as 'less than us'. As Sherene Razack (2002) argues: 'whites needed to constantly (re)create their own identities and superiority against the bodies of racialized 'Others' (p.49). This process was crucial to determine who had access to land and citizenship, which has been reflected in the land and immigration policies in Western countries which have greatly benefited white people, to the detriment of Native people and communities of colour (Pulido, 2018).

However, the colonisation project failed in what it intended to do, which was basically 'eliminate Indigenous people, take all their land, absorb them into a white, property-owning body-politic' (Simpson, 2014, pp.7-8). In fact, racism and in general power imbalances exist because the suppression and further elimination of those racialised Others were never completed (McClintock, 2018a). This is why the settler-colonial project is still in force today. When bringing these ideas to UA, we can see

how the imagery of white people as ‘pioneers’ (as has been discussed above) comes from the portrait of European settlers as ‘brave’, ‘adventurous’, ‘explorers’. This association is crucial to keep the settler logics alive (Barraclough, 2017; McClintock, 2018a).

Kobayashi and Peake (2000) defined the racialisation of space as ‘the process by which racialized groups are identified, given stereotypical characteristics, and coerced into specific living conditions, often involving social/spatial segregation and always constituting racialized places’ (p. 393). The spatialisation of race can be understood through what Saldanha (2007) calls ‘viscosity’ or the tendency of ‘white bodies to stick and exclude others’. There is a growing body of literature that explains how this ‘viscosity’ has percolated in alternative food spaces, making them white spaces (Slocum, 2007; Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Slocum; et al., 2016). Such patterns have not escaped community gardens and urban farms, which have become predominantly white places with almost invisible exclusionary practices, despite being portrayed as inclusive places that can bring social justice (McClintock, 2018a; Hoover, 2013, Turner, 2016).

5.3.4. Colourblindness

An important concept to understand the racialisation of the alternative food movement in spaces such as urban farms and community gardens is colourblindness. For some, colourblindness refers to the absence of racial identifiers in language with the aim of not being seen as racist (Frankenberg 1993; McKinney 2013). Although for many, refusing to see race differences is an attempt of being inclusive and non-racist, instead of helping to achieve racial justice, ‘it does its own violence by erasing the violence that the social construct of race has wrought in the form of racism’ (Guthman, 2008). Colourblindness ignores white privilege that derives from white supremacy that is ‘produced through a taken-for-granted logic of settler colonialism’ (Bonds & Inwood, 2016, p. 718) that naturalizes racial inequalities (Lipsitz, 1998).

Following Guthman (2008), one of the main manifestations of whiteness is universalism, which is the assumption that the values held mainly by white people are the norm and shared by everyone. This is a crucial aspect of colourblindness because it marginalises those who do not follow or do not conform to white values. Universalism is the result of white supremacy, and it manifests through the lack of acknowledgement of different experiences, values, and cultures; and by the belief that white values are superior and those who do not follow them should be educated or labelled as ‘different’, and especially as ‘less than us’. This colonial and missionary mindset reinforces difference and exclusion of people of colour from places that are seen as ‘white spaces’ (such as urban farms, community gardens and farmer’s markets). Although these places are not inherently white, the values celebrated there are, which makes people of colour not feel welcomed in such whitened spaces. Further, for some people of colour, their relationship to land and agriculture has been defined by traumatic and violent histories of colonisation, exploitation, and oppression (Slocum, 2007; Guthman, 2008; Alkon, 2012; Turner et al., 2016). I now will explore these themes within the work of Southern Garden.

As all the volunteers I interviewed said, and as anyone who goes to Southern Garden on a Sunday morning could confirm, most of Southern Garden volunteers and core members are young, middle class, white people. In terms of gender, it is reasonably even between women and men. At first sight, they represent the stereotype of an urban farm in the ‘Global North’: young white activists who can be classified by some as ‘hipsters’ and by others as ‘hippies’, who want to challenge the agrifood system and become themselves an alternative that fosters a more just system. Like most urban farms and community gardens that share these demographics, they have good intentions and a desire to become a place of inclusion and community building. However, there is a lack of awareness of the privilege they already have and the class and race dynamics that shape the food system and the very gardens and farms they are part of. For instance, Southern Garden core members and most of the volunteers are food secured; they do UA because it is aligned with their values or as a form of activism, and not because of actual need.

During interviews and fieldwork in general, it became evident that there is some degree of colourblindness among some members of the garden. When asking one of the volunteers of the garden, how would she describe the demographics of the garden, she said:

‘in terms of race and demographics, I’m not sure, it seems like is everybody, there is a variable mix. I think so; they just work with everybody, don’t they? I mean everyone who comes is very welcomed, and they are very nicely treated and respectful’. (Female volunteer at Southern Garden in her mid-50s).

Although Southern Garden indeed has a friendly and welcoming environment, racial diversity among the volunteers and the core members is limited. However, the core members of Southern Garden are more aware of this issue. They know that their farm is predominantly white and they state that they would like to have more diversity in their project. However, there is not a clear understanding of why, despite being in a diverse neighbourhood, most of its members are white and middle-class. For some of them, the lack of diversity is due to the limited outreach work they have done and the lack of time of people who are not white and middle-class (a common myth that I will explore later on). During an interview with one of the active members of the farm, she stated:

‘Absolutely everyone in the group wants to be more Māori, more cultural diversity, cause everyone wants knowledge about Māori plant benefits and medicine, and absolutely there is no single person in the group that wouldn’t enthusiastically want that, it’s structural things, yeah. It’s just not, by design, it just how’s happened, you know? That’s why we can’t. It won’t change unless we are really intentionally trying to change it’. (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

One of the core members of the garden had a broader understanding of the systemic causes of this issue:

‘I really think it’s a characteristic of community gardens and urban farms that they are white as, and in term of the remedy all the problems that

we've laid down and embedded with our current way of living, we are running an economy living. It's all because we haven't listened to Indigenous people. Indigenous people have for generations and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of years been looking after the [environment]. So, everything we do now has to decolonise, in order to properly face the issues that we're facing. We have to decolonise what we're doing, how we're doing it, so that means taking an Indigenous-centred approach. We are also lucky that we have an incredibly knowledgeable strong Indigenous culture in New Zealand [...] So we have to make a real intentional effort to make sure that they are Indigenous centred spaces. And we are not there at the moment at Southern Garden'. (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

There is some understanding of colonial dynamics and an acknowledgment of the importance of including Indigenous knowledge and wisdom in urban agricultural practices. Throughout the interviews, it was clear that they are also aware that other projects have a more Indigenous approach, either because Māori people lead them, or because they have a robust Māori community that is part of the project. Although they have within their core circle a Māori person who is the one that brings most of the mātauranga Māori, there are no current actions or future plans to incorporate more Māori knowledge or more Māori people in their project. Also, although they have a few Māori crops such as kamo kamo and some rongoā patches, most of the plants are not Indigenous. In fact, a constant debate within the core members of Southern Garden has been whether they should have Indigenous crops, or if they should plant food that can be easily purchased by restaurants. This has been a critical tension that the group has discussed and that I will explore in further detail in the next chapter when I talk about UA neoliberal tensions. Nevertheless, there are some ideas about how Southern Garden could become more inclusive and diverse. For instance, one of their core volunteers said:

'For starters, we can do things like holding workshops around everything related to Indigenous approaches to nature and growing, so like getting people in to run workshops around Māori uses of plant medicine, prioritize Māori crops. Like there've been long growing in this country, kumara, and I mean that was the main crop for Māori [...] I visited a marae in Auckland that has a big urban farming component. They grow like ten

different varieties of Māori kumara, and they are all different, and they are all amazing. They have built up this knowledge as well as food source, doing that sort of thing, and that's in terms of crop selection that's one of the challenges that in terms of what's economical in an urban farm, you make much more out of selling greens that you do out of potatoes because you can grow so much of it and it's high value. But trying to avoid becoming just a selling factory, actually is harder to do things like potatoes but it's important for lots of other reasons [...] So yeah, there is a couple of things that we can do, involve different parts of the community, iwi, a local marae, you know, there is a marae that is very involved with the natural systems around there, there's lots of ways'. (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

It is valuable that the conversation around the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and decolonisation is already taken place in Southern Garden. They also would like to include different able people, gender minorities, people experiencing homelessness, and refugees; however, it is essential to create plans and clear actions to include such communities beyond tokenistic approaches and to decolonise UA meaningfully. Similarly, there is a need to acknowledge that Māori people have not been the only ones who have been left out of Southern Garden. There is a diverse community of immigrants and former refugees in the area where the garden is located that are not taking part in this project. There is a need for Southern Garden to have discussions about these populations and the reason behind their lack of engagement with the project. They are already aware that diversity is a strength, in the words of its volunteers: 'I think as this community becomes more diverse, it would bring much better strength, and as it gets better, we'll be unstoppable' (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

In order to make UA spaces more culturally diverse places, there is a need to understand the role that racial dynamics play in the engagement of people in UA. Although colonialism is a topic Southern Garden members are familiar with, structural racism is less explicit. This lack of awareness could be partially explained by the lack of people of colour in the farm, and therefore, the difficulties they face to understand and relate to racial minorities' experiences. In particular, members of

Southern Garden seemed not to be aware that when people of colour do not participate in white-led UA projects, it is often due to white viscosity and the perception of these places as white. As Turner et al. (2016) and Hoover (2013) have pointed out, racial minorities do not go to 'white spaces' because they do not feel like they belong there, or they have a problematic relationship to the land or rural life due to usually violent colonisation processes and/or historical agricultural oppressive work conditions. When they do not see people from their own culture, they often feel like they do not fit there.

The problem becomes a vicious circle: urban farms and community gardens led by white, middle-class people create racialised spaces where people of colour do not feel welcomed or represented. As a consequence, white people remain unaware of people of colour's ideas and struggles; and in the 'best' case scenario, they engage in paternalistic dynamics to 'help' those struggling with food security (usually race minorities). In doing so, they contribute to the perpetuation of racial inequities and injustices and the promotion of white values as 'better', which in turn further marginalises and judges' people's food choices without having an understanding of their contexts. Figure 9 explains this vicious dynamic:

Figure 9: Diagram of the vicious circle of racialised urban farms and gardens. Source: Author.

A fact often ignored by white-led urban farmers and gardeners is that UA has historically been practised by race minorities and low-income residents as a way to supplement their diets (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). As was previously explained, the lack of recognition of this fact has led to perpetuating the image of UA as being an activity 'pioneered' by white people. A first step to decolonise UA and to engage in food justice work is to dismantle this idea and recognise the work of immigrants and communities of colour in this area and acknowledge their knowledge and expertise. Demystifying the idea of white people as the 'creative class' also helps to deconstruct colonial imaginaries that associate white people as 'entrepreneurial', 'adventurous', and 'leaders' and people of colour as 'backward', and 'victims in need of help'. This dialectical and also geographical differentiation -that once facilitated the subjugation and the appropriation of colonial territories- continues to marginalise peoples of colour and keep settler logics alive through 'racial Othering' (Barracough, 2017; McClintock, 2018a). These hegemonic racial hierarchies reinforce power imbalances and colonial patterns of oppression of people of colour (Ramírez, 2015; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; McClintock, 2018a).

The process of racial Othering contributes to racialise alternative food spaces such as urban farms and community gardens, which resonates with the situation of Southern Garden. Here, despite the good intentions for being inclusive to a diverse community, they unconsciously exclude people of colour by what Saldanha (2007) has called 'white viscosity'. In order to address this issue, it is imperative for those involved in these organisations to acknowledge their positionality. Doing so involves members and leaders asking themselves what is their race, ethnic identity, immigration status, class position, gender, and sexual preference (only to name a few), in order to examine how these intersecting aspects enable their privilege and influence the overall approach and outreach of their gardens and farms. It is from this awareness that they can then engage in more meaningful reflections and conversations with those whose voices are not represented in their organisations and make concrete plans to address these exclusions.

However, beyond having a conversation about positionality, white privilege, and white viscosity, it is essential to recognise and understand that the food system is a racial project. Therefore, it is important to also engage in an analysis of the influence of race and class (and also gender, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual preferences and so on) in the production, distribution, and consumption of food (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011), including UA experiences. Involving racial minorities is not limited to having one or two people of colour in the garden, as many gardens have used for good 'inclusive publicity' on social media (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). Meaningful involvement of people of colour implies being represented in UA, which means that their ideas, worldviews, and inputs should be included from the decision-making process of what to plant and how to the way that food should be distributed and consumed. In other words, it is not only a matter of having more people of colour in the garden but to actually listen to what they have to say and use that to (re)shape the garden/farm itself in more equal terms.

Southern Garden is a relatively new urban farm, and its core members are already engaged in needed debates around colonisation and the importance of including Indigenous knowledge in their practice. They are also aware of the lack of racial and class representation in their farm and they are open for conversations and keen to learn how to become more inclusive. However, there is a need for further conversations about race and the incorporation of a food justice framework. Challenging the corporate agrifood system involves addressing the fact that the system is inherently racist, classist, heteropatriarchal, capitalist, and colonialist. Beyond only producing organic, healthy, and culturally appropriate food, UA represents a unique opportunity to work against these multifaceted forms of oppression, and harvest socially just-food. These debates could also be held beyond individual gardens or farms and reach umbrella organisations such as the one they are part of. As a new organisation (not even a year old), this collective is uniting urban farms around Aotearoa to become a stronger and more united voice, and therefore could become a pivotal advocate to incorporate food justice as part of their ethos, and thus help decolonise and de-racialise UA in New Zealand.

