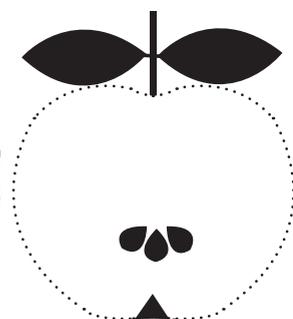
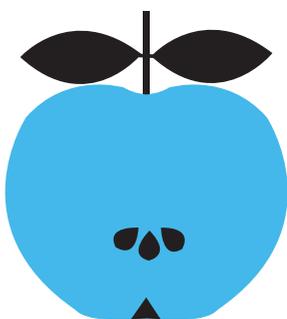
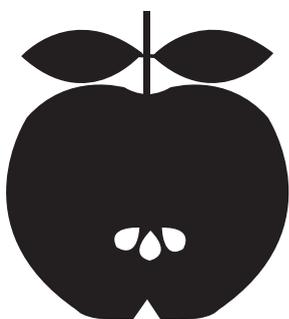
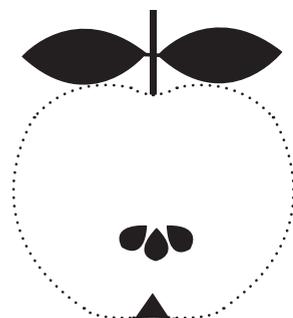
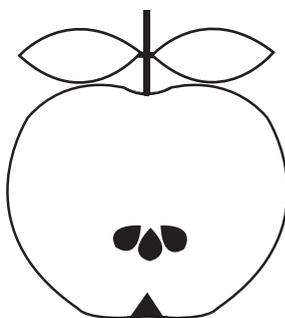
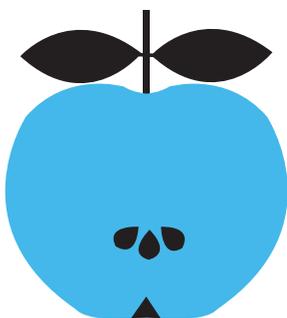
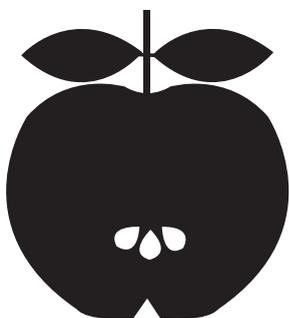
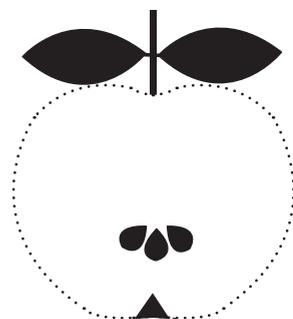
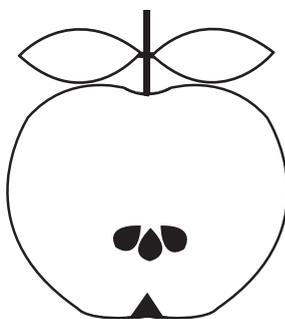
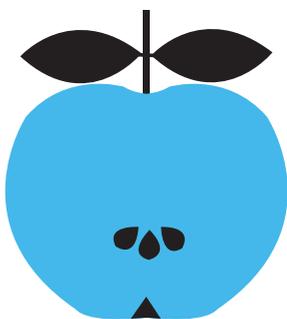
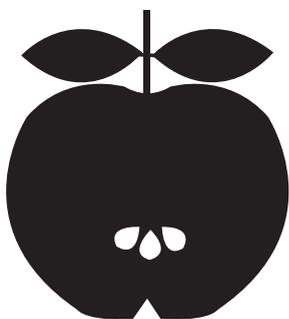


Community gardens in urban areas:

A critical reflection on the extent to which they strengthen social cohesion and provide alternative food



Propositions

1. Community gardening is always a social activity, even in spite of gardeners' intentions. (this thesis)
2. Community gardens enhance integration into networks, not integration into society. (this thesis)
3. Social cost-benefit analyses are too rough a tool to capture how interventions in the physical environment make a difference to people's lives.
4. Urban planners could see that there is free food producing space available in any city if only they themselves learnt how to produce (paraphrasing Johan Cruijff's saying: 'you will only see it when you get it').
5. If PhD students spend more time on extracurricular activities, they would be more efficient in writing their theses.
6. When engaging in participatory research methods it is more useful to know how to bake a carrot cake than to know how to grow carrots.

Propositions belonging to the thesis, entitled: 'Community gardens in urban areas: A critical reflection on the extent to which they strengthen social cohesion and provide alternative food'.

Esther J. Veen
Wageningen, 15 June 2015

Community gardens in urban areas:

A critical reflection on the extent to which they strengthen social cohesion and provide alternative food

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This research was conducted under the auspices of the Wageningen Graduate School of Social Sciences

Community gardens in urban areas:

A critical reflection on the extent to which they strengthen
social cohesion and provide alternative food

Esther J. Veen

Thesis

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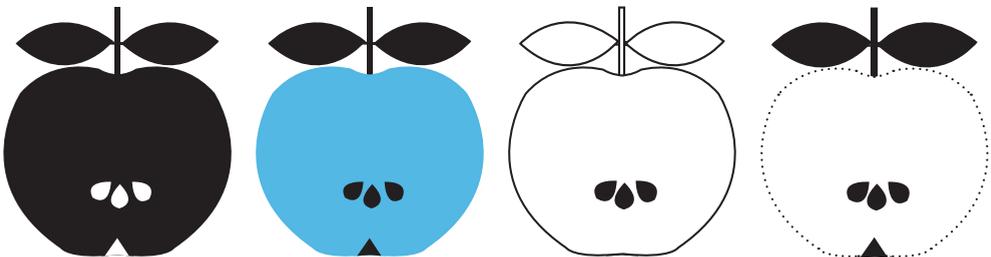


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Chapter 1

Introduction





In this thesis I present the results of my research on community gardening in the Netherlands. With this research I aim to increase the understanding of the extent to which community gardens enhance social cohesion for those involved. I also aim to shed light on the degree to which participants incorporate produce from the gardens into their daily meals, as well as whether people involved in such gardens identify their involvement as being political. My research involved the study of seven cases of gardens, four of which I followed over a two-year period of time.

Community gardens

The central concept of this thesis is community gardens¹, which should be interpreted broadly: I define community gardens as a plot of land in an urban area, cultivated either communally or individually by a group of people from the direct neighbourhood or the wider city, or in which urbanites are involved in other ways than gardening, and to which there is a collective element. A collective element can be a shared responsibility for the gardening work, but may, for instance, also be collective ownership (Knapp et al. submitted). In this definition, 'community' does not assume the existence of community in the sense that people necessarily form bonds (Pudup 2008); instead, it refers to the fact that a group of people is somehow involved in running the garden. Although allotments are often distinguished from community gardens (e.g. Firth et al. 2011), like Van den Berg et al. (2010) I do include allotments in my definition as one of the many specific types of community gardens. Allotments are defined as 'a collective of garden plots that lie adjacent to each other, effectively subdividing a larger piece of land' (Bellows 2004: 250). My definition of community gardens also includes gardens in which people are not necessarily engaged in cultivation, for instance because they buy vegetables from that garden rather than growing them. With this broad definition, 'community gardens' includes a wide range of initiatives, varying in terms of size, set-up, organisational goals, type of initiator, and degree of participant involvement. This way I do justice to the diversity in Dutch initiatives around groups of people engaging in growing food in the city and do not exclude specific types of gardens or gardens with non-typical set-ups from the outset.

The concept of community gardens is connected to that of urban agriculture, defined as food production in urban areas. During the last decade, urban agriculture has become ever more 'hot, hip and happening' in the Netherlands. A plethora of initiatives relating to food production in urban areas – including but not limited to community gardens - have sprung up in most Dutch cities. These projects have been started by a wide variety of initiators including citizens, housing corporations, local governments, entrepreneurs, artists and community workers. With this growth, not only in the number of initiatives but also in the number of people, organisations and institutions involved, the variety of initiatives and issues gathered by the concept has also grown. Urban agriculture is now a broad categorisation, combining diverse activities under one single heading: initiatives as varied as allotment gardening and

¹ In Dutch: *buurttuinen* or *buurtmoestuinen*.

bee- and chicken keeping, urban farms and balcony gardens, peri-urban farms and inner-city community gardens, food growing and food education all frame themselves as being part of an urban agriculture movement.

As urban agriculture contains a multitude of initiatives that differ with respect to scale, location, activities and goals, there is a growing need to use a more specific concept, not only because it is increasingly unclear what is referred to when speaking of urban agriculture, but also because the impacts of, challenges related to and preconditions for the different types of urban agriculture differ. Hence, the LinkedIn (professional social networking) group 'city network urban agriculture' discussed in October 2014 whether it would be useful to use different words for phenomena with different scales, such as urban agriculture, urban horticulture and urban kitchen gardens (also see Swaak 2014). In this thesis I take a similar approach but rather than treating urban agriculture as distinct from community gardens, I see urban agriculture as an overarching concept, within which community gardens form a particular type. Hence, whilst I embrace the diversity in community gardens, I draw the line around this specific group of urban agriculture initiatives. This way I prevent myself from studying too broad a phenomenon, which would lead to generalisations; this focus will help me better understand the dynamics of this specific urban food-growing practice.

Problem orientation: revaluing growing food in cities

Until about a decade ago, food production and cities were seen as being mutually exclusive, both spatially and mentally. Although food production in cities is not new (see for example Kortright and Wakefield 2011; Lawson 2005; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004; Berendsen 2001), for a long time it has largely been ignored in the industrialised West (Kortright and Wakefield 2011), seen as the 'antithesis of modernisation' in the global south (Hampway et al. 2007: 557) and considered evidence of de-modernisation and a remnant of a pre-industrial era in Eastern Europe (Jehlička and Smit 2012). In recent years, however, urban food growing has attracted interest from science, the public and policy makers (Sonnino and Spayde 2014; Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld 2012; Lovell 2010; Kneafsey et al. 2008; Steel 2008). This shows that the value of food production inside cities is being re-framed, symbolising a mental shift towards a revaluation of productive urban green spaces. There are several reasons for this increasing interest, none of which fully explains the phenomenon but all of which have some influence; I discuss two of these reasons below. I consider these two reasons as being specifically responsible for the growth in community gardens, and both have a strong influence on the focus of this thesis. The first is community gardens' promise to stimulate social cohesion in inner-city neighbourhoods, to be seen in the light of the 'participatory society'. The second is community gardens' contribution to the availability of locally-produced food, fitting an increased interest in Alternative Food Networks. For both trends, I discuss developments both in the social and in the scientific debate.

Community gardens and social cohesion

The participatory society

The Social and Cultural Planning Bureau and the Scientific Council for Government Policy recently published a report in which they explore socio-cultural segregation in the Netherlands, arguing that segregation between those with higher and lower levels of education has increased, perhaps even resulting in social polarisation (Bovens et al. 2014). This conclusion does not stand alone; in an older report, the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Bureau had already concluded that social cohesion had decreased over the previous twenty years (Commissie Eddy 1998, in: Van Ginkel and Deben 2002). This decline in social cohesion is stronger in urban than in rural areas (Deuning 2009). The extent to which social cohesion is indeed declining is not something I discuss in this thesis. What is relevant is that there is a widely shared view that social cohesion is loosening at various levels of society - the Netherlands faces an era of neo-cultural-pessimism (Van Ginkel and Deben 2002). Consequently, there is a general feeling that initiatives should be employed to either restore or preserve social cohesion.