5.3.5. Paternalistic dynamics

Within white values and imaginaries, one that is particularly important for the reproduction of paternalistic dynamics is the romanticisation of rural landscapes and agriculture. 'Going back to the land', or 'getting your hands dirty' are colourblinded ideas, embedded in the settler logics of Othering because, in the words of Nathan McClintock (2018a), these ideas 'remain blind to racialized and gendered histories of agricultural exploitation and eliding questions of whose land they are actually 'going back to' (p. 5).

Several scholars have shown how UA can reinforce hegemonic racial hierarchies when well-intentioned urban farmers and UA advocates try to 'bring good food to others' (Guthman, 2008). Such actions (re)produce paternalistic dynamics and reinforce power imbalances and colonial patterns of oppression of people of colour (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; McClintock, 2018a). Similarly, discourses around foodways usually associated with hipsters and the alternative food movement mobilised against the corporate food system that promotes processed food can also undermine Indigenous and non-white eating habits, which is also another way of enacting white and cultural alienation (Alkon et al., 2013; McClintock, 2018a). Below are some examples of how Southern Garden engages with paternalistic language:

'More engagement would be better, especially for people who are from the lowest socio-economic context because the skills of growing food, your own food and growing it for other people [...] there are lots of people who can't even afford fruit and vegetables and have little nutritious dietary styles. So, if we can give people those skills to grow the food that they need, but they don't have access to, that's really important' (Female volunteer at Southern Garden in her mid-20s).

'[...] they want to collaborate with us [a community garden], and we want to collaborate with them to provide a place for their [composting] drop-off costumers, and that's mainly, that's fairly low socio-economic group, so yeah, that would be something we can provide for a wider range of community, which would be great' (Female volunteer at Southern Garden in her mid-20s).

Although well-intended, we can see in these quotes that for members of Southern Garden connecting with a broader range of people, and particular people from a lower socio-economic background, is marked by paternalistic logics. For instance, when asking one of the volunteers how he thought Southern Garden contributed to the broader society:

‘So food is at the centre, literally feeding people, and feeding people nutrient-dense food, bringing people back to understanding how we are so disconnected from food, you know, we removed ourselves so far from what, what is healthy soil, what is good healthy nutrient-dense food, how it’s grown, where it’s grown, what are the foods that have been eaten in this country for a long time, what are the plants that people have been eating here. Learning how to actually grow, which is obviously really good food resilience and knowledge, and then it is literally feeding people. From an economic point of view, taking back power in communities because [...] poverty is just around completely losing power and autonomy over your life and there is no better way to getting back than community growing its own food. There are literally kids hungry in New Zealand, and we can, urban farming can help to combat that’ (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

Although this quote reflects how passionate this volunteer is about UA and his well-intentioned belief about the positive impact urban farms can have on people, there is a paternalistic tone in his discourse. He claims that Southern Garden and UA, in general, can teach people how to garden, and he states that their work is helping to feed people and give communities their power and autonomy back. While it is true that UA can be a space where communities get empowered and food secured, the literature has shown that this is the case when vulnerable populations are the ones on charge of UA projects as opposed to when white people are ‘empowering them’ or ‘feeding them’ (Alkon et al., 2013; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). These discourses portray communities of colour and people from low-income backgrounds as powerless and in need for help, which denies their agency and justifies paternalistic dynamics that reinforce power imbalances and colonial mindsets that lead to further oppression (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; McClintock, 2018a).

When researching urban agricultural projects led by white middle-class people, it is essential to do not fall in Manichean interpretations of their work. Usually, they engage with significant environmental and social work, while at the same time, they perform uncritical paternalistic discourses and practices. For instance, part of Southern Garden's aim is sharing nutrient-dense food, grown with environmentally friendly practices, to people who otherwise could not access such food. This is why, from the beginning, they have been donating approximately 50% of their produce to Kaibosh Food Rescue and community kitchens. For people who have engaged with Southern Garden, it is evident that their core members are highly committed people with genuinely good intentions; for whom donating 50% of their produce is a way of contributing to social equality and food justice. However, from a critical race theory and critical food perspective, members of Southern Garden are still reproducing paternalistic practices and discourses. These discourses perpetuate, for instance, the image of food-insecure people as passive agents of their lives and as people who need help from 'white people'. Acknowledging that those involved in Southern Garden are trying to experiment with different ways to transform the food system, and the organisation is, therefore, a work in progress, it is essential also to remain critical and unpack underlying assumptions that might lead to other forms of oppression. In fact, both sides of Southern Garden co-exist, they are part of the inherent contradictions of UA (McClintock, 2014, 2018a, 2018b). Following Gibson and Graham (2007), I decided to make an affective stance and do not judge them, acknowledging that Southern Garden is a young project that is in its process of becoming. However, it is crucial to raise awareness and open spaces of conversation around colourblindness and paternalistic dynamics in order to move forward to a more just food system, which is one of the primary purposes of Southern Garden in the first place.

On the other hand, Wesley provides an interesting counterpoint to challenge assumptions around how people of colour and from low-income backgrounds engage with community gardens. As mentioned before, most of the people who participate in the programmes that Wesley offers are Pasifika, Māori and increasingly former

refugees that have been resettled in Porirua. The mere existence of Wesley demonstrates that people of colour and from low-income backgrounds do engage with urban food growing if inclusive and relevant spaces exist. Although their community garden is relatively young, they are aware they are not the first ones cultivating food in the area. There are clear understanding and great respect for immigrants who have cultivated food for generations in Porirua and also in the Wellington region. This is what one of the staff members told me about them:

‘A number of refugees here, who whether they are Cambodian or Syrian, the ones I’ve interacted with, they come and they find themselves in a house with land, and then they very quickly start turning their land into an eatable garden, very very quickly. And it’s almost most of the sense of all the displacement that they felt; they suddenly have a place where they can call home, and there is land and yeah enormously abundant gardens. In fact, this Burmese family just around the corner, they basically plant herbs alone, so they can sell them at the vege market. That’s their main income. It is quite phenomenal. Some of them who have come, they know very little of English but can work their land. So, there is huge respect for a number of them who have limited resources but seem to have a resource of their own in the garden’ (Female staff member at Wesley in her late-30s).

The description made by this staff member shows awareness of abilities and agency of different groups of people, in contrast with the mainstream discourses that portray people of colour, from low-income backgrounds and refugees/migrants as power-less, in need of help, disenfranchised, or in need to be educated. As this staff member explains, many of them have valuable skills and knowledge that they put into practice in a way that is relevant to them and empowering for them on their own terms. This example illustrates an understanding of people’s agency and power to shape their lives and futures by themselves, using their own resources and abilities, which challenges the paternalistic assumptions of some UA projects that claim they ‘have the knowledge’ and they want to ‘educate’ less privileged people.

Wesley is an organisation that has been working in Cannons Creek for almost 30 years, and they have learned many lessons in the process. For example, as explained

previously, when the food bank started it had a more paternalistic approach; however, Wesley realised that the victim-saviour dynamic did not help the people they were trying to help and instead it was disempowering them. They now emphasise on acknowledging people's expertise and agency over their own lives. In this sense, their work focuses on giving people the tools or the temporary assistance they need in order to gain autonomy. They make the conscious decision to avoid claiming they are any kind of saviours or have ultimate solutions. In the words of one of the staff members: 'I have not gotten any directives on to, you know, say that we are flash fairies, or are kind of changing the world. We just do it, we just do what we can, and we do it' (Male staff member at Wesley in his early 40s).

The fact that both Wesley staff members and volunteers are diverse in terms of race and class might help a broader range of people in the community feel comfortable and welcomed. As Turner et al. (2016) and Hoover (2013) explain, when people find others from their own culture, background or context they have a sense of belonging and they are more eager to participate in such spaces and projects. Most of Wesley volunteers know each other, and some of them are also friends or family relatives. Many have found in Wesley a place where they feel welcomed and where they have been able to make new friends and start feeling like part of a community again. As one of the staff members told me about Wesley's work:

'It's about helping people to get there, make their lives a little bit better. Just trying to make people feel a bit better. Just people get that they are awesome, people that forget that they are useful, that they are funny, nice people to be around' (Male staff member at Wesley in his early 40s).

It was clear for me during the interviews and my time volunteering with Wesley that the organisation does embody an ethic of empowerment, inclusion, growth, and justice. It is not mere rhetoric about wanting to be inclusive or claiming to be the ultimate solution to people's problems, but actually engaging in concrete actions to work hand-in-hand with the community to find ways to achieve food and financial security. Wesley staff members believe in people's agency and ability to open spaces to possibilities and possible futures.

5.3.6. Demystifying the issue of time

As mentioned earlier, a common assumption both within UA groups and academic literature is that one of the reasons why people of colour or from lower-income sectors do not engage in UA is because of the lack of time to do it. This assumption was articulated by several people involved in Southern Garden, as the following quotes illustrate:

‘[...] it really happens that community gardens and urban farms become mainly white because they often exist in [...] upper neighbourhoods and more well-off people have the time and the social mobility and stuff to spend on these things’ (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

‘I think having the luxury of time to volunteer is not something everyone has, especially if you are like.... if you are trying to work two jobs to put food on the table, that kind of means that you don’t have energy to do volunteer work. So, it’s definitely a place of privilege having time to just donate to something that you believe rather than just things that you need to do to support your family or whatever. So, I think a barrier it’s just time and energy’ (Female volunteer at Southern Garden in her mid-20s).

One of the main issues with this assumption around income and time is that it reinforces a Manichean view on race and class by (re)creating the narrative that if someone is not white and middle-to-upper class, then is instead someone of colour and from a low-income background, and therefore time-poor as well. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the opposite of a middle or upper-class Pākehā is usually assumed to be a low-income Māori; however, Aotearoa is a widely diverse and multicultural country, which means that in terms of race there are not just two opposites (Pākehā and Māori), but there is a wide range of different races, cultures and also many mixes in between. In that sense, there is a broad spectrum of people who might not be white and identified as a ‘coloured’ but that are probably middle or upper class, and who probably have time to volunteer in UA projects. Similarly, it

should not be assumed that all the people who have better economic and financial means, also have the time (and the willingness) to volunteer in urban farms or community gardens.

Instead of falling to this easy assumption around time and class and race, people involved in urban agricultural projects need to acknowledge the racial diversity that exists in Aotearoa New Zealand and ask themselves: Who is being excluded in our farms/gardens? Why there are mainly white people in our garden/farm? And what are the real reasons behind this? As some scholars (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Alkon, 2012; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016) have shown, and as Wesley demonstrates, many UA projects are led by communities of colour in low-income neighbourhoods, who do have time and do engage in urban farming. Indeed, many of these projects are the pioneers of the food justice movement, and it is from these type of communities that systemic critiques of the food system and its consequences on urban settings have taken shape in the form of social, environmental and food justice activism.

In fact, people who have experienced marginalisation and disenfranchisement from the system have been the ones who have been more critical and resilient. They have created grassroots projects such as urban farms, community gardens, food cooperatives, cooking classes, and so on, to address the issue of food insecurity. They have thus created spaces of resistance, education and anti-oppression work that is aiming to dismantle systemic and structural issues such as racism from its core (Tolleson, 2013; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; McClintock, 2018a). Some of these programmes, as Reynolds and Cohen (2016) demonstrate, are using anti-racist activist work that is educating communities of colour on colonial history and systemic oppression. Their idea is not only to be aware of problems such as racism, classism, xenophobia, patriarchy, and heteronormativity (just to name a few) but also to (communally) come up with ways and solutions to address these issues.

As Alkon & Agyeman (2011) argue, communities of colour and poor communities do have time, but they have been denied access to the means of food production (such as land). However, through food justice activism, low-income communities and

communities of colour have created alternative local food systems that meet their food needs. Further, it is the invisibility of these projects, which, to a large extent, supports the assumption that they do not exist. This invisibility is linked to the lack of representation of these communities within the media and in general, in the UA movement. Academics have also played their role in perpetuating the invisibility of these communities. Indeed, most of the academic work on UA and urban farming in the 'Global North' focuses on white-led gardens and farms, reinforcing colourblind and victim-saviour narratives that encourage paternalistic dynamics and racial-Othering. Finally, everyday decisions and practices can further ignore and marginalise these initiatives. For instance, as Reynolds and Cohen (2016) explain in the context of New York, some policy discussion meetings take place at times where Black and Latino community activists are working and therefore cannot take part. Also, applying to sponsorships and funding usually involves a lot of paperwork and time as well, which can build extra barriers for minority community activists who despite having time availability, such availability is limited. In sum, it is imperative to acknowledge the contribution and work of minority groups in UA. Portraying them as passive victims of the system only further silences them, encourages paternalistic and colourblind narratives, and effectively makes their activist work harder.

5.4. Urban agriculture as a place of resistance

Although many urban farms and community gardens see food production as UA's primary purpose, for others, it also involves social and environmental activism. For many gardeners and farmers, UA is a form of political contestation, a way to stand against the corporate food system. Urban farms and community gardens can be places of resistance and contestation to environmental and social injustices (Certomà, 2011; Milbourne, 2011; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; McClintock et al., 2018) and places to enact anti-oppression and decolonising work through everyday actions (Daigle, 2017; McClintock, 2018a). UA is (re)shaping our cities and our public spaces; and whether this work is reinforcing racial and neoliberal dynamics or is contesting such dynamics depends on the awareness of the those who are leading and supporting these projects on issues of race, class, and also on gender, sexuality, and

ethnicity. Following Reynolds and Cohen (2016) when referring to the context of New York's UA system, they state that for some UA activists 'urban farms are places to resist food insecurity brought about by the domination of capitalism, and spaces where black and Latino community members can reclaim cultural roots, practice self-determination with regard to food and agriculture, or respond to the latest crises of discrimination and government abandonment in 'poor and disinvested' neighbourhoods' (pp. 12-13).