A recent development in the Netherlands, partially framed as a response to this feeling of loosening cohesion, is the so-called 'participatory society'. The participatory society, often used in combination with or replaced by words such as 'active citizenship' or the 'do-democracy', is about increasing citizens' responsibility for their social and physical environment. As the Dutch King said in his 2013 speech: 'Anyone who can is asked to take responsibility for his or her life and environment' (<http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/toespraken/2013/09/17/troonrede-2013.html>, own translation). In a letter to the Lower House of Parliament, the Prime Minister expressed that existing institutions are losing importance and that the power of the people – better educated, more mobile and with more means of communication than ever before – is to be used for the prosperity of Dutch society (Rutte 2014). The transition from a welfare state to a participatory society is already taking place; citizens set to work and try to change the public domain for the better, taking on topics such as neighbourhood care, neighbourhood safety or energy supply (Van de Wijdeven et al. 2013). The government takes on the role of facilitator rather than initiator or organiser, and is thus able to limit the ever-increasing need for public resources. Hence, not only the wish for social bonding and the growing self-organisational capacity of society, but also a withdrawing government and substantial cuts in public spending gave rise to the do-democracy (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties 2013). It is important to mention that there is severe critique on the participatory society, the do-democracy and active citizenship. Firstly, the ideology behind the participatory society requires empowered citizens with strong networks. Citizens who are less 'culturally and administratively literate' (van der Veen and Duyvendak 2014) cannot just 'open a can of citizen power' - whilst they are the ones who have to deal most with the consequences of the cuts in public spending. The dichotomy between the privileged and the underprivileged is therefore predicted to increase (Embrechts 2014). Secondly, the participatory society expects too much from volunteers (Tonkens et al. 2014) and frames 'the professional' as undesirable, while professionals are important in supporting weaker citizens to find their way to each other and various organisations (Van der Veen and Duyvendak 2014). Thirdly, the government has difficulty in 'letting go', such that citizen power

is often seen as disguised austerity; budgets are not transferred to citizen initiatives and if they are, they are reduced (Embrechts 2014).

Community gardens, however, fit the discourse of the participatory society; they are examples of residents taking initiative to beautify their neighbourhood, to organise communal activities and to practice their hobbies. Moreover, since small-scale initiatives such as community gardens are often informal and spontaneous, which gives these initiatives a vital energy, policy makers hope and expect that such initiatives contribute to quality of life, safety, and, indeed, social cohesion (Van de Wijdeven et al. 2013). In fact, publications of several public institutions such as Dutch ministries and non-governmental organisations demonstrate a strong belief in a causal relationship between community gardens and social cohesion. For instance, commissioned by an Amsterdam district, Lems (2011) lists and describes several community gardens in Amsterdam and argues that such gardens can improve the use and maintenance of urban green spaces, thereby improving social cohesion and liveability. Writing for Innovatienetwerk, a foundation developing innovations in agriculture, food and nature, Hulshof (2008) argues that allotments lead to more contact between those involved and therefore result in more social cohesion. In a publication for municipalities and health organisations, Van Wetten (2010) argues that a green living environment increases the amount of social contact between people of various ages and social backgrounds. In these and other publications, community gardens are framed as an effective way of strengthening social cohesion in urban neighbourhoods. The connection between community gardens and social cohesion is, however, often assumed rather than based on evidence, and presented as linear and straightforward rather than discussed in terms of its complexity. This exposes community gardens to high expectations. If the conditions for or mechanisms underlying the relationship between social cohesion and community gardening are not exhibited, the likelihood is small that the gardens are equipped to meet these expectations.

Moreover, studying a range of leaflets, brochures and reports from ministries, public organisations and national programmes on green cities shows that in most of these publications, social cohesion is not explicitly conceptualised. It is therefore not always clear what the authors mean when they write about the concept. Some authors argue that social cohesion is a result of social contact (Van Wetten 2010; Hulshof 2008) or, similarly, of exchange between residents (Lubbers et al. 2009), or working together (Woestenburg 2010); working together is also seen as leading to both contact and cohesion (Woestenburg no date). These authors thus explain how social cohesion comes about rather than defining the concept. Social cohesion is also often mentioned in relation to 'liveability', for example by Lems (2011) and Woestenburg (2010), although it is not always clear whether one leads to the other or whether they are both a result of similar processes. Some writers do in fact define social cohesion, but not always in the same way. Verdonk and Van Koperen (2007), for instance, define it as the degree of contact between neighbourhood residents, the degree to which people feel attached to the neighbourhood and the degree to which people in the neighbourhood know each other, while Lems (2011) defines it as people feeling connected to each other and communally feeling responsibility for their living environment; Groothedde (2009) sees it as 'good citizenship', personal growth and development, respect for the social and physical



environment and playing a positive role in democracy. Hence, conceptualisations of social cohesion differ, while in most publications social cohesion is not conceptualised at all; it is associated with other concepts like liveability, or the relationship between green spaces and social cohesion is explained, often by referring to social contacts. However, precisely because social cohesion is so multidimensional and ambiguous, it is important to clearly define it, not only in order to truly understand the effects of community gardens on social cohesion, but also in order to distinguish social cohesion from the processes that lead to it and from other social effects partly resulting from the same processes. This conceptualisation is therefore the aim of the next paragraph.

Social cohesion

For my conceptualisation of social cohesion, I adhere to the rather simple definition of De Kam and Needham (2003), who define it as the way in which people in a society feel and are connected to each other. It thus concerns the internal bonding powers within a social system (De Hart 2002). Social cohesion is often operationalised by being broken up into several elements. Kearns and Forrest (2000), De Hart (2000) and Bolt and Torrance (2005) all recognise the following elements; 1) social contacts, social networks or social capital; 2) collective norms and values; and 3) identification with or belonging to a social system. Other elements are participation in formal and informal (political) institutions (Bolt and Torrance 2005; De Hart 2002), social order and control (Kearns and Forrest 2000), social solidarity and mutual involvement (De Hart 2002; Kearns and Forrest 2000) and the coherence of a social or political system (De Hart 2002). Rather than dividing it into elements, Bronsveld (2014) explains the distinction between horizontal and vertical cohesion. Horizontal cohesion concerns mutual contacts - it is about people meeting and knowing others. Vertical cohesion is the bonds that people have with their living environment, such as their neighbourhood. Vertical cohesion is therefore more abstract than horizontal cohesion.

Since social cohesion consists of different elements, it is difficult to measure; which elements are taken into account, and how do they 'add up'? I tackled this difficulty by focusing on only one of the common elements as presented above: 'social contacts, social networks or social capital'. The hypothesis behind the selection of only one element of social cohesion is that if gardens are found to contribute to one of its elements, they can reasonably be expected to contribute to or enhance social cohesion as well. This hypothesis is backed up by Bolt and Torrance (2005), who argue that while it is possible that a social system shows cohesion in terms of one element (e.g. social contacts), but not another (e.g. identification with a system), this is not very likely.

A focus on social contacts is to a certain extent in line with the publications mentioned above. Many of these see social cohesion as a result of such contact; in this thesis I treat social contacts as one of the elements of social cohesion. The focus on contacts also means that this thesis concentrates on horizontal rather than vertical social cohesion: while there is evidence that gardens can strengthen vertical cohesion (as I explain later), such attachment to the living environment seems less directly and straightforwardly attributable to a garden than horizontal cohesion between its participants. Attachment to the neighbourhood is influenced

by many attributes, such as satisfaction with the house one lives in and the presence of a good school; a garden is only one of those attributes. Vertical cohesion is therefore not only difficult to disentangle, but it is also difficult to know which part of it to attribute to a community garden. Another reason to focus on social contact between garden participants is that it confines the research to the scale of the community garden itself. Hence, I was not looking at the way in which community gardens influence people's feelings of belonging to a larger social system such as the neighbourhood, the city, or even the nation state. Similarly to how I argued as regards vertical cohesion, the extent to which people feel part of a larger social system relies on many factors and seems therefore less directly attributable to a community garden than garden contacts, which rely to a large degree on the existence of the garden. For both reasons, studying contact between garden participants seemed a logical first step in exploratory research on the extent to which community gardens enhance social cohesion.

I operationalised the element 'social contacts, social networks or social capital' by breaking it up into two sub-elements: 1) contacts and 2) mutual help between people involved in community gardens. It is important to mention that social networks and social capital are in themselves also multidimensional concepts. Just like social cohesion, they are often broken down into elements, which partially overlap with those of social cohesion. This implies that these different concepts are all strongly related, emphasising different aspects of potential social impacts. Hence, while the prime interest of this thesis is in social cohesion - since this is widely perceived as their main impact in the Dutch debate on community gardens - this concept has a large area of overlap with social capital and social networks and the elements in which these are broken up. Indeed, the choice of social cohesion's operationalisation into contact and mutual help was also inspired by authors studying other but similar concepts; contact and mutual help seem to be a prerequisite for several social effects. These other authors include Maas et al. (2008), Kuo et al. (1998), and Flap and Völker (2004), all of whom examined social networks, ties or contacts in the neighbourhood - but also Leyden (2003), who looked at social capital in the neighbourhood, Coleman (1998), who wrote about social capital in a broader fashion, and Van Ginkel and Deben (2005), who studied involvement in the neighbourhood. Choosing this focus that is not exclusively related to social cohesion helped me to further explore the different social effects community gardening produces, avoiding missing out on other social benefits because of focusing only on social cohesion from the outset.

Community gardens as third places

The use of spatial and physical interventions to deal with social problems, especially in inner cities, is not new (Blokland 2003). In the Netherlands, this trend found resonance in the '*wijkgedachte*', loosely translated as 'thinking in neighbourhoods'. The starting point of the '*wijkgedachte*', which came up soon after the Second World War, is that people feel more strongly attached to each other in smaller communities rather than in larger communities in which they not only have fewer, but also more impersonal relationships with one another. Neighbourhoods are seen as functioning as villages (De Kam and Needham 2003; Van Ginkel and Deben 2002) in which the small scale makes life transparent (Bronsveld 2014). Although the '*wijkgedachte*' as such has largely been left behind and a strong physical determinism



is no longer valid (De Kam and Needham 2003), it is an established idea that the physical environment influences behaviour. For instance, places can be designed in such a way that they facilitate people meeting each other (Flap and Völker 2004). This relation between the design of place and behaviour is the basis of much literature on the relationship between community gardens and social cohesion. Please note that in the following discussion of this literature I do not stick to social cohesion alone. As discussed above, interpreting social effects in a broader fashion gives more starting points for my inquiry into the extent to which community gardens lead to social cohesion.

The social effects of community gardens can be seen as centring on a few mechanisms which I describe here briefly. The first mechanism relates to horizontal cohesion and is most important for this thesis: gardens can function as meeting places. They invite people to spend time in public areas where they meet others, that way strengthening cohesion amongst them (Bronsveld 2014). The availability of meeting places is important for social cohesion, since spontaneous meetings often happen in public space (Smits and Marinelli 2009) and the quantity of social contacts is critical in the formation of ties. Relations between neighbours, for example, grow primarily in the course of repeated visual contact and through short outdoor talks and greetings (Greenbaum 1982, in: Kuo et al. 1998). Casual contact that is a result of meeting each other intentionally or spontaneously can breed a sense of familiarity and predictability that people find comforting (Leyden 2003). Hence, by promoting social interactions, gardens are thought to build community (Hanna and Oh 2000), enhance social life in urban neighbourhoods (Bellows et al. 2004), stimulate the growth of bonds between residents (Madaleno 2001; Armstrong 2000), nurture a sense of community (Schmelzkopf 1995) and build social capital, mutual trust and reciprocity (Teig et al. 2009). Gardens thus function as 'third places', settings beyond home and work in which people relax in good company on a regular basis (Oldenburg 2001: 2). Oldenburg's examples of third places are coffee bars, bookshops and restaurants, but community gardens are similarly places in which people gather, meet and talk to others: 'Great good places unite the community, serve the elderly, bring adults and children together in a relaxed setting, foster democracy, provide places for people to have fun. All of these qualities enhance and encourage friendship, understanding and tolerance' (Cheatham 2001: 17). Gardens, however, go a step further than only enabling meetings, as people often work together or alongside each other and as a result share concerns and solve problems together (Hanna and Oh 2000; Patel 1991). Moreover, both food and information about food can be shared, strengthening ties (Gross 2011).

Other mechanisms by which gardens create cohesion are related to vertical cohesion and therefore less important for this thesis, but a short overview is nonetheless in order: gardens not only stimulate connections to others, but also to the garden itself (Hale et al. 2011). The physical environment can provide a positive way of identifying with the neighbourhood (De Kam and Needham 2003). This positive identification is important, as residents have a stronger sense of community when they feel at home and connected to the place in which they live (Maas et al. 2008). Community gardens are part of the physical environment and may therefore enhance positive identification, especially if people participate in the creation of the garden. The presence of a community garden is evidence of both individual and collective

achievement, showing that people can effect change (Lewis 1995). Community gardens then provide a symbolic focus (Armstrong 2000). Gardens also distinguish a neighbourhood from other neighbourhoods, enabling people to identify positively with the neighbourhood (Baycan-Levent et al. 2009). A Dutch study (Vreke and Salverda 2009) found, for instance, that people experienced public space more positively due to community gardens; they actively influenced their own living environment and gave the neighbourhood an identity. Moreover, if the area becomes visually more attractive, the use of public space becomes more appealing (Vreke and Salverda 2009) and the public experience of gardens creates the potential to generate an increased sense of community (Hale et al. 2011).

To summarise, community gardens can be seen in the light of people taking responsibility for their living environment – citizens taking responsibility in a participatory society – while they are also physical interventions that, by bringing people together in public place, decrease isolation. However, it is unclear to what extent community gardens enhance cohesion and under what conditions they may do so, especially as they come in various designs, shapes and sizes.

Community gardens and alternative food

Growing interest in food

Community gardens offer affordable and convenient access to locally produced fresh food (Corrigan 2011; Alaimo et al. 2008). This is an important benefit, as food insecurity is a real problem in many developed countries, for instance for those living in inner city food deserts (Corrigan 2011; Morgan and Sonnino 2010). However, despite a recent growth in the number of food banks (Schut 2014), access to fresh food is as yet a less pressing problem in the Netherlands (Van der Schans 2010). Attention on urban agriculture in general and community gardens more specifically therefore seems less related to tackling food insecurity² than to an overall increasing societal interest in food. This societal interest consists of several trends that are neither mutually exclusive, nor necessarily related. Firstly, amongst several sections of society an interest in healthy food is gaining terrain. As an illustration, in the summer of 2014, the turnover of McDonald's in the Netherlands faced the largest decrease in ten years: just like in other countries, the company is struggling with its image of serving unhealthy food (Volkskrant redactie 2014; De Waard 2014). Besides the fact that more people are staying away from fatty processed foods, there is also an increasing fascination for products that are seen as specifically healthy, such as the 'super foods' goji berries and wheatgrass. Secondly, there is a growing trend towards considering food as an intellectual experience, as exploration and rediscovery, a love for history and culture, and a search for a traditional identity as well as something new (Mattiacci 2004). Cooking is in, and has become a 'creative weekend activity' (Millstone and Lang 2003: 7), as is shown by the abundance of cooking programmes on television and the existence of various food and recipe blogs. This interest in cooking is

² In this light it is interesting that in the summer of 2014 the Dutch secretary of state for Social Affairs, Jette Klijnsma, received much critique on her remark that pensioners would be able to supplement their pensions by growing their own food in kitchen gardens, especially as this was associated with socialism (Van Tongeren 2014).



accompanied by attention to the quality of ingredients, which are either exclusive and from afar, or local, organic, untreated and wholesome. Seen this way, food is a means to express ones (cultural) identity (Morgan and Sonnino 2010) and a way to position oneself socially (Dixon et al. 2007). Thirdly, especially in urban areas, people display an increased interest in the countryside, farmers and farm products, preferably organic. This is illustrated by the rise of initiatives that aim to connect urban consumers and local farmers (such as boerenstadswens in Amsterdam), initiatives that promote regional food products (such as Lekker Utregs, Eetbaar Rotterdam and Proef Noord Nederland), open farm days organised by one of the largest Dutch retailers (<https://www.ah.nl/pers/persberichten/bericht?id=843386>) and companies delivering fresh farm products from around the city to offices for lunch³.

Hence, for various reasons, more and more people are looking for fresh, organic local products, to be used for healthy and interesting new dishes. Although citizens looking for such foods still represent a minority, these trends show that there is rising societal appreciation for food. Community gardens fit in well with this interest; gardens provide those involved with fresh local products that are often produced without chemicals, and bring food cultivation closer to the urban resident.

Alternative Food Networks

While community gardens can be seen in the light of an overall increasing interest in food, they can also be discussed in relation to Alternative Food Networks (AFNs); in the academic literature an increasing interest in urban agriculture in general is often presented as being associated with this debate and framed as an emerging food movement (see for example Specht et al. 2014; Mah and Thang 2013; Renting et al. 2012). This is therefore the debate on which I focus in this thesis.

A food network is any set of production-consumption relations which connects people through food (Cox et al. 2008). Alternative food networks, then, are 'food production-consumption practices of any scale which present possibilities for producing/consuming food in ways that differ from those typical in industrialised food systems' (Cox et al. 2008: 205). AFNs thus offer alternatives to the conventional industrialised food system, which is associated with various consumer concerns, such as the following: traders and retailers are seen as more powerful than producers and consumers (Millstone and Lang 2003) so that distributors may dictate what food they sell and how they sell it through managing commodity chain relations (Dixon et al. 2007); consumers are believed to increasingly depend on food from distant sources (Halwell 2002); as a result, local cuisines, local varieties and local agriculture are seen to be displaced by a standardised flavour and the security of knowing what one is eating is eroded (Halwell 2002). Hence, as the origins of food is less and less visible in daily life (Morgan and Sonnino 2010), consumers are considered to become increasingly distanced from the sites and processes of production (Jaffe and Gertler 2006). This is expected to lead not only to a loss of food literacy and cooking skills (Jaffe and Gertler 2006), but also to a disconnection from the food system (Turner 2011), resulting in rising consumer concerns and mistrust (Millstone

³ See for instance <http://www.boerenlunch.nl/> and <http://www.debuurtboer.nl/>

and Lang 2003).

As AFNs usually denote food systems 'that are somehow different from the mainstream' (Tregear 2011: 423), the rising number of and variation in AFNs can be interpreted as a reaction to these and other concerns about the conventional food system (Renting et al. 2012; Cox et al. 2008; Seyfang 2008; Guthman et al. 2006; Qazi and Selfa 2005; Millstone and Lang 2003; Renting et al. 2003).⁴ AFNs are understood to be committed to social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable food production (Jarosz 2008) and due to the close links between producers and consumers (Cox et al. 2008) both production and consumption are respatialised and resocialised (Jarosz 2008). Moreover, consumers involved in AFNs are considered to be actively engaged in creating new food supply chains based upon alternative values (Seyfang 2008). However, as Tregear (2011) notes, such ways of defining AFNs show a tendency to conflate the characteristics of AFNs with their desired outcomes, meaning that they are too easily assumed to deliver more just, equitable and ecologically sound food systems. Furthermore, as the concept of AFN is often described in terms of what it is not - rather than what it is - (Tregear 2011) the nature of the alternativeness of Alternative Food Networks is also unclear (Renting et al. 2012; Watts et al. 2005).

'AFN' is thus a heterogeneous category that includes various types of initiatives around food, such as farmers' markets, box schemes, short supply chains and farms based on Community Supported Agriculture. In fact, the conventional food system to which AFNs are a supposed reaction is not homogenous either, nor is it easily defined. It is therefore difficult to clearly state whether or not - and to what extent - community gardens should be considered as AFNs, and to what extent they are part of the conventional system. The literature around AFNs did inspire me, however, to investigate what it is that people do in community gardens, whether their practices are dictated by political motivations and the wish to 'be different from the mainstream', and if so, why this is the case. This knowledge will clarify to what extent community gardens can be seen as AFNs, or, more generally, whether they are alternative, and if so, what it is that defines them as such.

Starting with urban agriculture in general, growing food in cities is often believed to communicate strategies of 'doing things differently'. In the media, on the internet and in policy discourse, being involved in growing food inside the city is framed as an emergent food movement. For example, Tabak (2011) writes in VNG magazine (a magazine for Dutch municipalities) that urban agriculture is a way to counter the alienation from food, and Muhlke (2010) writes on food communities as part of a new Do It Ourselves food movement in the New York Times. However, the concept of urban agriculture does not dictate production methods, nor does it prescribe where, to whom or how food is sold - if sold at all. This means that despite the fact that the scale is usually smaller than that of more mainstream food growing, production and consumption in urban agriculture are not *necessarily* different from typical industrial food with regards to production methods and distance to the consumer. Moreover,

⁴ In Europe the growth of AFNs is also associated with the new rural development paradigm (Renting et al. 2003) and processes of defensive localism (Watts et al. 2005). I do not discuss this further in this thesis.

as urban agriculture is such a broad concept, labelling all of its appearances consequentially as alternative is problematic.

As a specific type of urban agriculture, community gardens are sometimes interpreted as AFNs. Tregear (2011), for instance, mentions them alongside phenomena as short food supply chains and farmers' markets. There are two main reasons for labelling community gardens as AFNs. Firstly, they improve the availability of local food (Ferris et al. 2001), enabling people to avoid involvement in the industrial food system. The activity of gardening challenges the corporate food system by creating an opportunity for people to 'get their hands dirty' and grow their own food (Baker 2004). Moreover, this embodied experience is a potential strategy to bridge the disconnection between urban consumers and the food they eat (Turner 2011). Secondly, community gardens do not usually operate within the rules of the market economy and therefore might escape commodification, especially when there is explicit emphasis on community (cf. Hinrichs 2000). Relations between producers and consumers in community gardens are often different than those in more industrial food systems, because this distinction is often irrelevant in the first place: people producing food in community gardens generally consume that food as well, and while excess produce is sometimes sold, this is usually not in regular market-type situations.

However, despite the fact that community gardens increase the availability of local food, we do not know whether or how much the people involved actually eat from these gardens in practice. Cultivation in community gardens does not therefore necessarily lead to people circumventing the industrial food system. Moreover, even if people involved in community gardening eat the produce from their gardens, this doesn't necessarily imply that they do so with the purpose of 'making a difference' and it is thus unclear whether the everyday act of eating is indeed 'politicised' (Bryant and Goodman 2004: 344). Hence, while the outcome of growing food in cities may look like a response to concerns about mass food being anonymously produced in contemporary industrialised societies (McClintock 2010), we do not know whether this reflects a '*desire* to bypass intensive agriculture and return to small-scale production' (Seyfang 2008: 190, emphasis added), nor do we know whether community gardeners cultivate in an urban context in an attempt to 'establish different modes of exchange between food producers and consumers' (Cox et al. 2008: 205). Interpreting community gardens as AFNs thus not only takes for granted that people eat the food grown in urban gardens, but it also ignores the motivations of those involved.⁵

This means that in order to define community gardens as alternative, we need to know to what extent the participants of these gardens are consciously and intentionally acting against the industrialised food system: even though there is a tendency to see alternative food production and consumption practices as morally superior than 'unreflexive' practices (Guthman 2003), motivations for being involved in AFNs are not necessarily radically different from or in opposition to those associated with mainstream food systems (Tregear

⁵ Besides, it is important to realise that gardeners do not always garden sustainably; they may use considerable amounts of chemical inputs (Farges 2015) - especially in allotment gardens - which does not reflect a typical attempt to offer an alternative to an environmentally unsustainable food system.

2011). Jehlička and Smit (2012), for example, show that in post-socialist Europe, food self-provisioning is a sustainability-compliant practice but is not recognised as such by the food-growers themselves. Rather, it is an activity that is associated with joy, a sense of achievement, mutual help and the sharing of resources. In another paper (2011) these authors argue that the self-provisioners are only partly motivated by the desire to protect the environment, while their actions do in fact reduce their environmental impact. In a similar fashion, Farges (2015) explains that pro-environmental gardening practices are not necessarily related to 'resistance'; such practices can also be associated with different meanings, such as being a skilful gardener. Hence, even if people involved in community gardens create alternative food systems, the gardening activity is not always explicitly political (Baker 2004). Therefore, we should not conclude too easily that such gardens represent a shift in the role of consumers from passive end-users to more proactive citizen-consumers who 'intend to regain control over the ways in which their food is produced and provided' (Renting et al. 2012: 290). The question is, therefore, to what extent community gardens, although framed as part of the urban agriculture movement, are truly *alternative* alternatives: we have to avoid assuming that they are necessarily political or reflexive or present a deeper morality. This research aims, therefore, to shed light on the importance of food and its presumed alternativeness in community gardening.

Research aims and objectives

Objectives

Community gardening can be seen as a reaction to two societal trends; on the one hand, the participatory society and the aim to increase social cohesion, and on the other an interest in local food as a potential alternative to the industrialised food system. Gardens are thought to bring people together, and are examples of people growing and eating food close to home. The aims of this research are therefore twofold. Firstly, I study social relations between community gardeners, their evaluation of these relations and how they come about. This will help me understand whether and to what extent community gardens contribute to the building and/or strengthening of social cohesion. Secondly, I aim to gain insight into the importance community gardeners attach to food growing per se, and the extent to which participants perceive community gardens as an alternative to the industrial food system. The focus is on people's motivations for growing food, social relations at the garden, the extent to which participants make urban harvests part of their diets, and people's views on whether or not they are part of an alternative food movement.