While many UA initiatives ignore systemic issues and are not aware of their role in supporting and maintaining social inequalities and injustices, there is also an increasing number of urban farms and community gardens that are engaging in these debates and are trying to incorporate social, environmental food justice work within their projects. Most of the projects that engage with anti-oppression work are run by people who experience oppression themselves. Some of the primary forms of oppression include structural racism, classism, sexism, patriarchy, xenophobia, heterosexism and colonialism (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; Turner et al., 2016; Miller, 2019). When UA is run by white, middle-class people, it is likely to ignore those forms of oppression unless there is a deliberate effort to have a social and food justice framework and engage in uncomfortable conversations that come from having different people in the same table sharing their different lived experiences and talking about issues such as white supremacy and historical oppression.

5.4.1. Enacting restorative justice through urban agriculture

According to Miller (2019), one of the first steps to achieve food justice is to 'acknowledge the traumatization of communities of colour through racism, capitalism, colonialism, and the inequities that remain as a result' (p. 2). By becoming aware of these histories and all the policies that have created an oppressive system, people can recognise such realities and find ways to work to dismantle these structures. Slocum et al. (2015), identified trauma and inequity as critical aspects of the food justice work. There are some examples of UA projects that have implemented anti-racist training to educate the community (mostly Black and Latino

people) on the role of institutional and structural racism in the food system, and how to dismantle it through farming.

Other projects have focused on restorative justice through healing. There are several examples of how UA has been used as a way of healing for people experiencing incarceration, which is a traumatic event that affects communities of colour and with low-income backgrounds predominantly, which according to Miller (2019), 'creates further marginalisation as families are torn apart, the local labour is interrupted, and economic mobility is hindered. Former felons also face further inequality as they experience the stigma that comes with imprisonment, including discrimination in jobs and housing. Consequentially, the former inmates often re-enter the prison system' (p. 3). Tools such as healing circles and community gardens within prisons have become rehabilitative spaces that foster restorative justice, working within a food justice framework that 'not only allow[s] for healing, empowerment, reintegration, and rehabilitation, but also creating a connection to nature, gaining job skills, and 'facilitat[ing] ties to local social movements' (Miller, 2019, p. 4).

5.4.1.1. Restorative Justice in Wesley-Cannons Creek

Below are some examples of how Wesley engage with restorative justice work:

'There were, not this year but the last couple of years, two guys, who were the most consistent and most regular, who would come at least once a week. They were not part of the men's group, because it wasn't existent then, but they came for the sole purpose of wanting to work in the garden cause they were growing peas. So, unfortunately, one of them went back to prison [...] He told me he had a lot of anger issues, and when he came here, he said he felt peaceful. He quite happily dug the garden, planted garlic. He found this place quite therapeutic. He joined different activities around here, he just landed in one really bad situation, and we didn't see him after that, which is very unfortunate' (Female volunteer at Wesley in her late 30s).

'We had another person as well who was referred to us, he was released from the men's prison in Rimatika and was placed out here instead, so

he ended volunteering with us for a while [...], so this person came, he did really well, he did the Good Cents course, and he helped in the garden, [...] He was very very good, and he moved into doing courses, and we haven't seen him, which, you know, good for him, sad for us, but good for him' (Female volunteer at Wesley in her late 30s).

One of the benefits of UA that is often highlighted by the literature and urban farmers and gardeners is that it is therapeutic and can help to maintain good mental health (Pitt, 2014; Marsh et al., 2018). According to one of the staff members, gardening has helped many people who were going through stressful periods in their lives. It has been a tool for some to find some peace, stability, and purpose while developing some skills and (re)gaining a feeling of belonging to a community and also feeling useful. This has been particularly relevant for people who need to do community hours, or who have been recently released from prison. As reflected in the quotes and as evidenced in the literature (Jiler, 2006), gardening is an excellent tool to resocialise prisoners and former inmates. Similarly, gardening has become a tool to address trauma and inequity (Slocum et al., 2015) and a platform for restorative justice and social mobilisation (Miller, 2019).

This has also been the case for Māori people, who through UA, can connect to the land and their culture (by the harvesting Indigenous plants) in the garden. For instance, the person who started the pūhā patch was a Māori woman who was going through a challenging period in her life, and when she got to Wesley, she was feeling rootless and aimless. She loved gardening and started to become an active member of the garden. Once in a conversation with one of the staff members, she mentioned how much she liked pūhā and how many good memories she had with that plant, memories from when things were better in her life. This staff member immediately suggested her to start a pūhā patch herself. With the support of Wesley and other local organisations, and her own resilience, she got back on her feet. Since her personal recovery, she has not been back in Wesley, which, according to them, is a good sign. Below is another quote from one of my interviews that shows some of the ways and reasons people volunteer at Wesley, and more specifically, at the garden.

‘Every now and then we get the Department of Correction contacting us to see, or some of the social workers from the other sites, to say they have clients who need to fulfil some community hours and whether they could volunteer here, which is usually is out here in the garden, which is the easiest place for them to be at, or sometimes they give a hand in the food bank as well. They have been times they have helped with the packing of the Fruit and Vege Co-op, but we found that they can cover more hours when they do the garden here with us’ (Female volunteer at Wesley in her late 30s).

As mentioned before, some of the volunteers at Wesley engage in different programmes in the house (particularly the garden) as a requirement from social services. However, from my interviews and fieldwork, I noted that more than an imposition, people enjoyed their time in the garden. Wesley’s community garden has become a place where not only food is grown to help members of the community to be food secured and to be food sovereign but has also become a place where people who are going through difficult times find refuge and a path to healing. Sowing, digging the soil, taking care of a plant and watching it grow and come to life is truly inspiring and metaphorical to life itself, and this may be one of the reasons people find it highly therapeutic, especially those who have been marginalised from society. This topic is particularly relevant in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, where most of the prison population is Māori.

Wesley’s work tries to decolonise the food system at a local level. It has become a space in the heart of Porirua, where people can feel safe and non-judged. They provide tools and support to people who are struggling with financial and food insecurity; and by working with them and acknowledging their agency and expertise over their lives, they can help them re(gain) control over their lives and become empowered. Further, Wesley has become a place for healing trauma and to address inequities and injustices; it is a place of resistance and community resilience. And I believe this is the potential any community garden or urban farm has, the potential of becoming a place that creates justice, a place of individual and communal transformation, a place of connection to people and also to the non-human world.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the literature around food justice in UA, making a special emphasis on race and engaging in class discussions tangentially. I showed the connection food justice has with food sovereignty, as both movements were born as a response to food insecurity and economic pressures that prevent people from accessing healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. I used CRT to explain how racial capitalism operates in UA perpetuating racial and class inequalities and injustices. Diving in food politics literature, I illustrated how UA projects have become racialised spaces driven by colourblindness and White supremacy, which has enhanced paternalistic dynamics and further marginalisation and exclusion of the people many of these white activists wanted to help in the first place. I also highlighted that UA can be both a place of exclusion and a place of resistance where restorative justice can be practised. At the light of this literature debates, I analysed the work of Wesley and Southern Garden and explored the ways they are dealing with such tensions. In the following chapter, I will engage with the neoliberal tensions that are inherent to UA, and I will also examine community economies and right to the city literature in order to understand how Wesley and Southern Garden are dealing with such tensions.

CHAPTER 6

6. Neoliberal Tensions

6.1. Introduction

As I have discussed throughout this research, urban agriculture has been celebrated by its subversive nature against the dominant corporate agrifood system and its multiple benefits, which range from improving social cohesion and psychological health (Alaimo et al. 2008; Freeman et al. 2012) to reducing the ecological footprint through building climate change infrastructure and sequestering carbon (van Veenhuizen 2014). However, critical scholars have also examined how UA programmes can contribute to racial exclusion, as I explained in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I will take a different angle to explore how UA can also underwrite neoliberalism by filling the voids left by the neoliberal state. In order to do so, I will first explore the ways UA can contribute to the process of neoliberalisation and (eco)gentrification in the city, analysing the work of Southern Garden. Secondly, I will present the literature about community economies and analyse how Southern Garden work is helping diversify the economy. Finally, I will assess the right to the city literature focusing on the relevance of the politics of the everyday and how both projects are challenging and changing the economy and the agrifood system from their daily work.

6.2. How does urban agriculture contribute to the process of neoliberalisation?

According to McClintock (2014), neoliberalism is an ideology, while neoliberalisation refers to 'a set of processes rather than an ideology [that] has entailed both the 'rolling back' of the safety net and government oversight and the 'rolling out' of new social and economic relationships that further fuel capitalist accumulation. Examples of roll-out neoliberalisation include privatisation, marketisation, market-friendly

reregulation, flanking mechanisms, and shifting discourse to self-sufficiency and personal responsibility' (p. 154). In general, neoliberal policies around the world have created more inequality in the distribution of wealth, and have intensively degraded and overexploited the environment (Harvey, 2005; 2008).

One of the main critiques posed by food scholars is that UA projects are filling the gaps left by neoliberal policies, doing the work that the state is supposed to do, which helps perpetuate the neoliberal rationality (Guthman, 2008; Pudup, 2008). Moreover, some UA initiatives use entrepreneurial discourse that put the responsibility on individuals and communities, instead of looking at systemic issues such as the absence of the state in the first place (McClintock, 2014). Many UA projects emphasise how UA can provide jobs to the community and focus on people's individual food choices with food activist slogans such as 'vote with your fork' or 'eat locally'. There is an overemphasis on purchasing healthy food, which at times means following certain diets such as vegetarian or wholefood diets. As explained in the previous chapter, blindly supporting these diets is notably problematic as they are usually promoted by white people who ignore people of colour and low-income communities' contexts and cultures. Following Patricia Allen (2010), those that are more vulnerable usually 'have least ability to exercise individual choice [because] allocations of choices are shaped by the historical demographics of inequality' (p. 300).

The emphasis on consumer's choices in the marketplace, such as farmers markets where many urban farms and gardens sell their produce, is problematic on two fronts. On the one hand, it allocates solutions to social problems in the market rather than in the state. On the other hand, it shifts the attention of people from structural issues such as: why do I live in a food desert? Or why is fresh food too expensive and processed food so cheap? Instead of focusing on collective action, some UA activists are engaging with neoliberal rhetoric by putting the work of transforming the agrifood system in the hands of individuals' choices and engagement with food projects (Guthman, 2007; McClintock, 2014).

Other critiques have been made to non-profit organisations or faith-based and community-based projects, suggesting that they are also filling the gaps left by the state. These organisations often offer social services that were previously provided by the state. Following Castree (2010), these types of organisations ‘do not threaten the neoliberal order or encourage others to seriously challenge it’ (p. 1744). Besides, these initiatives have limited capacity and reach, which means that only those who participate in the organisation or live close by can access these services, which means that these organisations might not cover large numbers of people.

Finally, another concern raised by critical food scholars such as McClintock (2014) and Reynolds and Cohen (2016), is that UA projects depend on funding and sponsorships. Usually, these organisations have to compete with each other to get grants from the government or philanthropic institutions that have their own agenda and shape the missions or goals of these UA projects. These forms of funding limit their scope and autonomy to do the work they aim to accomplish. This is particularly hard for UA initiatives that have social justice and anti-racist work within their core values, as these goals are harder to quantify and acquire grants for. These critiques all resonate with some aspects of this thesis’ case studies. However, before moving to the analysis, I will explore two key concepts that will deepen this analysis: Racial capitalism and ecogentrification.

6.2.1. Capitalism as a racial and spatial project

McClintock (2018a) makes a great analysis of the connection between capitalism and racism in North American society that is also applicable to Aotearoa New Zealand context. What he calls racial capitalism refers to a framework that ‘considers how distinct forms of colonization, settler colonialism, and White supremacy function relationally as part of a unified system of capitalist accumulation built on the exploitation of racialized human and spatial difference’ (p. 1). To understand racial capitalism, it is paramount first to know how capitalism is inherently a racial project. Following Pulido (2017) and McClintock (2018a), capitalist accumulation requires human difference (through race), exploitation and socio-spatial differentiation. In

this sense, racialisation, capital accumulation and the production of space are processes that work together and that are both dialectical and geographical (McClintock, 2018a).

As explained in the previous chapter, the process of racialisation of the space creates further marginalisation and exclusion that have been essential to the development of capitalism that has nourished from the exploitation of racial and spatial difference (Inwood, 2015; McClintock, 2018a). Using racial capitalism as an analytical framework allows us to understand the relationship between colonialism, capitalism and racialisation. Through the dispossession and genocide of Indigenous peoples (and slavery in the cases of the Americas), white colonisers dispossessed the means of production of these populations, creating a white supremacist racial hierarchy. In this sense, creating the image of people of colour as inferior, savages, and ignorant, allowed white people to position themselves as superior, civilised and enlightened, and entitled to acquire colonial territories and exploit the people who were at the bottom of that hierarchy. In the words of McClintock (2018a), 'while the economic motivation underpinning colonial resource extraction and slavery was distinct from settler colonialism's core logic of territorial acquisition, they functioned together as part of a unified system' (p. 3).

6.2.2. Ecogentrification in the sustainable 'green' city

There is a common belief that sustainable or 'green' infrastructure benefits everyone. However, as McClintock et al. (2018) state, 'sustainability is never politically neutral' (p. 3). In reality, there are spatial disparities in the access to these benefits due to the socioeconomic inequalities that exist in the city and that are exacerbated by the uneven investment in sustainable projects (McClintock et al., 2018). In fact, investment on sustainable infrastructure (such as bike lanes, farmers markets, rooftop gardens, urban farms, etc.) creates further inequity by benefiting some at the expense of others. These processes contribute to what scholars have called ecogentrification that according to McClintock et al. (2018) is:

‘a particular type of gentrification that is characterized by a green’ aesthetic and is abetted by design and planning agendas that value green spaces and ‘green’ infrastructure, including spaces for urban agriculture of one sort or another. This largely class- and race-specific ecological agenda, or environmental ethic, facilitates the exclusion and displacement of low-income and vulnerable populations from neighbourhoods where it is implemented in favour of their replacement by largely white middle-class residents’ (p. 11).

Under environmental rhetoric, ‘green’ development contributes to rising property values and rents, which force local residents (usually people of colour and low-income residents) out of their neighbourhoods to give place to more affluent, usually white residents (Treetter, 2013; McClintock et al., 2018; McClintock, 2018b). Ecogentrification illustrates the contradictions that emerge from the sustainability fix: while it tries to implement positive environmental policies, it simultaneously legitimates and advances neoliberal development strategies (While et al., 2004, Walker, 2015; McClintock et al., 2018). In the words of Neil Smith (2002), gentrification is the ‘consummate expression of neoliberal urbanism’ (p. 446). UA is considered as a relatively low-cost sustainability fix (compared to more structural interventions such as bioswales or green roofs), and one that is often celebrated for its health, social and environmental benefits.

In recent years, large commercial urban farms and community gardens in North America have arisen in economically devaluated areas (where vacant and cheap land abounds), contributing to the process of gentrification (McClintock, 2014). This phenomenon is linked to the sustainability fix employed by many cities in the neoliberal era that sees UA as a relatively low-cost sustainability fix project. As many scholars have pointed out, investment in ‘green’ infrastructure attracts ‘green’ consumers and investors, which creates further inequality and marginalisation of low-income communities and people of colour (Dooling 2009; Temenos & McCann, 2013; McClintock 2018b). In the words of McClintock et al. (2018), the ‘celebratory and postpolitical sustainability discourse frequently obscures the growing inequality in purportedly sustainable cities, as well as the historical processes of uneven

development that make sustainability investments possible in the urban core’ (pp. 4-5).

Although this phenomenon is not as commonly written about in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, UA is becoming popular in cities such as Wellington and has drawn the attention of policy-makers who have included UA as part of their sustainability fix policies. However, using UA as a way to perform sustainability does not address structural and systemic issues, such as who is actually benefiting from this neoliberal version of sustainability. As explained by McClintock et al. (2018b), UA projects are usually promoted by local and/or national government under the umbrella of sustainability, but they are not designed to address issues such as food insecurity and inequalities.

One of the reasons why sustainable infrastructure such as community gardens and urban farms generate ecogentrification is the association of UA with the awareness or adherence to environmental values (Naylor, 2012; McClintock, 2018b). Such values have been studied under the umbrella of eco-habitus or ecological habitus, ‘the embodiment of a durable yet changeable system of ecologically relevant dispositions, practices, perceptions, and material conditions—perceptible as a lifestyle—that is shaped by and helps shape socioecological contexts’ (Kasper, 2009, p. 318). Following Carfagna et al. (2014), the increasing environmental consciousness has fostered the consumption and the valorisation of ‘local food’, ‘local labour’, organic food and handmade products.

However, UA does not in and of itself generate gentrification. According to McClintock (2018b), for gentrification to occur due to UA, there must be many UA projects operating in a given place to be noticed, and it must be enough aggregation of people with similar environmental values (in other words, an ecohabitus should be predominant within a given area). Therefore, when gardens and environmentally friendly individuals are dispersed or disconnected, the potential of these places to attract gentrifiers and to become sustainable capital decreases (McClintock, 2018b).

McKittrick (2011) connects how the sustainability fix is one of the ways racial capitalist works in the context of North America. According to her, 'the process of uneven development calcifies the seemingly natural links between blackness, underdevelopment, poverty, and place' (p. 951). The rise of property values, eco-habitus and white viscosity work together to gentrify UA spaces and by doing so, making them white places, which creates further racial exclusion, marginalisation and inequity (Dillon, 2014). In the words of McClintock (2018b), 'a postpolitical, colour-blind discourse of sustainability obscures the resulting whitening of urban space but nevertheless functions tacitly within the larger racial project of gentrification arising from an urban sustainability fix, [...] especially in green cities where white people pride themselves on their liberal or progressive values—and their color-blindness' (p. 586-587).

6.2.3. Sustainable spaces and the risk of ecogentrification: the case of Southern Garden

As I have presented, UA is contradictory by nature. It has the potential to both be a place of resistance and radical change and a place where neoliberal narratives and racial capitalism operates. However, portraying UA as exclusively one thing or the other, instead of understanding that such contradictions are inherent, risks undermining UA's transformative potential. McClintock (2014) argues that UA is both radical and neoliberal and in fact, he assures that it has to be both because UA is embedded within the 'contradictory processes of capitalism [that] both create opportunities for urban agriculture and impose obstacles to its expansion' (p. 157).

As explained before, instead of resisting the processes of neoliberalisation, some UA projects have been co-opted by the sustainability fix neoliberal agenda. In this sense, UA fails to challenge the corporate agrifood system even when many projects aim to do the opposite. However, as McClintock (2014) highlights, 'even if urban agriculture programmes fail to effect structural change and ultimately underwrite

neoliberalisation, they nevertheless buffer society against market excess and failure; indeed, they would not arise if they did not serve this function' (p. 158).

McClintock (2014) urges UA activists and policy-makers to go beyond a Manichean vision of UA, and come to terms to its internal contradictions to better position UA 'within coordinated efforts for structural change, one of many means to an end rather than an end unto itself' (p. 147). This reflection is necessary for what Charles Levkoe (2011) calls a 'transformative food politics'. Focusing on UA's neoliberal nature can be counterproductive because it prohibits thinking on how to overcome these contradictions. Similarly, presenting UA as the ultimate solution to food insecurity and environmental issues also makes us ignore the limitations of UA and the risk to keep perpetuating inequalities. Following McClintock (2014), to successfully challenge these contradictions, UA must engage with food justice work.

As expressed by many of the volunteers that I interviewed at Southern Garden, urban farming is viewed as an effective space to challenge the neoliberal agrifood system that disconnects people from their food. According to them, UA has many positive social and environmental outcomes, such as creating jobs and becoming climate-change ready. In this sense, while they are contesting the neoliberal system, they are also filling the gaps left the neoliberal state. Although such contradictions are inherent to UA (McClintock, 2014), one of the goals of Southern Garden and the UA organisation they are part of is to expand urban farms around every city in the country, which creates a significant risk of not only bolstering neoliberalisation but also creating ecogentrification.

Southern Garden is located in Southern suburbs of Wellington. The area where the garden is located is already getting gentrified, and it is known for being 'alternative'. Fostering the expansion of UA in this area could further support gentrification and attract people who share a similar ecohabitus, which could create further inequality and marginalisation of vulnerable communities.

‘That is one of the things we’re trying to do with the [organisation of urban farmer we are part of]; it’s actually have these standardised data sets that we’re collected in all our projects, so we can say look, through these five urban farming projects around New Zealand and this year we sequestered this much carbon, we grew this much food, this is what people said about us, these are the numbers of different species we saw, increasing in number. And the idea of having this standardised data that we can collect around the country is to show the councils, this is why you should be changing policy in order to help these projects keep on going and support them, so we can maximize these outcomes’ (Female volunteer at Southern Garden in her mid-20s)

These well-meaning white activists who aim to transform vacant lots into gardens in the name of food security in low-income neighbourhoods of colour might be inadvertently contributing to the gentrification process of such places (Crouch 2012, McClintock, 2018b). Expanding UA in the Wellington in the name of food security and positive environmental and social outcomes can paradoxically displace the people that these white activist are willing to help in the first place. Both the organisation of urban farmers as a group and also Southern Garden as an individual UA project, are pushing for policy change around UA. They are trying to receive more support from the government by proving that UA can provide multiple benefits and services, which in turn are to a large extent, part of the state’s responsibility. If the government decides to prioritise UA as part of the sustainability fix, the risk of suburbs becoming gentrified increases. Since the local government has been relatively supportive of UA and the organisation of urban farmers Southern Garden is part of is becoming a stronger advocacy voice for UA, the expansion of UA in the city could be a reality soon, especially since UA is a relatively cheap form of sustainability fix.

However, it is essential to remember that for UA to become a strong force that can drive ecogentrification in the city; there is a need to have many UA projects in the same area and many people who share similar green values. In the area where the Southern Garden is located, many people share environmental values; however, there are few urban farms in the area, and one of them is currently not very active, which implies that Southern Garden by itself is not creating ecogentrification.

However, there is a great risk that as UA expands in the city, people become displaced from their neighbourhoods. McClintock (2018b) suggests that in order to mitigate the potential risk of gentrification of UA, there is a need for UA activists to engage with social and environmental justice frameworks. There is also a need for these UA activists to engage in conversations around the role of race, class, gender, sexuality, ableism, etc. in the food system, as well as within UA itself. Some scholars have demonstrated (Lubitow and Miller 2013; Pearsall and Anguelovski 2016) that sites of ecogentrification are also becoming central sites of contestation in the sustainable city, as I will show below. I only used Southern Garden for the analysis of gentrification since this issue does not appear to be relevant (so far) for Wesley.

6.3. Creating places of hope and possibility: Community economies

‘The neoliberal model of economic globalization is based in the assumption that there is no alternative, but there are alternatives everywhere [...] the story of these alternatives is the story of making peace with earth’ (Shiva, 1993, p.8).

There is a common belief that the economy is driven by capitalism and that we have little agency and power against this ‘big monster’. Some have suggested that perhaps through a revolution, we can make a real change. However, as feminist geographers Gibson-Graham (1996, 2002, 2016) have suggested, instead of waiting for the revolution to transform the economy, we can do it through our everyday ethical and political practices of diversifying the economy (in fact, we are already doing it). According to Gibson-Graham (2017), to mobilise a social and economic transformation and build community economies, it is necessary to work in four main areas: the first involves challenging and deconstructing the hegemony of capitalism, the second requires developing the language of diverse economy, the third is cultivating ethical economic subjects (ourselves and others), and the fourth is the actual practice of diversifying the economy and building community economies. These actions constitute what they have called a ‘post-capitalist politics’.

The mainstream economic discourse is capitalocentric, which means that capitalism is viewed as the norm and non-capitalistic relations are 'understood with respect to capitalism, as either the same as, complements to, opposites of or contained within capitalism' (Gibson-Graham, 2016, p. 291). Those activities associated with capitalism are associated with a higher value than those that are not and are considered deviant, small or exotic. However, capitalocentric discourses have been challenged by alternative economic discourses. The most relevant counter-discourses come from feminist activists and economists who have explored unpaid labour, non-market-oriented activities, and informal economies, predominately located within the 'Global South' (Gibson-Graham, 2016).

6.3.1. Diverse economies

Based on these counter-discourses, Gibson-Graham have developed a language of economic diversity that not only aims to challenge the hegemony of capitalocentric discourse but also attempts to give more visibility to local and alternative economic initiatives and show how powerful and efficient they are. Queer theory and post-structuralism have contributed to the development of such language. Drawing on the work of Judith Butler, Gibson-Graham have extrapolated the way queer theory explains how new gender identities have developed from the dominant heteronormative order, into how diverse economies have emerged from the mainstream capitalocentrism (Gibson-Graham, 2006). According to Butler (1997), being and becoming are part of an active process that is always ongoing and never completely successful. This process is also called subjectification, which refers to how people are both 'made' and 'making themselves' through discourse and daily practices (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

Following Foucault's work on governability, Butler (1997) explains that power is 'assumed by the subject, an assumption that constitutes the instrument of that subject's becoming' (p. 11). In other words, what Butler is trying to point out is that when people reclaim their power and agency, the opportunities of new becomings emerge, creating hope, possibility and change. In terms of the economy, such new

becomings require engaging with the politics of the possible in where economic possibilities are diverse. Gibson-Graham (2016) engage in this work by developing and speaking a counter-hegemonic discourse that acknowledges and amplifies the voices of those who already practice and enact 'alternative' and diverse economies.

As aforementioned, one of the ways Gibson-Graham (2006; 2016) have found to repoliticise the economy is the creation of a diverse economy language. Building such language opens the space for hidden economic identities to imagine and perform alternative economies. However, although there has been a lot of effort in building a new economy language (from community activist to academics), these languages tend to remain non-credible to what already exists (Santos, 2004). It seems that such language exists in the shadows of the mainstream capitalocentric thinking, which is why Gibson-Graham (2016) propose a 'collective deidentification' with capitalism not dissimilar to what Judith Butler does with heterosexuality and the binary gender categorisations that it supports.