Research questions

The overall research question is therefore:

What is the significance of community gardening in terms of its intention to promote social cohesion as well as its representation as an alternative food system?

This broad question is instructed by the following sub-questions:

1. Why do people get involved in community gardens? What are their motivations?
2. How, to what extent, and under which conditions does community gardening promote the development of social relations between participants?
3. How do participants value these social effects?
4. To what extent do the diets of community garden participants originate from the gardens in which they are involved? What is the importance of food in community gardens?
5. What is the importance of growing or getting access to *alternative* food for participants of community gardens?

Contributions to the literature

The main contribution of this thesis is to verify, contradict or nuance the two claims about community gardens. By studying seven community gardens I clarify the extent to which community gardens lead to social cohesion and the extent to which they can be considered Alternative Food Networks. As I involve gardens with different characteristics in the research, I not only do justice to the wide variety in community gardening initiatives, but I am also able to show whether or not, and to what extent, these different characteristics influence 1) the social-cohesion-enhancing qualities of community gardens, and 2) the alternativeness of food growing in community gardens. As gardens vary in terms of several aspects, their impacts are also bound to vary. To date, however, little has been written regarding this organisational variety in community gardens; the 'community garden' is often treated as a clear-cut concept. Apprehending the influence of different characteristics of community gardens is therefore an important contribution by this thesis to the literature.

Another main contribution lies in the use of the theory of practice as a conceptual framework (see chapter 2) which I use to understand how community gardens function in reality. Practice theory is a useful way of studying what actually happens in gardens rather than studying what people intend to happen. It is therefore extremely suitable for nuancing the claims about community gardens. However, while the theory of practice is thus useful for looking beyond motivations, I also study participants' motivations and their views on whether or not their involvement is political or reflexive. As Tregear (2011) argues, this viewpoint is largely lacking in the literature and important to explore further.

The fact that in many community gardens, the producers of the food are also the consumers of the food, is an interesting addition to the literature on Alternative Food Networks. AFNs are often described in terms of renewed relationships between producers and consumers (see for example Jarosz 2008). Academic attention on initiatives in which the concepts of consumer and producer overlap, such as in community gardens, is relatively recent (Kortright and Wakefield, 2011).

Finally, I contribute to the literature by studying gardens mainly in a Dutch context. Most literature on community gardening and its social benefits is based on research in a North American context. That context is very different from a European and specifically Dutch situation; unlike North American cities, Dutch cities do not have ghettos and inner-city problems are less severe. Moreover, food deserts do not exist in Dutch cities. Availability and 'physical' access to food are therefore less of a problem; food insecurity is specifically related to accessibility and affordability. Because of these differences, both the motivations of the gardeners and the benefits of the gardens are likely to differ.

Unfolding the research: outline of this thesis

I approach the questions outlined above by using the theory of practice, as I discuss in chapter 2. In that chapter I also explain the methods I used to conduct this research. Chapters 3 to 7 are papers/chapters that have been published in or submitted to scientific journals or books; these are the chapters within which I answer my research questions. Chapter 8 is the final chapter of the thesis, in which I combine the lessons from chapters 3 to 7 in order to answer the main research questions. I also give suggestions for further research and reflect briefly on the methodology.

This thesis starts by exploring people's motivations for being involved in community gardening, as this is the first step towards understanding what community gardens mean to people and what the importance of social relations and alternative food is in such gardens. Motivations therefore form the focus of **chapter 3**. By studying the motivations of the participants of two of my case gardens, I analyse the extent to which these participants consider themselves to be part of an alternative food movement, and consequently to what extent we can see this participation as being politically motivated. Hence, in this chapter I answer the first research question (*Why do people get involved in urban agriculture? What are their motivations?*) and also start to answer the fifth research question (*What is the importance of growing or getting access to alternative food for participants of community gardens?*).

In chapter 3 the theory of practice does not yet play a role, but the chapter does make clear why this framework is useful, showing that motivations do not (fully) predict behaviour since people motivated to engage in local food (growing) do not necessarily manage to do so. The theory of practice asserts that individuals have agency and make choices, but do so within the restrictions of everyday life. Rather than people's motivations or attitudes, practices are the



basic unit of ontological analysis (Røpke 2009). Practice theory thus allows an understanding of the everyday dynamics that play out in that practice (De Krom 2014). This attention to the everyday is valuable; spending time at the gardens made me realise that daily life often gets in the way of people's motivations. Studying urban food growing from a practice point of view (in addition to looking at people's motivations) therefore contributes to a better understanding of the dynamics going on in this activity and enabled me to further explore the fifth research question (*What is the importance of growing or getting access to alternative food for participants of community gardens?*), discussed in the chapters 4 and 5.

In **chapter 4** I make a small detour beyond the borders of my own case studies by including a case from New York; this chapter is a combined effort with two other researchers. While the main aim of this chapter is to contribute to the theory of practice itself, the chapter is a useful bridge between chapters 3 and 5 of this thesis by introducing the theory of practice as well as confirming chapter 3's conclusion that not all urban food growing practices are necessarily part of 'the urban food movement'. In chapter 4 we show that while both case gardens are examples of urban food growing, there are large differences in terms of the meanings, competences and carriers involved and the activities undertaken. In **chapter 5** I continue with the theory of practice. By comparing two gardens in which people grow their own produce and two in which they buy produce, I show that reflexive motivations alone are often insufficient to stimulate people to action; these motivations are embedded in practices that have their place in everyday life. The four gardens represent two different practices which fit into people's lives in different ways, resulting in different degrees of eating from the garden. Chapter 5 therefore answers the fourth research question (*To what extent do the diets of community garden participants originate from the gardens in which they are involved? What is the importance of food in community gardens?*).

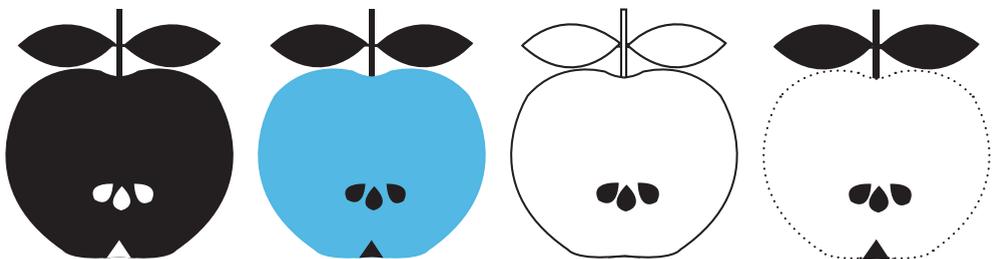
Both chapters 6 and 7 focus on the second (*How, to what extent, and under which conditions does community gardening promote the development of social relations between participants?*) and third (*How do participants value these social effects?*) research questions. In **chapter 6** I compare all seven case studies and show that in all of these gardens, people know other gardeners and give and receive help. This way, all of the gardens – with their various organisational designs – contribute to the creation of social cohesion. However, I do see a difference between place-based gardens, where participants join because of social motivations, and interest-based gardens, where participants are mostly interested in the vegetables and the gardening activity. During the field work for this thesis I realised that gardens may not enclose one but rather several communities, and that rapprochement and separation can take place simultaneously. This is the focus of **chapter 7**, in which I discuss one particular community garden. I show how the two different communities which are present at that garden assign each other to categories ('us' and 'them') on the basis of place of residence, strengthening their social identities. I also demonstrate that ownership over the garden is both an outcome and a tool in that struggle. In both chapters 6 and 7, participant observations are used to understand what happens in practice, which enabled me to zoom in on the daily reality of social relations as reflected in practice.





Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework and Methodology



This research is qualitative; the emphasis is on processes and meanings that are not measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 10). Qualitative research is based on the idea that reality is socially constructed. The researcher studies things in their natural settings and attempts 'to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 3). This requires a set of interpretative practices that make the world visible (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). In the previous chapter I positioned my research within two social and academic debates, and introduced my research questions. In this second chapter I discuss the methodology that I used to find answers to these research questions. First I explain my conceptual framework - the theoretical approach of the research. After that I discuss the methods I used to conduct the research.

Conceptual framework: practice theory

Practice theory, or the theory of practice, is an important theoretical lens in this research - although more explicitly so in some than in other chapters of this thesis. Practice theory stems from the work of Bourdieu (see for example 1977; 1990; 1998) and the structuration theory of Giddens (1984), but recently the theory has received renewed attention (De Krom 2014; Røpke 2009), related to an interest in everyday life (Reckwitz 2002). Although these recent theories of practice are heterogeneous (Røpke 2009; Warde 2005; Schatzki 1996), they share at least one important trait: the idea that practices are the sites where understanding is structured and intelligibility articulated, and that both social order and individuality result from practices (Schatzki 1996). In the sections hereafter I explain more about what practice theory entails. However, I first discuss why I chose to use practice theory and the role it plays in this thesis.

The theory of practice is useful for this thesis because of its focus on everyday life and the reality of having to organise the performance of competing practices. The first results of my research showed that while spending time at and eating from community gardens is an appealing picture to many people, not all of those who are enthused by it manage to fully engage in these practices. The theory of practice offers an understanding for this, as well as a way of disentangling such dynamics. As Reckwitz (2002) argues, practice theory seems to revise the hyper-rational and intellectualised picture of human agency and the social offered by classical and high-modern social theories. It 'decentres' mind, texts and conversation because it enables us to see people as carriers of routinised complexes of bodily movements, forms of interpreting, knowing how and wanting and the usage of things. Practice theory thus acknowledges that daily life interferes with people's motivations, which is particularly useful as I aim to understand to what extent the benefits associated with community gardens take place in reality. It is thus important to study the dynamics and the daily reality of the gardening practice rather than sticking to motivations and attitudes alone; the rationality of everyday life has to be taken into account (Spaargaren 2003) if I want to understand how community gardens fit into people's lives.

Two practices take a central role in this thesis. The first is the practice of urban food growing,

which I treat as a synonym of the practice of community gardening.¹ Community gardening is the overall topic of this thesis, and in chapter 4 we discuss this practice in particular by investigating to what extent it can be seen as an emerging social practice. The second practice that I discuss in this thesis is the practice of food provisioning. Food provisioning practices are defined as a range of activities, 'including the acquisition, preparation, production, consumption and disposal of food' (McIntyre and Rondeau 2011: 118). This definition includes activities such as shopping for food or growing food. Community gardening is thus one of the practices that people can choose to engage in within the wider set of food provisioning practices available to them. In other words, the practice of urban food growing is one element of the practice of food provisioning. While in the overall thesis I focus on community gardening, the way in which this practice fits within the practice of food provisioning is interesting in order to understand how community gardening finds its place in the rhythm of daily life. This is therefore discussed in chapter 5.

In chapters 3, 6 and 7, the theory of practice plays a less dominant role. This is because practice theory was not the starting point of my work; it captured my attention when I was trying to understand why some people had difficulty visiting the gardens as much as they intended to, as I show in chapter 3. Motivations and what they mean for people's involvement in community gardening play an important role in chapter 6. The theory of practice recognises the existence and importance of motivations, and as practices consist of both doings and sayings, it allows for a focus on why people do or do not engage in certain practices. This means that although I do not directly refer to practice theory in all chapters, the chapters do not stand in opposition to practice theory either. Practice theory makes it possible to go *beyond* motivations, and understand how these work out in practice, which is important in all of the chapters of this thesis. Moreover, all of the chapters centre on everyday life, and in all of them I use methods that are associated with practice theory. Therefore, although not particularly mentioned as such, these chapters are in line with the use of the theory of practice.

Practices

A practice is defined as concrete human activity, 'a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge' (Reckwitz 2002: 249). Examples of practices are driving a car, playing tennis and growing food. Elements of practices thus include things, bodily doings and sayings, but also the meanings of these doings and sayings (Røpke 2009). Shove and Pantzar (2005a, in: Røpke 2009) therefore interpret practices as consisting of material, meaning and competence, or expressed differently, as equipment, images and skills.