The development of a language for a diverse economy has involved exploring the diversity of economic relations and conceptualising them in terms of forms of transactions, kinds of labour, and types of enterprise (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Exploring the myriad of contingent ways the economy can be performed allows us to change our collective and individual imaginaries in regard to the economy and go beyond the binary understanding of the economy so we can start to see the economy from its diversity rather by its dominance. Understanding the economy as a hybrid process that is neither fully capitalist nor non-capitalist bring us hope and open possibilities to move forward.

One of the most well-known ways that economy diversity has been explained is through the analogy of the iceberg (Figure 10). The top of the iceberg – what is most visible – illustrates what is usually called 'the economy'. This includes wage labour, market exchange, and capitalist enterprise. However, the top of the iceberg only represents a small portion of the activities by which we produce, exchange, and distribute value. In contrast, the submerged part of the iceberg contains a much more

vast and diverse range of activities, sites, people, and ways to enact the economy. The list is not extensive, but it aims to symbolise the open-ended possibilities that can go in this side of the iceberg.

Figure 10: Gibson-Graham's iceberg framework. Source: Graham-Graham (2006).

The iceberg figure is a pedagogical and graphic version that represent what Gibson-Graham (2006) have called their diverse economy framework. Acknowledging those practices that have been marginalised by the presumption of capitalist hegemony allows us to see the economic diversity and the power and agency of those who reclaim it as a contested space of representation. In the words of Gibson-Graham, 'our language politics is aimed at fostering conditions under which images and enactments of economic diversity (including non-capitalism) might stop circulating around capitalism, stop being evaluated with respect to capitalism, and stop being seen as deviant or exotic or eccentric-departures from the norm' (2006, p.56).

6.3.2. Community economies

Gibson-Graham are particularly careful of not having a restrained definition of what community economy is. They avoid creating a recipe or a guide of the process of how to build diverse economies because they are aware that this can limit the space of decision and the opportunity to cultivate ethical praxis. Instead, they suggest that the practice of the community economy is 'a fluid process of continual resignification, rejecting any fantasy that there is a perfect community economy that lies outside of negotiation, struggle, uncertainty, ambivalence, disappointment, rejecting the notion that there's a blueprint that tells us what to do and how to 'be communal' (Gibson-Graham, 2016, p. 298). Instead of a blueprint, community economies are an open terrain for exploratory conversations and where ethical and political decisions are made.

Community economies are built through collective action, a concept that, according to Gibson-Graham (2006), involves both agency and collectivity. These collective actions are based on ethical discussions and decisions around issues such as the process of goods, wage levels, re-investment strategies, and sale of products, etc. Given the fact that community economies are developed within the mainstream capitalocentric view of the economy, these economies are, to some extent, shaped by it and compliant with it. However, they also create counter-narratives that contest capitalist economy with hope while engaging with possibility. It is essential to understand these projects as hybrids that work in parallel with capitalism and are trying to negotiate a 'space of interdependence' where uncertainty is embraced within the economy (Healy & Graham, 2008, p. 17). This is why Graham and Cameron (2007) invite us to have an affective stance toward these projects and understand them as a work in progress. We need to be aware that those who enact alternative economies are people who are on a journey of deconstruction and resubjectification. They are finding their own ways of enacting their agency and ability to make a difference in a system where alternative, informal, solidarity or Indigenous economies are seen as less important. As Hosking (2015) argues, capitalist discourse discredits people's actions to the point that they do not think their actions are

important or meaningful. In other words, capitalocentrism views individual and small community actions as unmeaningful incredible and backward.

6.3.3. Engaging with new ways of understanding and enacting the economy: Southern Garden

As expressed many times throughout this research, Southern Garden has faced many contradictions and tensions related to their economic model. While their members are trying to be a community project, they also have had to take part in the market economy in order to fund their project. This is how one of its core volunteers voiced it:

‘When you cut lettuces really young and send that to some of the most prestigious restaurants in the city and realise that there was quite a bit inequality issue there... We were kind of moving into the space of not really growing food, but growing lettuce. There was a lot of discussions in around how do you grow food in the city [...], so I think that was the start of having those conversations. It’s interesting because it comes up again in tensions of making money, of paying the bills, but I think the whole point of food sovereignty and the food justice movement is that it has to pay the bills ‘cause part of the discussion is that there are costs associated with doing things but you shouldn’t just righting off, right off growing food that is just, cause otherwise you go down a rabbit hole of continuing this kind of broken system that we see, and we know we can’t continue’ (Male volunteer at Southern Garden in his mid-20s).

These issues often came during the interviews with some Southern Garden members and also during informal conversations on the working bees on Sunday. Often in the moment of discussion, I found it difficult to reconcile the neoliberal language some of the members used when talking about urban farming (as if it were a business) with their ideal of a more just society. However, these juxtapositions provided insight as to what motivates the people I collaborated with to actively reclaim the economy. They wanted to become active agents of change. Most of them are young political activists who are aware that the government is not providing the services or promoting the right policies in regards to food security and climate change. They

want to become themselves ‘the change they want to see’, even if this means that unintentionally they are bolstering the neoliberal agenda that make citizens responsible for their own wellbeing.

In comparison to Wesley Community Action, the members of Southern Garden used a more neoliberal language. When talking about how to measure all the intangible benefits that come for UA, the members of Southern Garden used to use words such as ‘how do you put a price on this’, ‘we are trying to sell education’, ‘we need people to come to the farm and say: sold! We need this everywhere’. Meanwhile, in Wesley, people used to use terms like ‘it is hard to bottle these outcomes’. It is essential to highlight that while Wesley has regular financial support, Southern Garden is more financially unstable. Although they receive some income from the composting service and the sale of the farm’s produce, they mainly rely on funding from the WCC and grants.

The words used by Southern Garden members are, in a sense, complying with the very system they are contesting. However, as I have attempted to show throughout this chapter, the acknowledgement of UA contradictions and its hybridity is paramount to understand and support community economies. It is not a surprise that Southern Garden members appropriate aspects of the capitalist/neoliberal discourse for their own advantage. Following McClintock et al. (2018), ‘such contradictions cannot be fully understood without treating UA as a process operating within broader contradictory tensions of the ‘uneven development’ of the city’ (p. 2). Southern Garden members are aware of these contradictions and are trying to find their way to find a middle path. Through the lens of simultaneous compliance and resistance, Southern Garden is engaging with the politics of the possible by creating a space for politically progressive change and not for an unreachable utopia. Instead of either perpetuating or overthrowing the current system, Southern Garden is choosing to create alternative possibilities within the economy. They are creating space for a credible, visible diverse economy.

Since it was established, Southern Garden has tried different ways and channels to sell their produce. From making green smoothies to sell produce in prestigious restaurants, they have been trying to find a way to have profits that allow them to keep their community project alive. Recently they started to sell 'vege boxes', which is the way they have found now to negotiate those internal tensions. By having a constant financial stream through the 'vege boxes', they are now able to pay a living wage to a Farm Manager, while not selling to high-end restaurants but to more middle-class people. As McClintock (2014 p. 166) states, 'food justice requires increased entitlements. It requires jobs and living wages, not just a garden or grocery store in every neighbourhood'. Widening the scope of these economic practices bring space to way to enact the economy that goes beyond calculative rationality and competitive individualism. In the words of Gibson-Graham (2006), alternative economies:

'no longer entails simply (painfully) submitting to the demanding logic of global capitalism, but becomes instead an ethical and political engagement-a sometimes difficult and conflictual process of experimenting with, fostering, exploring, connecting, expanding, and reworking the heterogeneous and scattered elements of a diverse (becoming community) economy' (p. 195).

Instead of examining the work of Southern Garden through binary lenses, such as neoliberal/non-neoliberal, I decided to look at the ethical choices that its members have to make every day. Believing that the solution is to replace capitalism with another alternative system is totalising and reductive. Rather, looking at the myriad of alternative economies that already exist (but remains invisible and discredited) subverts capitalism's supposed dominance in order to build a diverse understanding of the economy. While Southern Garden is aware of the tensions they face between engaging in the market economy and being a social project, they have a sense of hope and possibility, and they are in fact transforming the way we understand and act in the economy. They have become a site of political contestation over urban sustainability and food politics.

‘That’s another tension as well because at the moment working in a business model is really tricky because you don’t get paid for sequestering carbon, you don’t get paid for improving biodiversity, you get paid for selling food, but we are moving away from that extracting model of farming as it’s like how much value we can take off the land and how much value we can invest into land in the form of carbon sequestration, biodiversity, social cohesion and community participation, teaching, and getting back to our community in skills, empowerment, and all these things. So how do we fund that is the question that we are at the moment’. (Female volunteer at Southern Garden in her mid-20s).

Conventional economic discourse constrains other ways of enacting the economy privileging ‘growth at any cost’ which is seen as unquestionably desirable. Following Shiva (2012) and Harvey (2012), the current economic model based economic growth (usually measured in terms of GDP, levels of capital investment, levels of ‘formal’ employment, etc.) has not brought satisfaction or happiness among people. It instead has caused environmental destruction and economic dispossession. Southern Garden is trying to become an alternative in this way by measuring the economy. By collecting composting around the city in bikes and selling ‘vege boxes’ to the local community, they are not using any gas or cars, which is not doing much for GDP, but they are contributing to the wellbeing of the community and the environment. As Roelvink and Gibson-Graham (2009) state, diverse economies do not only include humans but also involve relations and interconnectedness with non-humans. Economic development is a (by)product of ethical debates and decisions, rather than the main purpose of Southern Garden work.

However, Southern Garden also wants to prove to the government and the private sector that they are a good ‘business model’ that is worth investing in. Their narratives are hybridised; they both content and contest neoliberal and capitalocentric discourse. As Gibson-Graham (2006) suggest, community economies are in a process of becoming and resubjectification, which means that they are in their journey of deconstruction and liberation from being subjects of capitalocentrism and are becoming subjects to new discourses which (re)shape them in different ways. This process enables them to assume power in new forms and to

explore their agency to change the status quo of a system that discredits community actions by considering them small and meaningless. The hybridity in their discourse, according to Hosking (2015), is 'much more enabling and empowering' (p. 84).

Capitalocentric discourse disregards the agency of people to make a difference in their worlds. Instead, it portrays them as consumers and nothing more (Cameron, Healy & Gibson-Graham, 2013), which constrains people's understanding of their agency in the economy. I observed that while the core members of Southern Garden are hopeful and confident about the potential of UA, they are also at times unsure of how much they are actually accomplishing. Despite their expertise in urban farming, they doubt their skills and they see themselves as small at times. However, I believe that Southern Garden is engaging in the process of creating a broader understanding of the economy by becoming a living example of how the economy can be enacted alternatively, although not free of tensions. They are in a process of resubjectification through which they are creating hope, possibility and change.

6.4. The politics of the everyday: The right to the city

Increasingly, scholars have highlighted how people are rethinking and changing the use of urban spaces in relation to food (Galt et al., 2014). Namely, how communities are demanding more urban spaces for food growing and are fighting against development policies that are generating gentrification and reinforcing racist dynamics (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; McClintock, 2018b; McClintock et al., 2018). A lot of these movements have been framed under the umbrella of the right to the city, connecting the demands of people for food sovereignty and justice with the rights of people to (re)produce urban spaces to meet their needs and wishes (Toranghi, 2016; McClintock, 2018b). The concept of 'the right to the city' was first proposed by Henri Lefebvre in 1968 in the context of social mobilisation in France against the negative impacts of the capitalist economy during the '60s. Given that more than half of the world's population lives in cities and that social inequalities persist as a result of

neoliberal policies, debates and demands for the right to the city are still relevant (Shillington, 2013).

The idea of the right to the city has been used by different social movements, especially in Europe and Latin America. In the academic world, it has been discussed extensively, especially by David Harvey (1973; 1996; 2003; 2008; 2012). Harvey (2008) poetically describes the right to the city as 'a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart's desire' (p. 2). According to him, it is more a collective right rather than an individual one since changing the city requires the exercise of collective power over the process of neoliberalisation and urbanisation. The right to the city is centred on social (re)production of space and spatial justice, which are connected to the right of urban citizenship (or spatial citizenship), participation and appropriation of urban space. These ideas have been used and have evolved and transformed through the work of urban political ecology that see cities as continual processes of socio-environmental change that create urban spaces (Heynen et al., 2016).

Two of the core ideas within the right to the city literature are the participation of the urban inhabitants in the decision-making process that (re)shape the city, and the right to produce urban spaces that satisfy the needs of all the inhabitants (Shillington, 2013). Both Lefebvre and Harvey give special importance to daily mundane actions. According to them, real change comes from both collective and grassroots groups' actions and individual everyday actions. In the context of urban life, these actions are manifested in the way we interact with space, both public and private, and in how we challenge the status quo and create change day to day. An example of this is guerrilla gardening, which refers to the act of gardening in (usually abandoned) public spaces without legal permits to cultivate food. Guerrilla gardening has become a popular subversive way to do urban farming in food desert places with high rates of food insecurity, by challenging the status quo and reclaiming the right of the urban inhabitant of shaping the city according to 'their heart desires' but also according to their needs (Iveson, 2013; Metcalf & Widener, 2011).