Practices can be divided into practices-as-entity and practices-as-performance. A practice-as-

¹ Although these practices are not the exact same thing, for the purpose of this thesis they are similar; growing food is what people do when they engage in community gardening. In some instances the practice of community gardening can be defined differently (e.g. as socialising), but when this is the case I make it explicit.

entity is the set of bodily-mental activities held together by material, meaning and competence (Røpke 2009: 2492). It is a temporarily unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings, in which understandings, procedures and engagements are the linkages between doings and sayings (Schatzki 2002, in: Røpke 2009). A practice-as-performance concerns the actual carrying out of practices and refers to the performance of doings and sayings (Warde 2005). A practice-as-entity is thus more abstract while practices-as-performance form daily life; people engage in practices-as-performance, that way shaping and maintaining practices-as-entity.

Reproducing the practice

People perform practices and thereby actualise and sustain them. The performance of practices therefore creates routinised forms of behaviour (Reckwitz 2002). This routinisation of practices leads to a routinisation of daily life, in which practices constantly have to 'compete' for the attention of practitioners (Røpke 2009: 2493): a practice is only reproduced if it finds a place within the rhythm of daily life, in which time is limited (Gregson et al. 2002, in: Jackson et al. 2006). New practices therefore have difficulty successfully integrating in everyday life; they are shaped by the extent to which people are able to revise the texture and rhythm of their daily lives (Shove and Walker 2010). Routinisation also means that performance in a familiar practice is often neither fully conscious nor reflective (Warde 2005). Much of people's day-to-day behaviour is not directly motivated but is instead based upon unconscious motivations and practical consciousness (Giddens 1984). This does not mean that people do not have plans. Rather, they rarely have true strategic intentions as a principle of action (Bourdieu 1998). People simply do not have time to carefully consider all their day-to-day decisions and do not make calculated choices in which all interests are consciously weighed. In the words of Røpke (2009: 2493): 'rather than imposing an overall logic as an organising device (such as optimising the utility of time use or shaping one's identity according to some ideal), people manage everyday life as a puzzle of many considerations emerging from practices and projects and influenced by their accumulated experiences and dispositions'. Hence, actions are not isolated events; agency is a flow of activities in an on-going process. As a result, intentionality is seen in a processual perspective rather than as relating specific motivations to specific actions (Røpke 2009; Giddens 1984), mediated by the social relations individuals sustain in the routine practices of their daily lives (Giddens 1984).

As carriers of a practice, people are 'neither autonomous nor the judgemental dopes who conform to norms: they understand the world and themselves, and use know-how and motivational knowledge, according to the particular practice' (Reckwitz 2002: 256). People are competent practitioners, who are able to link and integrate the elements of meaning, material and competence necessary to perform the practice (Røpke 2009: 2493). They are knowledgeable agents, reflexively monitoring the interaction they have with one another (Giddens 1984) and consciously constructing who they are by choosing which practices to engage in (Schatzki 1996). As people have a range of options in any context, relative to their desires, other conditions and components of practical consciousness, they choose which

practices to engage in, according to their plans and goals (Schatzki 1996). Practice theory therefore not only observes the role of routines, but also that of emotion, embodiment and desire (Warde 2005).

The central role of routinisation in practice theory does not mean that practices are static. The circumstances under which people perform practices are never the same; people adapt, improvise and experiment. Hence, the forms that practices take are conditional upon the institutional arrangements characteristic of time, space and social context (Warde 2005). The reproduction of practices therefore always differs slightly and transforms the practice-as-entity over time (Schatzki 2002, in: Røpke 2009). Moreover, people experience everyday crises in their routines, in which the breaking and shifting of structures takes place (Reckwitz 2002). Practices are also subject to change through the creation of new links between meanings, materials and competences, or through the breaking up of existing links between them (Shove et al. 2012; Shove and Walker 2007). Practices thus have a history of emergence, change and eventually disappearance (Crivits and Paredis 2013; Giddens 1979). Hence, '[s]ociological applications of the concept [of practices] may deal equally with persistence and change in the forms of practices and their adherents, with manifest differences in the ways in which individuals and groups engage in the same practice' (Warde 2005: 136).

Structure and agency, society and the individual

Practice theory is located at the intersection of structure and agency: individual actions are created by practices, while social order comes into being through practices (Røpke 2009). Hence, by performing practices, people draw upon but also feed into 'structure'. Although authors such as Giddens (1984), Bourdieu (1977) and Schatzki (1996) all describe this somewhat differently, the commonality is that practices shape and are shaped by a social system; by performing practices, people simultaneously reproduce structure, while structure in itself influences how people perform practices. Hence, by producing individual and collective practices, the regularities that structure society are being reproduced; structure is both a product of history and that which produces it (Bourdieu 1998; 1977). Alternatively, in the words of Giddens (1984), the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they organise. Importantly, these structural properties are not intentionally made by people; although they are created by activities that are themselves intentional and motivated, creation and recreation of the structure is not an intentional project (Giddens 1984).

Routinisation, the nature of social structure, is embedded in collective cognitive and symbolic structures (Reckwitz 2002). This means that when people perform practices, they 'routinely enact behaviours in accordance with the prevailing requirements of normality and appropriate conduct' (Evans 2011: 110). As De Krom (2014) explains, the dynamics of a practice contain and co-constitute the capabilities and preferences of the people involved, but the translation of people's motivations and attitudes into behaviour depends on how these motivations and attitudes are integrated within the routinised nature of the configurations of the practice.

Practice theory thus highlights the ‘significance of shared or collective symbolic structures of knowledge in order to grasp both action and social order’ (Reckwitz 2002: 246). Practices articulate how people understand things and shape what makes sense to them, and how things make sense is in turn articulated in practices - a person coexists with others through participating in a practice. Human coexistence is therefore a hanging-together of human lives, forming a context in which each proceeds individually. Practices are the medium in which lives interrelate (Schatzki 1996).

Approaching this research through the lens of the theory of practice has implications for the methods used, something which will be discussed in the next sections.

Methodology

Through their involvement in particular practices, people create meaning, and thereby create and maintain a social reality. This social reality does not exist beyond these practices and from such a perspective, there is no truth ‘out there’ that is to be discovered. This research was therefore conducted within the constructivist paradigm, which assumes a subjectivist epistemology (Denzin and Lincoln 2005), denoting that the truth does not exist but is created by the subject’s interactions with the world, and ‘[m]eaning is *constructed* not discovered’ (O’Leary 2004: 17, emphasis in original). The paradigm assumes a relativist ontology: there are multiple realities which are local, specific and constructed.

Constructivism sees meaning as central to human behaviour; human interaction with the world is mediated through a process of meaning-making and interpretation (O’leary 2004: 21). The constructivist paradigm therefore generally supposes a hermeneutical methodology, indicating that there is an emphasis on interpretation (Guba and Lincoln 2005), as this is needed in order to understand the complexity of the constructed social reality (O’Leary 2004). Indeed, Bourdieu (1977; 1998) emphasises the importance of interpretation in the study of practices since in order to be able to grasp the specific logic of a practice, researchers have to take up the point of view of the practice. This is because people do not react to objective conditions, but to the practical interpretation of these conditions. Researchers need to construct that interpretation. Hence, they need to study people’s actions, objects and society from the perspective of those people (O’leary 2004) and to enter people’s worlds. That way they can ‘see the situation as it is seen by the actor, observing what the actor takes into account, observing how he interprets what is taken into account’ (Blumer 1969, in: Schwandt 1994). The aim of the researcher is thus to reconstruct the actor’s viewpoint (Flick 2009). The process by which the researcher arrives at this interpretation is referred to as ‘*verstehen*’, which can be seen as an ‘abiding concern for the life world, for the emic point of view, for understanding meaning, for grasping the actor’s definition of a situation’ (Schwandt 1994: 118).

To guide the process of ‘*verstehen*’ I used a case study design. This is an approach in which a social phenomenon – community gardening – is studied by analysing one or more individual

cases (Kumar 2005). The main advantage of a case study is that it enables a holistic approach, meaning that the phenomenon is studied as a whole and in its context (Baarda et al. 2005). The case study is therefore useful for in-depth research on small numbers of social entities (Numagami 1998) and is an 'opportunity for the intensive analysis of many specific details often overlooked by other methods' (Kumar 2005: 113). The study was longitudinal, meaning that the researcher visits the cases a number of times over a longer period of time (Kumar 2005). I followed four of the seven case gardens studied for this thesis over a two-year time span (also see 'case selection' and 'participant observations'). The main advantage of a longitudinal study is that it allowed me to see the gardens 'at work' under different circumstances – on different occasions, in different seasons – which helped me truly grasp the practice of community gardening. I chose several rather than one case study, which made it possible to create a comparative perspective (Baarda et al. 2005). On the one hand this enabled me to look at community gardening from a broad perspective, looking beyond the specifics of the cases selected. On the other hand, comparing cases made it possible to understand the influence of such specifics.

Multiple methods

I used multiple methods to study the cases, as is common in qualitative research (Flick 2002, in: Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Using multiple methods is a way to understand the phenomenon as well as possible, adding rigour, breadth, complexity and richness (Flick 2002, in: Denzin and Lincoln 2005). In the words of Fontana and Frey (2005: 722): '[h]umans are complex, and their lives are ever changing. The more methods we use to study them, the better our chances will be to gain some understanding of how they construct their lives and the stories they tell us about them'. Hence, combining different ways to collect data, called triangulation, is a way to increase the validity of the results (Baarda et al. 2005). Using several methods is also useful in light of the theory of practice. Practices consist of both doings and sayings and analysis must therefore be concerned with practical activity as well as its representation (Jackson et al. 2006; Warde 2005): I used observations (the practice) as well as interviews and questionnaires (its representation).

Observations are suitable because they mean going beyond people's opinions and their own analyses of what they do, and studying their actual actions (Gray 2004). Bourdieu (1977; 1998) considers observations to be a way to minimise what he calls the 'scholastic point of view'. He argues that scientists may be prone to confuse the model of reality for the reality of the model; the 'rules' that people are following, the principles that underlie the production of regularities, are implicit and therefore difficult to express. People should not therefore be asked to be their own sociologists or to adopt a quasi-theoretical attitude: instead, researchers should study empirical realities (Bourdieu 1977; 1998). Hence, the deepest logic of the social world can only be understood if the researcher dives into the particularity of an empirical reality, historically located and dated (Bourdieu 1998). Indeed, participant observations enabled me to live the everyday experiences of community gardening, side by side with participants. Observations helped me understand garden dynamics and increased my ability to interpret other research

findings.

Although the use of participant observations thus has clear advantages, other writers such as Schatzki (1996) do not agree with Bourdieu's view that people are not able to describe and explain their own behaviour. As people are the carriers of practices they can be asked about the meanings these practices contain for them. According to Schatzki, people do not systematically offer inadequate explanations for what they do. Instead, people are knowledgeable about their day-to-day activities (Giddens 1984): they are able to discursively formulate reasons for actions, to articulate motivations and to reflect on these (Røpke 2009; Giddens 1984). In order to capture and discuss these reasons, motivations and reflections I conducted semi-structured interviews and used questionnaires. Besides participant observations, interviews and questionnaires, I also used document research. I discuss each of these methods in more detail below. However, I first present the seven cases studied in this research, and explain how I selected them.

Cases

Case selection

The field work consisted of two phases. In the first phase, which took roughly two years, I studied four gardens. I selected cases in a purposeful way, using a three-step selection process. Firstly, I compiled a list of potential case gardens and organised these into categories; the variance among the final list (tens of projects) was large. I looked for cases on the internet and in newspapers - others came to me by word of mouth. The categories were 1) allotments; 2) gardens located in neighbourhoods and cultivated by residents from that neighbourhood; 3) gardens which contained a clear economic component, usually because food was sold; and 4) art projects. The second step was to select categories to involve in the research. I dismissed art projects; these are generally temporary by design and I was looking for projects with long-term perspectives. In the third step I selected two cases from the three remaining categories. A prerequisite for cases to be selected was that they had to have been in existence for more than a full year. I expected that this would limit the likelihood of the project ceasing to exist during the course of the research. A second prerequisite was that the case had to be accessible: I deliberately ruled out cases that were part of other studies or appeared in the media a lot. I wanted to spend a lot of time at the gardens, speaking to key persons repeatedly, and it seemed that this degree of engagement would be easier with gardens that were not already saturated with outside attention. For each remaining case I defined the initiator (residents, an entrepreneur, a housing corporation) and scored the following characteristics;

- The extent to which participants live in the direct neighbourhood of the garden;
- The extent to which market relations are present;
- The importance of food in the initiative (a direct goal or used as a vehicle for other goals);

- The extent to which participants of the initiative are required to be actively involved in growing food;
- The extent to which contacts between participants are formalised (e.g. because participants garden at set times).