Although this thesis has focused on systemic issues, it is also important to highlight that everyday mundane actions like sowing, weeding, planting, keeping bees, and harvesting are still relevant and can be a way of social and political activism, urban citizenship, and participation in policy making and can ultimately change the status quo (Marsh, 2011; Harvey, 2012; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016), and can ultimately change the status quo. These everyday contestations open possibilities in the production of space that challenge colonial and racist practices and narratives (McClintock, 2018a). As several scholars have pointed out, for UA to become a place of environmental and social justice, it needs to dismantle oppression at its core. In other words, it has to engage with anti-oppression work, which includes anti-racist and anti-capitalist work (Allen, 2008; Slocum & Cadieux, 2015; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; McClintock, 2018; Miller, 2019). However, there is a need for further research that includes gender, ethnicity, and sexuality within the frame of anti-oppression tools in UA. Following Turner et al. (2016):

‘Anti-oppression practice can expose these blind spots while serving as a mechanism to build cross-difference and foster wider participation in building inclusive, sustainable, community-driven food systems [...] food justice bridges theory and practice and can help reposition sustainable food systems work within social justice and anti-oppression frameworks’ (p. 108).

Food justice work is a way of praxis by connecting both theory and the actual daily anti-oppression actions that contest the systemic issues that create inequalities and injustices among communities of colour, low-income residents, and to gender and ethnic minorities. It helps to develop what Turner et al. (2016) called ‘an anti-racist consciousness’ both among people who are oppressed and white people.

Drawing on Lefebvre’s work, he often talked about ‘concrete utopias’ which in the words of Butler (2012) refers to ‘the anticipatory striving towards possibilities that are latent within the present, through spatial practices, aesthetics forms, imagery symbols and political action (p. 133). This idea was also conceptualized by Jacques Derrida in what he called *hauntology*, which refers to how ‘all things that

appear as 'being' - or as 'being natural' - are haunted, and potentially disrupted, by that which has been excluded (Demeritt, 2001, p. 57). In the context of UA, which has been excluded has been the people who have been oppressed by the food system such as the working class and people of colour who face greater food insecurity. These people are the ones who are haunting the norm, the current system and those in power who perpetuate the cycle of inequality and exclusion. They are the ones who have the potential to change the status quo.

The purpose of this section, and more broadly, of this research is to challenge the dominant and singular colonial and neoliberal narrative that can silence people of colour and low-income residents. Focusing solely on settler structures of oppression without acknowledging the everyday resistance actions and practices that challenge the system and resist the image of victimization perpetuates the view that marginalised communities lack agency. In this section I explain how the everyday practices of the projects I worked with contest the colonial and neoliberal logics. These alternative projects are changing these main paradigms and are telling other histories and are (re)writing social, environmental and food dynamics.

6.4.1. Enacting the politics of the possible: Wesley and Southern Garden

Although both of the projects I worked with are challenging the system in their own ways, Wesley has engaged more directly with decolonisation and anti-oppression work. Southern Garden is at the early stages of that journey. They have focused more on environmental activism. However, both projects are places of resistance that are trying to address systemic issues both by pressuring for policy changes and through their daily 'mundane' (but also subversive) actions. Following the right to the city literature, both projects are reclaiming their urban citizenship and are using their voices to push for systemic change at a government level. In the case of Wesley, they advocate for social policies that are more inclusive and just to those who have been more excluded from society. They have a particular focus on people of colour and low-income residents, but in general to vulnerable populations such as kids and older people, since Wesley is an organisation that works with different segments of the

population. Meanwhile, Southern Garden pushes for policy change in Wellington regarding UA. They want the government to support and prioritise UA initiatives on their agenda.

In this way both Wesley and Southern Garden are using their 'right to the city' to participate in the decision-making process and by doing so, they are (re)shaping the city and creating urban spaces that aim to satisfy the needs and desires of the urban inhabitants. In this context, the desire and need to have more places to grow food, fight climate change, build community, and (especially in the case of Wesley) places to decolonise and dismantle oppression at its core. This is how one of the staff members at Wesley voiced it:

'We are a strength-based organisation, so the approach and values are very much that we work with our people, our taura here, and we want them to come up with a community-based solution for themselves and not as coming in and doing things to them [...] we want those strengths and those solutions to come from the people we work with on the ground, so I'd say that's one of the highest values we hold, then they guide us as what we like to call as they are experts of their own lives and what that means is if we communicate together then they eventually find a solution for themselves, their families, the wider whānau' (Female staff member at Wesley in her early 40s).

Although Wesley does not claim to do any decolonising or anti-oppression work, the way their programmes are designed engage with food justice activism. What started as a food bank that worked with a charitable model has transformed and became a place of resistance and hope. People who use the services that Wesley provides are usually going through a phase of instability in their lives. For example, they may not have financial stability and as a result may be struggling to become food secure, or may have had troubles with the justice system. However, at Wesley, nobody's past is judged, and the team tries to support people through the different programmes it offers in the hopes of helping them to (re)gain control over their lives.

As aforementioned, capitalocentric discourse tends to discredit individual and community work by consider it meaningless, small in scale and limited to create a change. This imagery is particularly strong when the people of colour, low-income or in general minorities are the ones enacting alternative economies. Following Palomino-Schalscha (2011), essentialising marginalised people portrays them as powerless in the face of global capitalism and their role in its (de)construction. Rather than being subjected as marginalised citizens of racial capitalism, the people I volunteered with in Wesley can be seen as agents of their own change; they are 'cultivating [their] capacities to imagine, desire, and practice' (Gibson-Graham, 2003, p. 54) the politics of the possible in their everyday lives. With their daily work, they are collectively changing the city, and (re)shaping the way people access food while creating strong friendships and resilience.

As explained before when talking about community economies, it is paramount to support these alternative economies and their process of resubjectification and becoming. They are reclaiming their site as a place political contestation and transformation through their daily actions that aims to challenge and create new ways of understanding and performing the economy while (re)shaping the city. People on the ground, everyday people that engage in projects such as Wesley or Southern Garden, are using their agency to imagine and create a better world. Wesley's work helps to resist cultural oppression by maintaining and passing on culturally specific knowledge about food and agriculture, and by challenging and refuting the stereotype of people of colour as victims of economic and political disenfranchisement with no agency to affect their realities. In this sense, Wesley demystifies those imaginaries and helps people to cultivate social resilience and self-determination through building community power from within. They represent what Derrida (1993) called 'constitutive outsides', which means that they are those excluded by the system who are now disrupting, challenging and changing the status quo from the inside.

Wesley has managed to work towards food justice and food sovereignty in all the stages of the food chain, from seed to plate. In all these stages, the power is partially

shared. People participate in the decision-making process of what to sow and how to cook, and at times of how to sow as well. The food harvested is not only fresh and nutritious but also culturally appropriate. Similarly, they have engaged with a subversive way of enacting the economy through their Timebank programme. This model, which is already practised in other countries, has challenged capitalist values at its core. Instead of exchanging money, people exchange time and skills with the members of their community. In the words of one of the Wesley staff members:

‘It’s using time as currency, and it’s also encouraging community involvement and led people to work within the community, [...] everyone can join, everyone has something that they can contribute, everyone has skills and knowledge that other people don’t. So yeah, just the main philosophy behind is community involvement.’

Through these everyday politics, Wesley is becoming a significant site of struggle and also a ‘significant site of imaginative, non-hegemonic and culturally sensitive development’ (Hosking, 2016, p. 111). Usually, when we think about contesting the system, we imagine people protesting on the streets or dramatic acts of subversion. However, the everyday is a site of resistance and self-determination, the ‘banal and mundane’ everyday acts ‘reflect and reproduce capitalist social relations, express their contradictions, and contain the seeds of their overcoming’ (Figuerola, 2015, p. 502). People divert the dominant order without leaving it, making it function differently. Following Hosking (2016), ‘a recognition of the politics of possibility located within the everyday actions of ordinary people in the community economy is a way in which to include marginalised groups into social and political governance’ (p. 113)

However, as Gibson-Graham (2006) sustain, it is essential to approach ‘the existing conditions in a spirit of experimentation and generosity, [...] to view them as conditions of possibility as well as of impossibility’ (p. 194). In fact, McClintock (2008) and Reynolds (2015) argue that UA is not the panacea nor the ultimate solution to social and environmental injustices. ‘Farming and gardening will neither ‘feed the city’ nor eliminate racism, patriarchy, or any other manifestation of social or political

oppression. Rather than a cure-all for inequity (or an anticapitalist project), urban agriculture is [...] a tool that can help individuals and organisations create more socially just systems within their communities' (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016, p. 59). This is what Wesley is doing on a small scale by combining tangible activities such as gardening, selling food (through the Co-op), and cooking with an acknowledgement of the structural causes of social and food injustice. In this way, Wesley is engaging with the politics of the possible by contributing to growing power within the community, making it resilient and self-reliant, and by doing so, (re)shaping the city to its inhabitants' 'heart desires'.

6.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented how UA can be both a place of (eco) gentrification (using Southern Garden as the case of analysis) and how it can also be a place of resistance and possibility using community economies and right to the city literature. In the first section of the chapter, I exposed the neoliberal tensions Southern Garden faces and the way its team are dealing with them. In the second part of the chapter, drawing on Gibson-Graham work on diverse economies, I used Southern Garden to illustrate how the economy can be enacted in alternative ways that challenge capitalocentrism and that open windows of possibilities and hope. Finally, I explored the importance of the everyday politics using the right to the city scholarship as my framework of analysis. In this last section, I showed how both Southern Garden and Wesley are challenging and changing the system from the inside with their daily, mundane actions. Both projects are (re)writing new ways of engaging with the economy, and they are also (re) shaping the city according to their 'hearts desires'.

CHAPTER 7

7. Conclusion

7.1. The journey of writing this thesis

Writing this thesis has been one of the most transformative processes I have been through in my life. Having the opportunity to dive into critical food scholarship, CRT and community economies literature has widened my worldviews and has helped me deconstruct many preconceived ideas I had about race, privilege, and the economy. Having a critical mindset and being in the process of constant self-reflection is an exhausting never-ending task that, although rewarding, is also confronting and at times, uncomfortable. Reflecting on my own positionality and my privileges (and lack of them) have made me more aware of the different ways people's experiences are shaped by their intersectional positionalities (such as gender, race, age, ability, sex, class, etc.). Although over time I have become somewhat cynical and disheartened by many of the injustices I witness (and sometimes experience) every day, the work I did through this thesis and the findings I encountered have made me more hopeful about the future. Engaging with grassroots groups and participating in their daily activities has enabled me to see some openings and broaden my horizons of possibility and justice.

Grounded on the experiences and discourses of volunteers and members of Southern Garden located in the southern suburbs of Wellington and Wesley Community Action in Cannons Creek, I have used food sovereignty, food justice, community economies and the right to the city as my theoretical frameworks to explore the work these community projects are doing to contest the current corporate agrifood system, and become an alternative to it.

Although food security is an essential part of both projects' ethos, their work goes beyond merely producing food. They engage in food sovereignty and food justice work in their own way. In regard to food sovereignty, Southern Garden is more

focused on environmental activism and seed sovereignty; while Wesley centres its efforts on community building and resilience through all the food chain phases (from seed to plate). Given that Cannons Creek's population is mostly Māori and Pasifika, Wesley has put effort into having Indigenous and culturally appropriate crops as a way to foster people's connection to food and land. Despite the differences in the ways these two initiatives engage with food sovereignty, they both are critical of systemic issues and dynamics that have driven them to do their work in the first place.

In terms of food justice, Wesley challenges the stereotype of UA in the 'Global North' as an activity done by white, middle-class people. This grassroots group works hand-to-hand with people of the community to find together solutions to their problems that are usually around food and financial insecurity. Over time Wesley has created different programmes that aim to help the members of the community to get empowered, always acknowledging their agency and expertise over their own lives. The organisation tries not to engage in paternalistic dynamics by sharing the power on the decision making and design of most of the programmes they offer, and by being open to the feedback from the community members.

On the other hand, Southern Garden represents the image of a 'conventional' UA project in the 'Global North', since its members are mostly young, white, middle-class people. Although its work does not focus on producing food for monetary purposes and their members engage in significant environmental and social activism, some of their discourses and practices are paternalistic and come from a colourblind perspective. Even though Southern Garden members are working towards a more just system, there are aspects around food justice such as race and class that are ignored by their members. This might be due to the lack of engagement and understanding of communities of colour and from low socioeconomic backgrounds contexts. As some scholars have warned us (McClintock, 2018a; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016), UA projects that ignore racial and class dynamics risk fostering further exclusion and marginalisation. Although this is an issue that is mainly driven by systemic structures such as colonialism and white supremacy, UA projects can

deliberately engage with food justice frameworks and anti-racist work to prevent paternalistic and exclusionary practices. In this regard, Southern Garden core members are open to conversations around these issues and willing to engage with food justice activism in their farm in the future.

From a critical economic perspective, Southern Garden and Wesley can be described as community economies. Both engage with work that contests and question the hegemony of capitalism and both represent different ways the economy can be enacted out of the apparently 'dominant' capitalist system. However, these initiatives are not non-capitalist; they are hybridised projects that both reproduce neoliberal practices and discourses and contest them at the same time. Both case studies engage with the politics of the possible; through their ordinary daily actions, they are (re)framing the economy and making UA spaces of justice and possibility. Wesley and Southern Garden are just examples of the thousands of community projects around the world that are changing the world with their ordinary daily actions. It is paramount to remind ourselves that these community initiatives are not marginal, but that are indeed, all around us: we just need to look carefully, and we will find them in every corner.

7.2. Main contributions of this research

Through this research, I have attempted to foster a space to discuss UA from a critical perspective in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. As Reynolds and Cohen (2016) state, sometimes academics think that supporting UA means portraying it in adulatory ways, however, they argue that engaging in uncomfortable debates around the role of UA in fostering food justice is not only important but necessary to push for systemic and local change. This is what I tried to do throughout this thesis. I have shown how UA can be a place of resistance and justice while also being a place where exclusionary dynamics can be (re)produced. There is a lack of conversations around the role of race and class in UA in Aotearoa New Zealand in general and the Wellington area in particular. This gap is concerning because, despite the growing

number of UA initiatives and studies around them, most UA projects in the area are led by white, middle-class people, leaving people of colour and from lower socio-economic background out and underrepresented in such spaces. This thesis contributes to open such debates both in academia and among the grassroots groups that are practising UA.

I tried to open a space that, on the one hand, was supportive and not judgemental to the groups I worked with, and on the other hand, critical and not complacent about their work. This is a space of reflection that tries to keep this careful balance while it aims to push for transformation and inclusion of marginalised voices in UA debates. One of the reasons I worked with Wesley was because I wanted to show that UA in the 'Global North' is not only practised by white, middle-class people, but also by communities of colour and from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. I wanted to make their work more visible and give them space in academia since most of the academic scholarship around UA in the West has privileged the voices and stories of white gardens while ignoring and silencing the voices and the work of people of colour and low-income communities. I hope this thesis helps foster conversations around race and that immigrants, former refugees and Indigenous people's voices become more relevant and visible in the media, academia and the local forums and conferences around UA and food politics.

This research also contributed to expanding the understanding of UA as community economies and the importance of the 'everyday' as a tool of transformation. When working with community groups that are engaging with 'alternative' economies, many academics are highly critical around the contradictions of such groups, which although aim to contest the capitalist and neoliberal economy, also engage with capitalist/neoliberal discourses and practices. Following Gibson-Graham (2006), I decided to take an affective stance, which I believe is paramount when researchers seek to support grassroots groups. Taking an affective stance does not mean not being critical about the work of these groups, but understanding that they are in their own process of resubjectification and becoming. They are navigating and finding new

ways of enacting the economy, and therefore they are a work in progress. I hope this research contributes to foster spaces of support but also of critical reflection where together we can create new futures full of hope and possibility.

7.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research

Despite the contributions that this thesis has made, there were several limitations in its creation and conduction, particularly in the way that knowledge was produced. Although I have mentioned frequently throughout this thesis the importance of collaboration and power-sharing when engaging with food justice work, achieving such intentions while doing this research was challenging due to limitations of institutionalised academic research, and due to lack of time and expertise on conducting participatory research. I selected the project focus before 'getting' in the field, and before engaging with the community activists that were part of this research. I did not share with them the power of deciding the framework and focus of this thesis, nor the methodological approaches I engaged with. However, many of my decisions around the topics and angles of analysis that I took were informed by my interactions with members of both community groups.

Although I tried to break the idea of academics being the 'experts', and tried to privilege the voices of my 'participants', the thesis was run by unequal power relations. I was always in charge of the decisions and of the framing of the research. Even though I used ethnographic and PAR approaches, looking back, I can now see that this research could have been more collaborative and subversive in its design. Emerging from this thesis, then, is the need for a continued pursuit of better ways of conducting fair, equal and emancipatory research.

Following Reynolds and Cohen (2016), academic research can be exploitative, especially when engaging with vulnerable populations. While researchers get postgraduate titles or advance in their academic careers, communities usually do not get anything in return, not even a report of the research. In the worst scenario,

communities are misinterpreted or represented in ways that disempower them. To prevent such exploitation and dismantle oppression, critical academics have emphasised the need for engaging with the communities from the early stages of research. This means building ties with communities before starting your research and sharing the power with them throughout the process. This approach follows PAR methodologies and aims to give communities more power in the decision-making process and the framing of academic scholarship. I encourage researchers looking to work with food politics or food justice frameworks to include these approaches from the beginning of their research.

This research only had two case studies, which limits the understanding of the way UA is enacted in the whole Wellington area. It is paramount to expand the research about the connection of UA to food justice since the literature in the context of Aotearoa and Wellington is almost non-existent. There is a critical need to engage in food justice debates and to include and privilege the voices of communities of colour and from low-socioeconomic backgrounds in order to dismantle the idea of young, white, middle-class people as the 'pioneers' of UA, and to show how these communities are engaging with food politics and food justice work. One of the first steps towards advancing food justice is making these voices more visible. There is a gap in the literature around research about the role of race and class in UA. Similarly, it is essential to undertake research that looks at other intersectionalities such as gender, sexuality, ability, etc. in order to have a broader understanding of the potential of UA to be a place of resistance and justice and also the ways in which it could contribute to further marginalisation and exclusion. Similarly, there is an absence of the voices of immigrants and Indigenous peoples in the literature about UA in Aotearoa, despite the fact that they have been a leading force of UA in the country.

There is a significant gap in the literature around the ways white, middle-class people can become allies and active members in dismantling oppressive structures such as racism in the context of UA. People of colour and from vulnerable backgrounds have

been the primary agents driving such work; however, it is paramount that white people also actively engage in conversations around white supremacy, white privilege and structural racism if we are to foster a real change. Nonetheless, white people need to find ways of engaging in these conversations, not people of colour. As many community activists interviewed by Reynolds and Cohen (2016) stated, people of colour are already fighting many battles (many of them created by white people), and it is unfair to continually ask them 'how to become a better white', or a 'better ally'. This is something that white people need to find out by themselves.

Academic work in Aotearoa around race tend to privilege colonial understanding of racial inequalities and injustices, but often ignores the voices and experiences of immigrants and former refugees, especially in the context of UA and food politics. Most of CRT has been produced in the USA, and although most of their debates and critiques are relevant to Aotearoa's context, there is a need of further research and production of theories around race that are unique to NZ context.

Following this line, there is also room for research that explores the potential of UA in helping former refugees and immigrants to (re)connect to their 'new home' through the cultivation and sharing of food. Shillington (2013), has framed food as 'the most intimate and necessary human-nature relations' (p. 104). According to her and other scholars (such as Reynolds & Cohen, 2016; Uribe et al., 2009; Valenzuela & Martinez, 2017; Hoover, 2013; Tolleson, 2013), UA has the potential of becoming a tool through which people reconnect and maintain their culture in a foreign land when people have the right and freedom to plant culturally appropriate food. This is especially relevant since as I showed in this research, UA projects can be racialised spaces that exclude such populations.

Finally, there is room for research around seed sovereignty and the potential of UA to help in the work of decolonising the agrifood system. There is a large number of UA projects run by Māori people around the country that could further inform these

debates. Several scholars have shown the potential of UA as a tool of self-determination and decolonisation (McClintock, 2018a; Bang, 2016; Thomas, 2017). According to them, Indigenous ways of connecting to the land and the non-human world challenges neoliberal and Western ideas around property and foodways. Following Alfred & Corntassel (2005), UA can help Indigenous communities regain their capacity of being self-sufficient by being able to provide their own food, medicines and even their own clothing. In sum, there is space and need for research that looks at the potential of UA as a tool in the settler-colonial city to decolonise, empower communities and foster spaces of possibility and freedom.

7.4. Final remarks

This thesis is an attempt to show the often unrecognised and underestimated revolutionary work community activist are doing through UA. I tried to highlight the power of everyday politics to change and challenge the status quo without being complacent and uncritical about the limitations and contradictions of such work. Southern Garden and Wesley are engaging with food sovereignty and food justice work. They both are hybridised forms of the economy that are opening spaces of possibility and freedom where we can all build better futures. I have tried in this thesis to do justice to their work and to help move forward in the search of more radical spaces of transformation.

Appendix 1: Information sheet for organisations

Seeds of hope

INFORMATION SHEET FOR ORGANISATIONS

Thank you for your interest in this project. Please read this information before deciding whether or not your organisation will take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to take part, thank you for considering my request.

Who am I?

My name is Isabella Sanchez Bolivar and I am a Masters student in environmental studies at Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my thesis.

What is the aim of the project?

This project will look at the relationship between urban agriculture (UA) and food and environmental justice. According to recent literature, urban agriculture has multiple benefits in terms of community building and positive environmental outcomes. However, recent studies have also demonstrated that urban agriculture can reinforce social exclusion and colonial and paternalistic dynamics. This research will look at the ways in which urban agriculture projects in Wellington negotiate these tensions, particularly focusing on the links between UA and food justice. Your participation will support this research by adding to the current literature around urban agriculture and its link to food justice. This research has been approved by the

How can you help?

If you agree to take part, I will interview your community garden members. I will ask them questions about the general operation of the community garden and its link to food and environmental justice. The interviews will take around 30-1:30 hours. Community garden members will complete the interviews either outside or during volunteering hours depending of their time availability. The interviews will take place in a location agreed with the interviewees beforehand. Each individual participant will be asked to provide consent before their involvement in the research. I will audio record the interview with the permission of the participants and write it up later. The interviews will be confidential, meaning that only my supervisor and I will know who participated, but the identities of the participants will be protected, unless they explicitly choose to be identified in the research outputs.

If you agree to take part, I will survey your community garden members. I will ask them questions about their involvement in the community garden. The surveys will take about 5 minutes to be completed. The surveys will take place in the community garden. Community garden members will complete the surveys either outside or during volunteering hours depending of their time availability. The surveys are anonymous. This means that nobody, including the researcher will be aware of the participant's identity.

Finally, if you agree to take part, I will observe your community garden members. I will be observing them as they engage in regular and daily community garden activities. The observations will occur within the community garden, the length of the observations will depend of the length of the community garden activities I attend to. I will make around 3 to 5 visits in total and I will inform you the dates I will attend. The observations will not have an impact on your community garden members. Each individual participant will be asked to provide consent before their involvement in

the observation. The observations will be confidential, meaning that my supervisor and I will know who participated, but the identities of the participants will be protected, unless they explicitly choose to be identified in the research outputs.

What will happen to the information the participants give?

Information provided by participants in the surveys will be confidential. This means that although I am not recording any personal information, I will know who is participating. However, the answers will remain completely anonymous and unidentifiable.

Information provided by participants in interviews and participant observation is confidential. This means that the researcher named below will be aware of the identity of your organisation but your organisation will not be revealed in any reports, presentations, or public documentation, unless you explicitly choose to have the organisation named in the final report.

Only my supervisor and I will read the notes or transcript of the interview, have access to the survey and observation data. The interview transcripts, summaries, any recordings, and observation and survey data will be kept securely and destroyed on 18/05/2029. I will keep this information till the date formerly stated because I may do a PHD in the future and the data collected from this research may be helpful for my future studies.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in my Masters, for academic publications or conferences, and in dissemination at academic or professional conferences.

I will also provide your organisation with a report summarising the results of the research.

If you accept this invitation, what are the rights of your organisation?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide that your organisation will participate, you have the right to:

- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- withdraw your organisation's participation from the study before 20/08/2019, however, individual participants retain the right to decide if their data will be withdrawn;
- be able to read a report of this research

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student: Name: Isabella Sanchez Bolivar University email address: sancheis@staff.vuw.ac.nz	Supervisor: Name: Marcela Palomino-Schalscha Role: Lecturer School: School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences Phone: 044635899 marcela.palomino- schalscha@vuw.ac.nz
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Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Convenor of the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee: Dr Judith Loveridge, email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.

Appendix 2: Informed consent for organisations

Seeds of hope

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE (ORGANISATION)

This consent form will be held for 10 years.

Researcher: Isabella Sanchez Bolivar, School of Geography, Environment, and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington.

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.
- I agree that my organisation will take part.

I understand that:

- I may withdraw this organisation from this study at any point before 20/08/20019, and the information provided up to this date by members of the organisation will be used in the project.
- The identifiable information will be destroyed on 18/05/2029. The information will be kept till the date formerly stated because it may be used in a PHD in the future and the data collected from this research may be helpful for these future studies.
- Any information the participants provide will be included in a final report but the surveys, transcripts, observation notes, and recordings will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor.

- In the case of the surveys the participation will be confidential and the data collected will be published anonymously.
- The identities of the participants will remain confidential to the researcher and the supervisor, unless they explicitly choose to be identified in the research outputs.
- I understand that the results will be used for a Masters dissertation, for academic publications or conferences, and in dissemination at academic or professional conferences
- I consent to information or opinions which are given by the participants being attributed to the organisation in any reports on this research and have the authority to agree to this on behalf of the organisation.

Yes	No
☐	☐
- I would like to receive a copy of the final report and have added my email address below.

Yes	No
☐	☐

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Contact details: _____

Appendix 3: Information sheet for interviews

Seeds of hope Interviews

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

Who am I?

My name is Isabella Sanchez Bolivar and I am a Masters student in environmental studies at Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my thesis.

What is the aim of the project?

This project will look at the relationship between urban agriculture (UA) and food and environmental justice. According to recent literature, urban agriculture has multiple benefits in terms of community building and positive environmental outcomes. However, recent studies have also demonstrated that urban agriculture can reinforce social exclusion and colonial and paternalistic dynamics. This research will look at the ways in which urban agriculture projects in Wellington negotiate these tensions, particularly focusing on the links between UA and food justice. Your participation will support this research by adding to the current literature around urban agriculture and its link to food justice. This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee Research Master application reference number 0000027660

How can you help?