I selected cases which represented as wide a variety with respect to the above characteristics as possible. This way I aimed to do justice to the large variation in community gardens in the Netherlands. Although I selected six cases, not long after the start of the research only four cases remained. In two of the six selected cases I did not manage to build the type of relationship required for the research I aimed for. These cases were therefore dismissed. Table 2.1 shows how the four remaining cases score on the characteristics defined.

Table 2.1. The first selection of cases and their scores on the selection criteria.

	Starting year	Initiator	Participants live in direct neighbourhood	Presence of market relations	The importance of food	Degree of required involvement	Contacts at set times
Bioakker	2009	Entrepreneur	-	++	++	+/-	-
Doarpstún	2001	Local resident	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-
Windhoek	1980	Citizens in allotment association	-	--	+	++	+/-
Witte Vlieg	1995	Individual with roots in squatting movement	-	--	+	++	++

Both of the gardens that I did not manage to keep involved in the research were from the category 'gardens located in neighbourhoods and cultivated by residents from that neighbourhood'. This category was therefore no longer represented. This negatively influenced the representativeness of the selected cases, as can be seen in table 2.1: amongst the remaining four cases there is little variety regarding the extent to which participants live in the direct neighbourhood and regarding the importance of food. I therefore decided to select another two gardens for a second stage of the research, which lasted a few months. This also enabled me to make up for other blanks in the selection, such as gardens in one of the four major cities in the Netherlands. I started the selection procedure of these new cases by drawing up another list of potential case studies. I combined two lists compiled by two students² who had drafted these for their own research on community gardens - and supplemented their lists with other cases I came across. The second step was to select cases from this list. Rather than looking for as wide a variety as possible within these cases, I

² Carmen Vercauteren and Ladina Knapp.

identified a number of prerequisites that the selected cases would have to fulfil. I was looking for cases located in one of the major cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht or the Hague). Cases had to have started recently (no more than five years ago) in order to allow an understanding of the influence of the recent interest in urban agriculture. Moreover, I was aiming for one garden with individual, and one with communal plots. In order to make up for the missing category 'gardens located in neighbourhoods and cultivated by residents from that neighbourhood', selected cases also had to fulfil the following prerequisites:

- Started by the residents themselves (e.g. not initiated by local government or housing corporation);
- Participants should live in the direct neighbourhood of the garden;
- Gardens should function without any market relations (e.g. no food sold).

Only a few cases of an initial list of more than sixty cases met the required characteristics. Three cases met all criteria; I approached all of them. As they took time to reply, I approached a fourth case, located in Almere. Although this case did not therefore meet the criterion of being located in one of the four major cities, it met all other criteria. Moreover, I had met the initiator before, which made contact easier. Eventually, however, other cases I had approached agreed to the research as well; I therefore continued with three extra case gardens. See table 2.2 for the characteristics of the second set of case studies.

Table 2.2. The second selection of cases and their scores on the selection criteria.

	Starting year	Initiator	Location	Plots	Participants live in direct neighbourhood	Presence of market relations
Cupidohof	2012	Group of new local residents	Almere	Communal	++	--
Trompenburg	2009	Local resident	Amsterdam	Individual	++	--
Tuin aan de Maas	2007	Group of new local residents	Rotterdam	Communal	++	--

The selection procedure was thus driven by the desire for richness of information; I was aiming for a selection of cases that, taken together, represented the variety within a number of characteristics. I envisaged that this would be important as it provided me with the greatest opportunity to learn, which Stake (2005) argues to be an important selection criterion. However, the final selection seemed to have a major omission in the form of gardens in neighbourhoods started by local residents. I therefore purposefully included gardens from this category, increasing the representativeness of the sample. Choosing seven gardens from the wide variety of community gardens that exist in the Netherlands, all in different contexts, makes it impossible to be fully representative. However, as I established large variety over a set of characteristics and made sure to cover the range as well as possible, I am confident that I reached a fair degree of representativeness. See table 2.3 for an overview of the characteristics

of the final selection of seven case studies, and figure 2.8 for their locations. I will now discuss these case studies in more detail.

Table 2.3. Characteristics of the case studies.

	First selection				Second selection		
	Bioakker	Doarpstún	Windhoek	Witte Vlieg	Cupidohof	Trompenburg	Tuin aan de Maas
Initiator	Entrepreneur	Local resident	Citizens in allotment association	Individual with roots in squatting movement	Group of new local residents	Local resident	Group of new local residents
City (inhabitants)	Zutphen (± 47.000)	Leeuwarden (± 97.000)	Almere (± 192.000)	Assen (± 65.000)	Almere (± 192.000)	Amsterdam (± 820.000)	Rotterdam (± 616.000)
People involved	± 144 members	± 180 donors	± 120 gardeners	± 8 participants	Undetermined	14 gardeners	Undetermined
Members' places of residence	Spread across the city and nearby village	Spread across the village and nearby city	Spread across the nearby neighbourhood, some in wider city	Spread across the city, one in another village	In the surrounding streets	In the surrounding streets	In the surrounding streets
Decision making	Entrepreneur	Garden board	Allotment board	Group, led by initiator	Unofficial board	Group, in meeting	Board
Maintenance	Entrepreneur and volunteers	Volunteers	Gardeners maintain private plots	Gardeners work communally at set times	Children and one volunteer, children have private plots	Gardeners maintain private plots, communal herb garden	Board maintains communal plot
Harvest	Harvest your meal, pay for vegetables taken	Buying harvest at shop	Individual, from private plot	Shared, from communal plot	Individual, from private plot, children's plots, some shared	Individual, from private plot, herbs for all to take	Shared for those that volunteer, some shared broader in dinners
Starting year	2009	2001	1980	1995	2012	2009	2007

Selected cases

Bioakker is a 'pick-your-own' garden with 144³ members in Zutphen. The garden is run by an entrepreneur. People become a member of the garden by paying €100. This should be seen as a down-payment; members harvest vegetables whenever they want and after calculating the value of what they have taken (prices are listed on the website) they subtract this from that initial payment. After having spent their €100, they make a new deposit. Members are invited to work at the garden, but this is voluntary. The garden is organic and no animal manure is used. *Bioakker* was started in 2009. The entrepreneur maintains two other gardens in the area, selling the harvest of these plots at the local organic market.

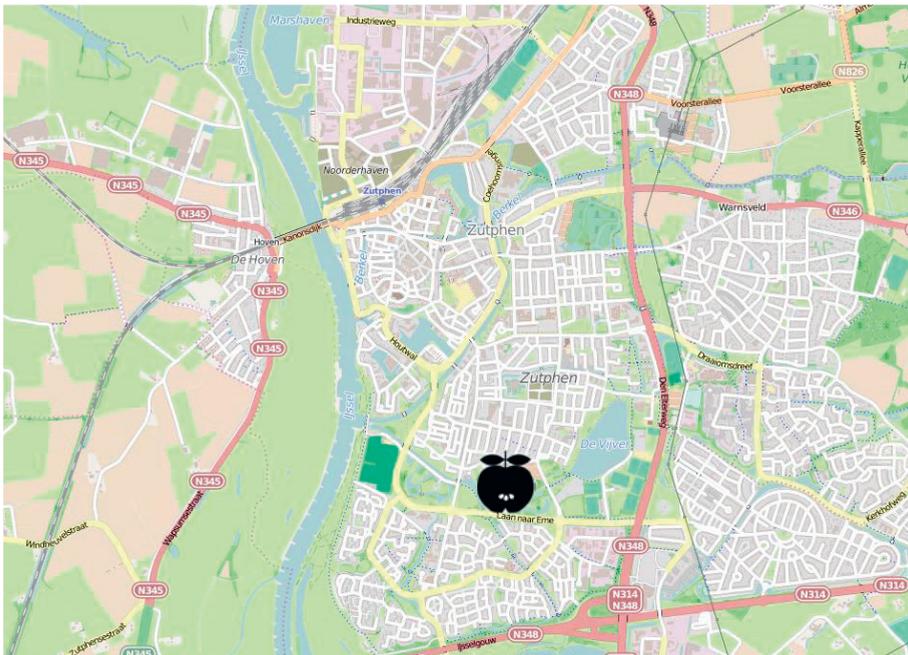


Figure 2.1. Two pictures of Bioakker and a map showing its location in Zutphen.

³ Numbers and other specifics of these case studies are from the time of research.

Doarpstún is located in a former village – Snakkerburen – that is now part of the medium-sized town Leeuwarden. It has existed since 2001, and works without the use of herbicides, pesticides or fertilisers. Garden produce is sold in the garden shop, which is open to donors only. Donors are people who support the garden with at least €6 a year; there are about 180 donors, though in practice, no one checks whether the buyers are donors. Vegetable prices are similar to those of conventional vegetables in the supermarket. Both the garden and its shop are run by volunteers, while the overall management is the responsibility of a board. The garden is also used as a site for cultural activities such as open-air theatre, dinners and children's activities.

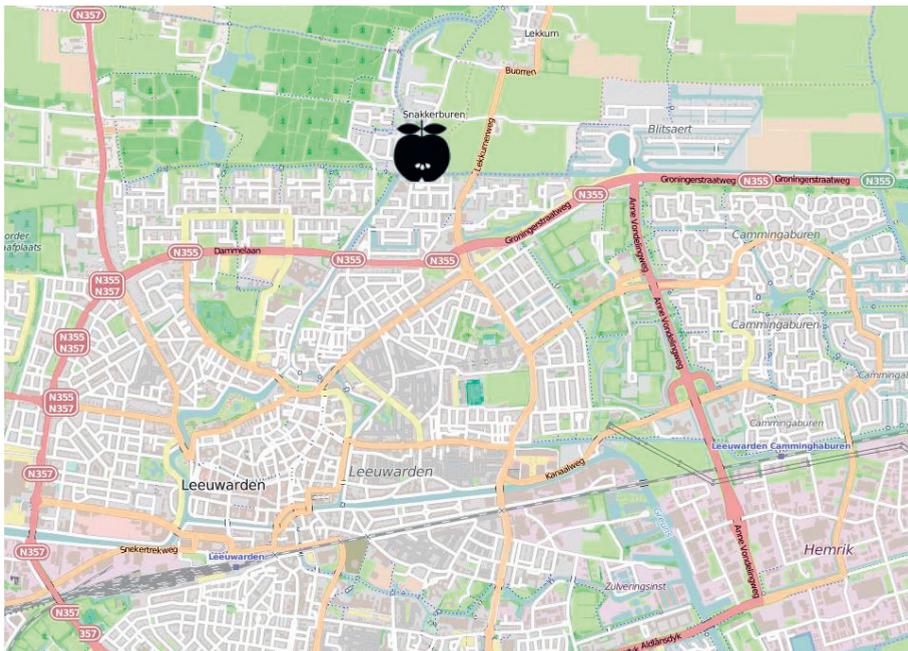


Figure 2.2. Two pictures of Doarpstún and a map showing its location in Leeuwarden.

Windhoek was started in Almere in 1980. It is an allotment in the traditional sense of the word; the land is divided into more than 200 plots, which are maintained individually by 123 members (some maintain several plots). Most members grow fruit and vegetables. The allotment is managed by an allotment board, consisting of members who take up this task voluntarily. The board is supported by several volunteers who organise various social activities – Easter brunch, open day, harvest festival, barbeque. They also run the allotment shop, bar and canteen. Members are obliged to spend three mornings a year on common maintenance work such as keeping tiled areas free of weeds. Organic farming is not obligatory, but farming without chemicals is encouraged.