You have been invited to participate because you are an active member/leader in this community garden. If you agree to take part, I will interview you in a location agreed with you beforehand. I will ask you questions about the general operation of the community garden and its link to food and environmental justice. The interview will take around 30 to 1:30 hours. I will audio record the interview with your permission and write it up later. You can choose to not answer any question or stop the interview at any time, without giving a reason. You can withdraw from the study by contacting me at any time before 20/10/2019. If you withdraw, the information you provided will be destroyed or returned to you.

What will happen to the information you give?

This research is confidential. This means that the researcher named below will be aware of your identity but the research data will be combined and your identity will not be revealed in any reports, presentations, or public documentation, unless you explicitly choose to be named in the final report.

Only my supervisors and I will read the notes and transcript of the interview. The interview transcripts, summaries and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed on 18/05/2029. I will keep this information till the date formerly stated because I may do a PHD in the future and the data collected from this research may be helpful for my future studies.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in my Masters, for academic publications or conferences, and in dissemination at academic or professional conferences.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- withdraw from the study before 20/10/2019;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- receive a copy of your interview recording;
- receive a copy of your interview transcript;
- read over and comment on the interview transcripts
- be able to read any reports of this research by emailing the researcher to request a copy.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student: Name: Isabella Sanchez Bolivar University email address: sancheis@staff.vuw.ac.nz	Supervisor: Name: Marcela Palomino-Schalscha Role: Lecturer School: School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences Phone: 044635899 marcela.palomino- schalscha@vuw.ac.nz
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Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convenor: Dr Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.

Appendix 4: Informed consent for interviews

Seeds of hope

CONSENT TO INTERVIEW

This consent form will be held for 10 years.

Researcher: Isabella Sanchez Bolivar, School of Geography, Environment, and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington.

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.
- I agree to take part in an audio recorded interview.

I understand that:

- I may withdraw from this study at any point before 20/10/2019, and any information that I have provided will be returned to me or destroyed.
- The identifiable information I have provided will be destroyed on 18/05/2029. The information will be kept till the date formerly stated because it may be used in a PHD in the future and the data collected from this research may be helpful for these future studies.
- Any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor
- I understand that the findings may be used for a Masters dissertation, for academic publications or conferences, and in dissemination at academic or professional conferences.

- I understand that the observation notes and recordings will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor
- I understand that organisational consent has been provided and the organisation will/will not be named in any of the reports *[depending of the organisation response]*
- I consent to information or opinions which I have given being attributed to me in any reports on this research:

Yes	No
☐	☐
- I would like a copy of the recording of my interview:

Yes	No
☐	☐
- I would like a copy of the transcript of my interview:

Yes	No
☐	☐
- I would like to receive a copy of the final report and have added my email address below.

Yes	No
☐	☐

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Contact details: _____

Appendix 5: Information sheet for participant observations

Seeds of Hope

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS IN PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

You are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

Who am I?

My name is Isabella Sanchez Bolivar and I am a Masters student in environmental studies at Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my thesis.

What is the aim of the project?

This project will look at the relationship between urban agriculture (UA) and food and environmental justice. According to recent literature, urban agriculture has multiple benefits in terms of community building and positive environmental outcomes. However, recent studies have also demonstrated that urban agriculture can reinforce social exclusion and colonial and paternalistic dynamics. This research will look at the ways in which urban agriculture projects in Wellington negotiate these tensions, particularly focusing on the links between UA and food justice. Your participation will support this research by adding to the current literature around urban agriculture and its link to food justice. This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee Research Master application reference number 0000027660

How can you help?

You have been invited to participate because you are a member of this community garden. If you agree to take part, you will be part of a participatory observation research. I will observe you as you engage in regular community garden activities. I will observe your behaviours and interactions with other community members (E.g. the role and activities you take part on, the language and words you use, the decision-making processes, the conversations you engaged with other volunteers, etc). The observations will occur within the community garden, the length of the observations will depend of the length of the community garden activities or working bees. I will make around 3 to 5 observations in total. I may ask you to use a pin I will give to you to help me recognise you as part of the research and differentiate you from the volunteers who decided not to participate.

What will happen to the information you give?

This research is confidential. This means that the researcher named below will be aware of your identity, but the research data will be combined and your identity will not be revealed in any reports, presentations, or public documentation, unless you explicitly choose to be named in the final report.

Only my supervisor and I will read the notes of the observation. The observation data will be kept securely and destroyed on 18/05/2029. I will keep this information till the date formerly stated because I may do a PHD in the future and the data collected from this research may be helpful for my future studies.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in my Masters, for academic publications or conferences, and in dissemination at academic or professional conferences.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- withdraw from the study before 20/10/2019; however, it will not be possible to withdraw the information you have provided up to that point;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- be able to read any reports of this research by emailing the researcher to request a copy.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student: Name: Isabella Sanchez Bolivar University email address: sancheis@staff.vuw.ac.nz	Supervisor: Name: Marcela Palomino-Schalscha Role: Lecturer School: School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences Phone: 044635899 marcela.palomino- schalscha@vuw.ac.nz
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Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convenor: Dr Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.

Appendix 6: Informed consent for participant observations

Seeds of hope

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

This consent form will be held for 10 years.

Researcher: Isabella Sanchez Bolivar, School of Geography, Environment, and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington.

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.
- I agree to take part in a participant observation research

I understand that:

- I can withdraw from the participant observation at any point before 20/10/2019, however I understand that it will not be possible to withdraw the information I have provided up to that point.
- The identifiable information I have provided will be destroyed on 18/05/2029. The information will be kept till the date formerly stated because it may be used in a PHD in the future and the data collected from this research may be helpful for these future studies.
- Any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor

- I understand that the findings may be used for a Masters dissertation, for academic publications or conferences, and in dissemination at academic or professional conferences
- I understand that the observation notes will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor
- I understand that organisational consent has been provided and the organisation will/will not be named in any of the reports *[depending of the organisation response]*
- I consent to observations of my behaviour in the community garden being attributed to me in any reports on this research

Yes	No
☐	☐
- I would like to receive a copy of the final report and have added my email address below.

Yes	No
☐	☐

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Contact details: _____

Observation protocol

Name of researcher: Isabella Sanchez Bolivar

Name of project/ethics application number: Seeds of hope/0000027660

Broad description of intention of participant observation

I am using participant observation as part of my methods. This means I will volunteer in each of the community gardens this research will work with during the working bees and the different activities they may have during the time I do my fieldwork, which would be around 3-4 months. I will be mainly observing the community garden members who come to volunteer. I will observe the different dynamics and social interactions between them and also the conversations they engage.

Alongside with surveys and interviews, I chose to do participatory observation as well because it is aligned with my epistemology, which is critical theory, since I am interested in understanding the experiences of different groups and to look at structural inequalities. Observing people's behaviours in their daily routines working in the community gardens helps me getting a better understanding of the social dynamics of urban agriculture projects. It will help me answer: how environmental and social justice issues are discussed and addressed by Urban Agriculture projects? And in general, understand how UA work in Wellington and how can it be a space for food justice, if it is not already one.

Consent processes

Participants in the observation will receive an information sheet and a consent form. The community garden members will be asked at the beginning of the working bee or any other activity in the garden if he/she want to be part of the participant

observation, and if they do, they will sign the consent form. The observations will occur within the community garden, the length of the observations will depend of the length of the community garden activities I attend to. I will make around 3 to 5 visits in total in each community garden. Participants can have a copy of this protocol on request.

How will the observation be recorded?

I will not audio/video record the observation, instead I will make notes about my findings after the working bee or any other activity in the garden. The observations will be confidential, meaning that my supervisor and I will know who participated, but the identities of the participants will be protected unless they explicitly choose to be identified in the research outputs.

Observation notes (to be completed for each observation)	
Date:	
Location:	
Start time:	
End time:	
Who was present:	
Activity:	

Example of table

<i>Working bee</i>	<i>Community members behaviour</i>	<i>Interaction dynamics</i>	<i>Conversations/language used by community members</i>

Appendix 8: Interview questions guide 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 1

- How was the community garden founded? For how long has it been operating?
- What is your role/connection to the garden?
- What kind of food is produced? What is the average quantity? How is it distributed?
- Is the community garden located in public or private land? (what are the tenancy arrangements?)
- How would you describe the demographics of the community garden? (In terms of age, ethnicity/race, class...)
- How the community garden gets funded?
- What is the main purpose of the community garden? (be an alternative to capitalism and global food system, activism, environmental reasons, community reasons, cultural reasons, food security reasons?)
- What is the philosophy/ main values of this garden?
- Why are you involved? Why this specific garden?
- How do you think this garden contributes to the broader society/community?
- Do you think this community garden is inclusive to a diversity of people? Why? Who would you like to see more engaged? Who is missing?
- In case of lack of diversity: What do you think is the reason of lack of ethnic diversity within the community garden?
- Is food justice a topic discussed within the community garden? (Explain what food justice is)
- How is the garden organized? What are the key roles within the garden? Are any of these positions paid?
- What activities or workshops do you have in the community garden? What is the aim of such activities? Who participates? Are they done in partnerships with other institutions?

- What are the main barriers the garden face? (financial issues, lack of volunteers, lack of gardening tools, land tenure arrangements...) How have the garden deal with them?
- What are the main strengths of the garden?
- Anything you want to add, comment etc

Appendix 9: Interview questions guide 2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 2

- What is your role in Wesley? Which programs are you part of?
- For how long have you been working here?
- How Wesley gets financially funded? For how long has it been operating?

GARDEN

- How did it get started?
- What type of crops do you have? What is the average quantity of food produced? How is it distributed?
- How does the decision-making process work? Who decides what to sow, when, where, why?...
- Is the community garden located in public or private land? (what are the tenancy arrangements?)
- How many volunteers do you have in general?
- What do you think are the reasons for the low number of volunteers?
- How would you describe the volunteers of the garden in terms of age, gender, ethnicity/race...?
- What would you say is the main purpose of the garden?

FOOD BANK

- Regarding the food bank. Where does the food comes from?
- I've seen there are some fixed quantities of how much to give depending on the household size. How did those quantities got established?
- For how long has been the food bank operating?
- How would you describe the users of the food bank service in terms of age, gender, ethnicity/race...?
- How often can people use the service of the food bank?
- How is the follow up of the users of this service?
- What would you say is the main purpose of the food bank?

COOKING CLASSES

- Moving to the cooking classes... how did they started? Have you been always in charge of those?
- How many courses are run over the year?
- How many people participate in every course and how would you describe them terms of age, gender, ethnicity/race...?
- What are the main reasons for people to join the classes?
- How are the menus set up?
- What would you say is the percentage of the ingredients that come from the veggie co-op and from the garden?
- What is the main purpose of the cooking classes?

CO-OP:

- Where does the food from the co-op comes from?
- Who design the recipes?
- For how long has been operating?
- Do you know who are the users of this services? Families, students, organizations?
- How many people use this service?
- Where does the food from the co-op comes from?
- Who choses what is gonna be in the bags each week?
- For how long has been operating?
- How many people use this service?
- Do you know who are the users of this services? Families, students, organizations?
- Who designs the recipes?
- What do you do with the leftover food or when people don't collect their orders?
- I know you recently changed the bags system from plastic to fabric bags. Why did you change and how has this new system been working?

TIMEBANK:

- For how long has the timebank been operating in Porirua?
- How many users has the timebank? (are they active?)
- Where can people volunteer to get timebank credits?
- Where people get more credits from?
- What are the more common trades made through the timebank?
- How would you describe the demographics of the users of Timebank in general? (In terms of gender, age, ethnicity/race, class...)
- Why do you think people decide to volunteer in the Timebank?
- What would you say is the main purpose of the Timebank?

MEN'S GROUP:

- How did the men's group start?
- Why did you decided to open a men's group? (if there were others opened already?)
- How many men participate in the men's group on average?
- How do you decide what activities to do with them?
- Can you give me some examples of activities you have done in the past?
- How would you describe the demographics of the members of the men's group in general? (In terms of age and ethnicity/race)
- What do you this is the main purpose of the men's group?

GENERAL:

- What is the philosophy/ main values of Wesley?
- How do you think that Wesley contributes to the broader society/community?
- How would you describe the demographics of the users of Wesley's services in general? (In terms of gender, age, ethnicity/race, class...)
- Do you know in general what is the average of people that use Wesley's services? Do they use different services? (I've seen some people in pictures that look like they have taken part of different programs in Wesley.
- Do you think Wesley is inclusive to a diversity of people? Why? Who would you like to see more engaged? Who is missing?
- In case of lack of diversity: What do you think is the reason of lack of ethnic diversity within the organization?
- I've seen you use a form for you cooking classes and I think that form is also used in the Good Cents program. What is that form about? Where does it come from? What is its purpose?
- I know food security is a topic that is discussed in Wesley. I was wondering if is food justice and/or food sovereignty topics that are also discussed within the organization? (Explain what food justice and food sovereignty is)

- What are the main barriers or challenges that Wesley face? (financial issues, lack of volunteers, lack of gardening tools, land tenure arrangements...) How have the garden deal with them?
- What are the main strengths of Wesley?
- How can the Wesley improve?
- Anything you want to add, comment etc

Appendix 10: Memorandum from Human Ethics Committee

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

Phone 0-4-463 6028
Email judith.loveridge@vuw.ac.nz

TO	Isabella Sanchez Bolivar
FROM	Associate Professor Judith Loveridge, Convenor, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	11 July 2019
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	Ethics Approval Number: 27660 Title: Seeds of hope

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval is valid for three years. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards,

Judith Loveridge
Convenor, Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee

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