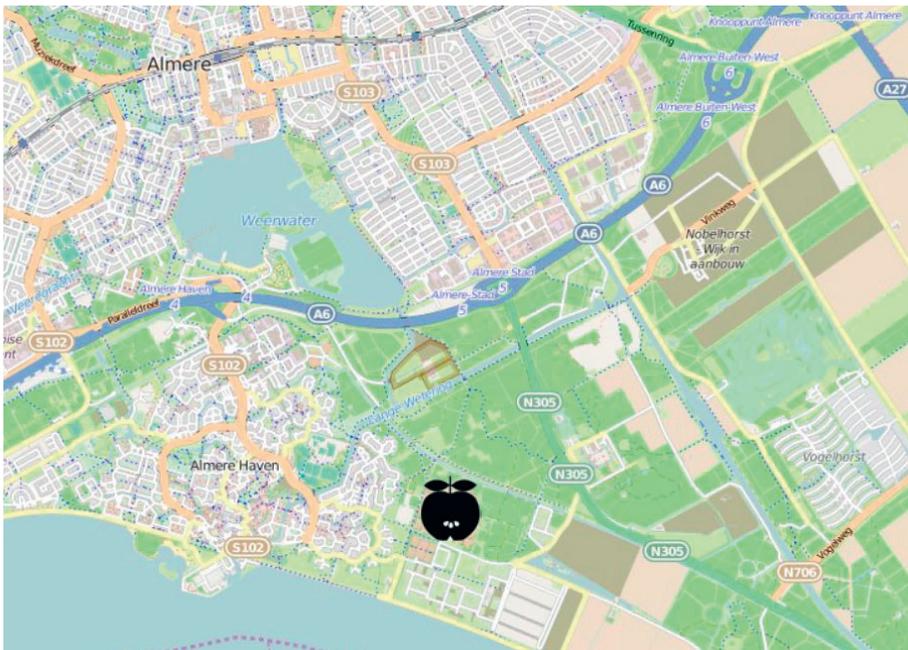


Figure 2.3. Two pictures of Windhoek and a map showing its location in Almere.

Witte Vlieg is located at the edge of an allotment in Assen. Together, a group of eight people maintains one allotment plot, which consists of several pooled allotments. Participants are divided into two groups, each of which gardens for one morning per week. After each working morning, members take home a share of the produce. Participants pay a small fee for the costs of seeds and rent. The gardening is done organically and most work is done manually. The garden was started in 1995 by an individual from the squatting movement; he is still the unofficial leader of the garden.

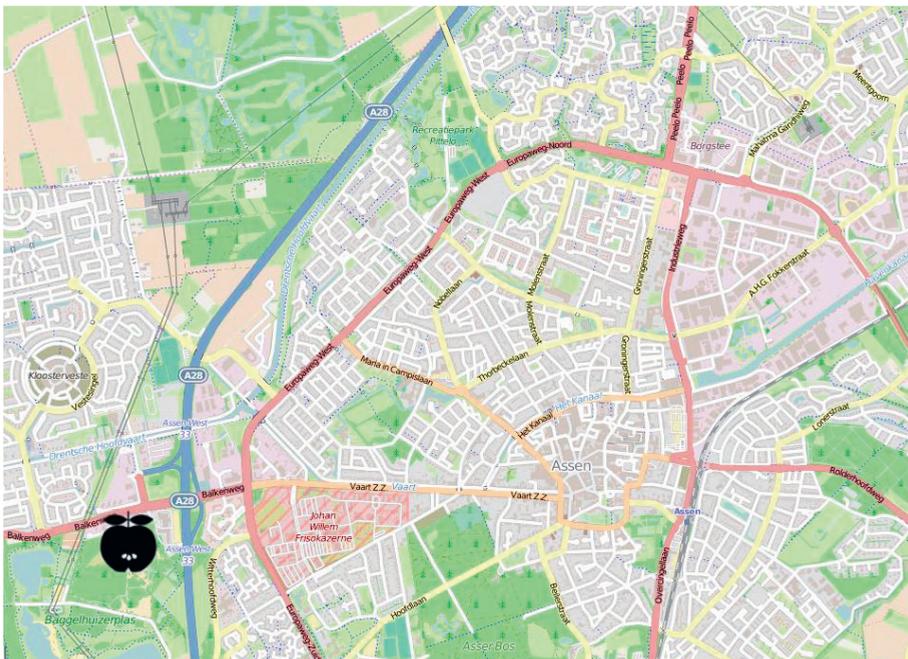


Figure 2.4. Two pictures of Witte Vlieg and a map showing its location in Assen.

Cupidohof was started in Almere in the summer of 2012. A group of residents from a newly developed neighbourhood made the plans for the garden; building developments on it were delayed. The garden is part of a larger design that also contains a playground and a football field. The local council assisted with its creation and mows the grass. Children have small private plots on which they grow vegetables. Every Sunday morning one of the residents – who can be seen as the main organiser of the garden – works with the children on their gardens for about an hour. She also waters the gardens when needed. Once every month, neighbours clean the area. Around thirty residents are involved in the garden in one way or another; some residents have planted vegetables, others regularly water the plants.

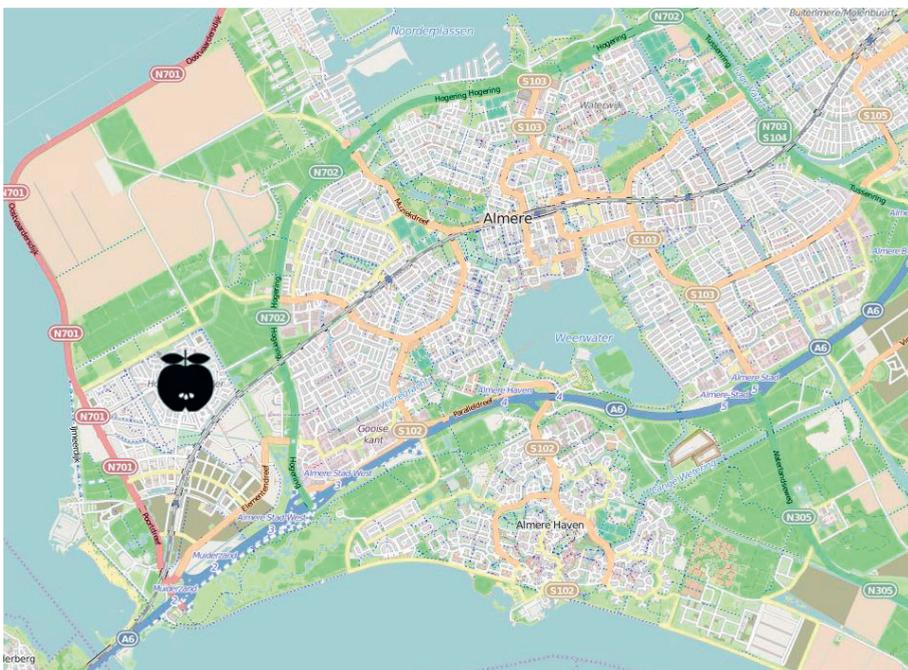


Figure 2.5. Two pictures of Cupidohof and a map showing its location in Almere.

Trompenburg is a community garden in Amsterdam. Fourteen participants have a private plot on which they grow vegetables. There is one communal plot on which participants grow herbs communally. The garden was started in 2009 and is located on a small strip of land between a playing garden and a sports field. As a result, the plots are only small (about 5m²). Members get together to discuss gardening matters occasionally, or to share a drink, but no more than a few times a year. The garden was started by a local residence who was inspired by the Transition Town movement and was interested in local food and social cohesion. He received support from the local council and the community work organisation. Members pay a small fee to rent their plot.

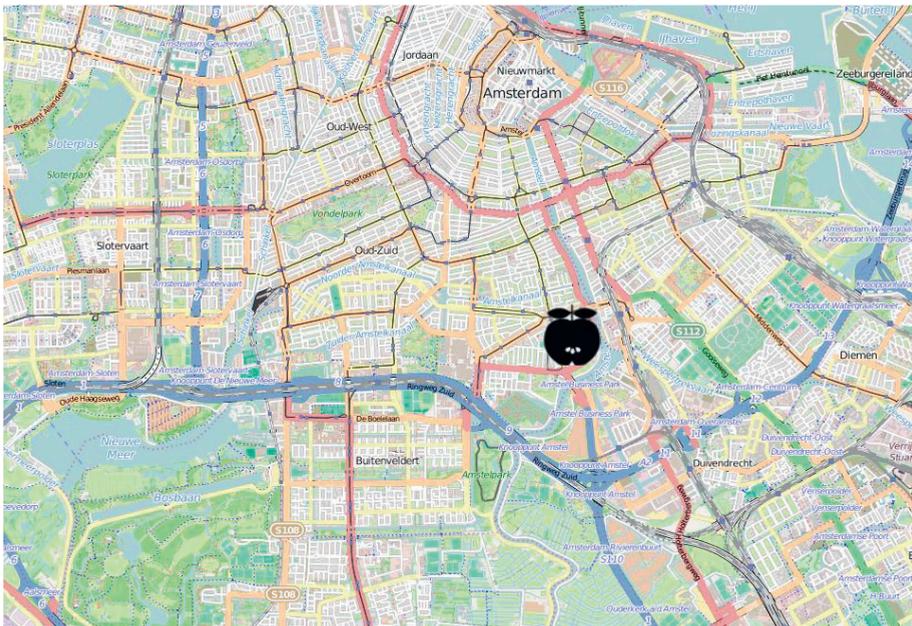


Figure 2.6. Two pictures of Trompenburg and a map showing its location in Amsterdam.

Tuin aan de Maas is located on a pier in the river Meuse, Rotterdam. The neighbourhood in which it is located is relatively new, but there is a lively informal neighbourhood network. The garden was started in 2007 by two local residents on a vacant plot on which building was delayed. They were soon accompanied by other residents, leading to a group of about forty people working on the creation of the garden. Now that the garden is running, only the garden board works in the garden, on a communally maintained plot. It is, however, also used as a space for neighbourhood social activities such as dinners. The harvested produce is shared and available for all residents but is in practice eaten primarily by the people working in the garden.

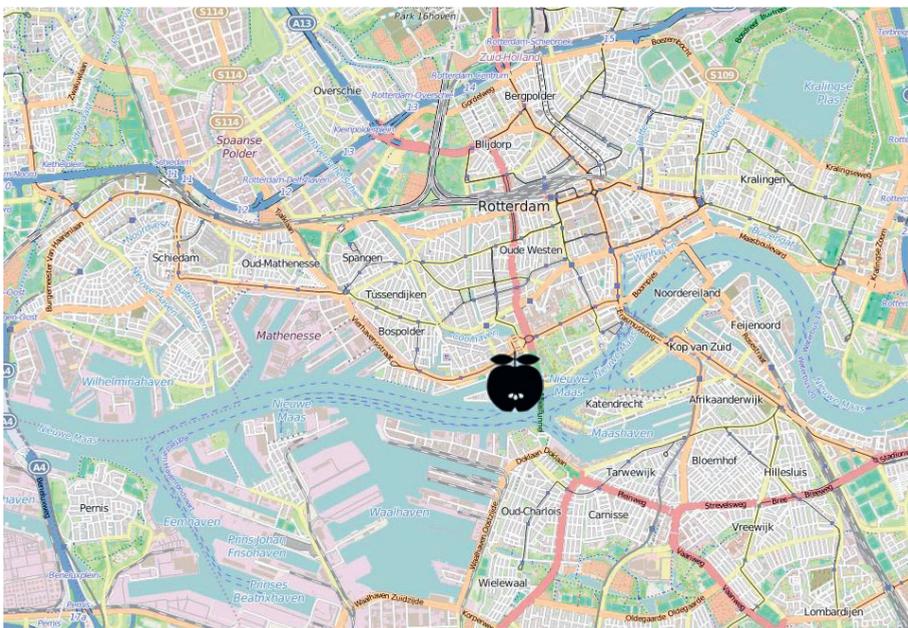


Figure 2.7. Two pictures of Tuin aan de Maas and a map showing its location in Rotterdam.

Methods

Participant observations

In the first stage of the research – in which I studied four case studies - I used participant observations in the form of field visits. The character of my field visits varied from case to case, depending on the opportunities available. For instance, Witte Vlieg works on two fixed working mornings a week which enabled me to visit on a regular basis, while at Bioakker, where members have no formal obligations, it was harder to know when to enter the field. At all gardens I participated both during 'ordinary' days – a normal day at the garden - and during special social activities. Hence, I engaged in working mornings at Witte Vlieg, volunteered at Bioakker, participated in 'common work days' at Windhoek and ran the shop at Doarpstún. I joined yearly meetings, board meetings and information evenings and attended harvest festivals, Christmas markets and open days. I learned how to prune trees during a weekend away with Witte Vlieg members, shared my carrot cake during a brunch at Bioakker, enjoyed the open air theatre play at Doarpstún, and poured beers, made sauerkraut, and joined an Easter brunch at Windhoek. Most field visits were conducted between November 2010 and December 2011, allowing me to visit the gardens during different seasons.

Spending time at the gardens on several occasions over a longer period of time decreased my outsider status, also because I participated in activities as if I was a member of the garden myself. This way I tried to create an atmosphere of trust. As Gray (2004: 242) states, '[t]o remain an 'outsider' would be to fail to gain the kind of rapport that is needed to make this method a success'. I became a 'well-known face', which will have limited the Hawthorne effect - which refers to people changing their behaviour when they become aware that they are being observed (Kumar 2005) - because the disturbance is known to recover soon when researchers adjust to the local situation as well as possible (Baarda et al. 2005). Blending in with the gardeners also meant that I did not walk around with a pen and paper. I felt this would be too intruding and unnatural (except when writing was normal behaviour, such as at board meetings). Sometimes I carried a small notebook and jotted down some observations at the toilet or in the car before leaving. I wrote more extensive field notes as soon as possible after returning from a field visit, usually on the same day. These field notes were unstructured; I described the experience of being at the garden as well as possible, paying attention to those who were present, discussion topics, activities, and the atmosphere.

Semi-structured interviews

I used semi-structured interviews in each of the seven case studies. The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they allow for probing of views and opinions, so that respondents can expand on their answers. This is particularly useful when exploring subjective meanings that respondents ascribe to concepts or events (Gray 2004), such as how people experience social life at the garden. I kept interviews informal and tried to create a pleasant atmosphere by making the interview resemble a conversation. The length of the interviews varied between



thirty minutes and one hour. They were all tape-recorded and transcribed.⁴

Interview guide

The interviews were comparable for all gardens, but adjusted for the specifics of each case. For example, when asking about people's involvement in the garden, Doarpstún respondents, who buy vegetables in the garden shop, were asked different questions than Windhoek respondents, who maintain their own plots. Moreover, I slightly changed the interview guide during the course of the research, as the specifics of what I wanted to know became clearer over time. For example, the focus on the theory of practice, which I took up after analysing the first data, influenced some of the questions I asked regarding people's use of the harvest. Although changing and adding questions was not ideal considering the fact that I wanted to compare answers, not doing so would have been less wise. As Stake (2005: 453) argues: '[a] plan is essential, but the caseworker needs to anticipate the need to recognise and develop late-emerging issues'.

The interview guide categorised questions into three main topics: general involvement in the garden, contacts and help at the garden, and food patterns. I based my questions which were related to people's garden contacts, the value of those contacts and mutual help, on the work and methods of several authors. This way I increased the validity of the interviews, as the translation of concepts into questions had already been tested and used by others. As I explained in the previous chapter, these authors' methods proved to be a great source of inspiration, even though what they intended to measure is not limited to social cohesion but covers related concepts as well. Hence, inspired by the questions of these researchers, I asked people to describe their contacts at the garden (e.g. do they invite other gardeners to their birthday parties, do they consider them as friends), I asked about mutual help (e.g. did other gardeners help them with tasks at home, do they discuss personal issues with fellow gardeners), and I asked whether participants felt that other participants were similar to them (e.g. do people have similar backgrounds, norms and values). I got a better understanding of the importance of the gardens in people's daily meals and the choices they make in planning, buying and growing food by discussing the different aspects of food provisioning, such as planning, cooking, and discarding of waste.

Sampling

I used different sampling strategies to find interviewees. In Witte Vlieg, I interviewed all current and two former participants. At Windhoek I found respondents by volunteering to write gardener 'portraits' for the allotment magazine. In Doarpstún, Bioakker, Trompenburg, Cupidohof and Tuin aan de Maas I found respondents through the questionnaires; one of the questions was whether people were available for an interview. This often led to more people than needed; I selected respondents based upon characteristics such as age and number of years of participation, looking for as great a variety as possible. In some cases I found additional respondents through the snowball method. I stopped looking for more respondents once I reached a saturation point.

⁴ Except one; one respondent did not want his interview to be recorded; therefore notes were made instead.

These methods of selecting respondents are not structural sampling strategies, making it difficult to draw conclusions beyond the sample. I chose these techniques, however, as more structural methods were not possible or appropriate and I was dependent on a trust relationship with the gardens. Moreover, as the research was exploratory, it was more important to be able to learn about a variety of social effects than to be able to make statements for the group as a whole.

Interviewers

Although I did most of the interviews myself, colleagues conducted interviews for this research as well. At Witte Vlieg and Windhoek I interviewed all respondents personally. At Bioakker and Doarpstún, colleagues performed some of the interviews. I did not conduct any of the interviews at Tuin aan de Maas, Trompenburg and Cupidohof; at this stage of the research I was on maternity leave and my colleagues stepped in. I did however visit these gardens and spoke to the key informants.

Having others undertaking interviews is a source of bias; different interviewers have different interviewing styles, leading to different answers. There are a few ways in which I tried to limit this bias. Firstly, in every case study only one interviewer besides me stepped in. This may have enlarged differences *between* cases, but will have limited differences *per* case as respondents at one garden were interviewed by no more than two different interviewers. Secondly, I prepared the interviewers for the research and its aims and discussed the interview guide. Thirdly, all interviews were taped and transcribed, giving me access to the exact wordings of the interviews, and making it possible to understand the context of answers, the specific tone of voice (e.g. sarcasm) and the specific wordings used by the interviewer. Moreover, it is important not to overestimate the influence of the interviewer: referring to Singer and Presser (1989) Fontana and Frey (2005) state that interviewer characteristics such as age, gender, and interviewing experience have a relatively small impact on responses.

Questionnaires

I used questionnaires to get a broader view of the gardens and the people participating in them. Questions were fairly similar to those in the semi-structured interviews but were mostly multiple choice (both category and list questions). I used the questionnaire to measure topics similar to those in the interviews in order to increase the reliability of the data (Baarda et al. 2005). In that sense I used the questionnaires as a check or a back-up of the semi-structured interviews. Moreover, where the semi-structured interviews provided reasoning and motivations, the questionnaires provided the numbers behind these. As with the interviews, questionnaires were comparable in set-up, but adjusted to the specific gardens.

Distribution and response

I used different distribution techniques for the questionnaires, depending on what was feasible and appropriate at a specific garden. In three cases (Cupidohof, Bioakker and Trompenburg) I used online questionnaires accompanied by emails from contact persons. At Doarpstún

I also used an online questionnaire, but as I did not have access to email addresses (nor home addresses), I used a notice in the newsletter and a request at an information meeting to attract members to the questionnaire. At Windhoek and Tuin aan de Maas I used paper questionnaires. Windhoek gardeners received it by post and were asked to return it (a return envelope was provided). Participants of Tuin aan de Maas received a printed questionnaire from my contact person, who also collected the filled-in questionnaires and returned them to me. In Witte Vlieg a questionnaire was not feasible as all participants were interviewed.

Table 2.4 gives an overview of the number of field visits, interviews and questionnaires conducted in the seven cases.

Table 2.4. Overview of research methods.

	Visits	Interviews	Questionnaire respondents	Response rate (questionnaires)
Bioakker	6	14	58	40%
Doarpstún	23	14	48	27%
Windhoek	21	10	81	66%
Witte Vlieg	17	10	-	-
Cupidohof	-	6	18	18%*
Trompenburg	-	5	12	92%
Tuin aan de Maas	-	4	18	76%*

* These response rates are difficult to calculate as the number of people involved in these gardens is not clear. The rates are therefore based on the number of questionnaires handed out; in Cupidohof questionnaires were more widely distributed than in Tuin aan de Maas.

Document research

Finally, I studied written documents such as emails, newsletters, garden magazines, announcements and newspaper clippings. I used these to complement or contradict other findings, but they also gave an insight into how cases presented themselves, how communication between members took place and which issues were considered important at the garden.

Analysis

I manually coded interview transcripts, field reports and documents, and created spreadsheets containing answers on specific questions from semi-structured interviews. I also categorised answers, for example on people's main motivations to join the garden. I used two main ways of analysing the data. On the one hand I looked at the material from a practice point of view, meaning that I coded and interpreted with certain practices in mind. For instance, I

deconstructed the practice of food provisioning and looked for data containing information on its separate elements, such as acquisition, preparation, and consumption. On the other hand I also looked at the material in a more 'open' way, interpreting it without specific practices in mind in order not to be too biased towards certain practices. Part of the analysis was performed with the aim of trying to understand which different practices people engage in when performing certain activities, and what meaning the practice has to people, which meant reading the material in an iterative process, identifying emerging themes and going back to the material when new themes emerged. In that sense I switched from inductive analysis (developing concepts, categories and relations) to deductive analysis (testing these concepts, categories and relations) and back again (Flick 2009).

As the questionnaires provided me with a large amount of comparable data, I also used statistical methods; the calculations were performed by a statistician. Using Genstat 16 we performed several analyses of variance to compare answers of different groups of respondents. We used t-tests, chi-square tests and F-tests.

Ethical remarks

The use of participant observations requires ethical considerations; observing people when they are engaged in their daily practices is intrusive and should be done carefully. During the field work I was therefore always open about my research. Before starting the project I discussed with key informants what engagement in the research would mean for the gardens and their participants. I introduced myself to garden participants in newsletters or garden magazines and always explained about my research when asked or in conversations with members. I am therefore confident that everyone I spoke to at the four gardens where I performed participant observations was aware of my research, except perhaps for those people with whom I did not speak to face-to-face.

As a result of the field work, working alongside gardeners and meeting people on several occasions, I engaged in friendly relations with respondents. However, this sometimes gave me the awkward feeling that I was only being friendly for 'opportunistic reasons' (Fine 1983-1984, in: Fontana and Frey 2005). Of course, to a certain extent this was true; I did hope to get useful information from them. However, as suggested by Baarda et al. (2005), I tried to create a more two-sided relationship by doing things in return: volunteering at an open day or bringing cake for the harvest festival. Moreover, even though the contact with people at the gardens was necessary for my research, friendly conversations were genuine nevertheless.

The research is also largely based on personal information from respondents, provided during interviews. At the start of an interview I always made clear that it was perfectly fine to skip questions or to end the interview altogether, and I explained the purpose and use of the interview in particular and the project in general. Respondents were thus fully informed about their participation. Interview and questionnaire data were treated anonymously

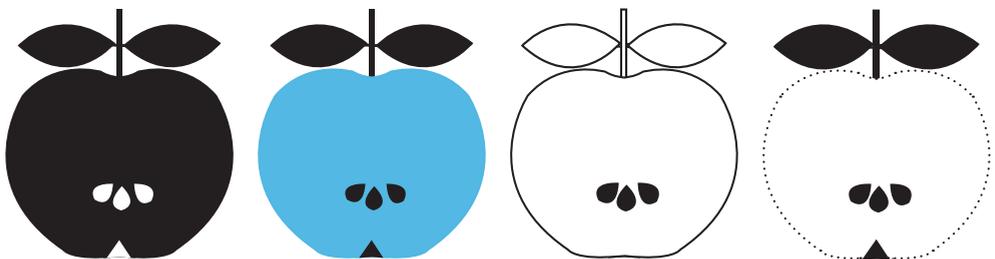
and confidentially, the only exception being the gardener 'portraits' I wrote for the garden magazine; in this case, the stories to be published were checked with the respondents. Finally, I provided all respondents with feedback about my results; I sent around simplified short versions of my papers to them, wrote summaries for newsletters and shared results on my blog. This way I made sure that the data was not only 'mine', and that respondents could also read about other cases involved in the research.





Chapter 3

Motivations, Reflexivity and Food Provisioning in Alternative Food Networks: Case Studies in Two Medium-sized Towns in the Netherlands





Abstract

Grow your own is emerging as a trendy urban activity. Becoming involved in 'farming' inside the city is framed in the media, on the Internet and in policy discourse as an emergent food movement. In this article we look at food provisioning practices inside cities and situate these in the literature on Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), responding to two of Treager's main critiques. We use the concept of 'food provisioning practices' to overcome the critique of producer–consumer dichotomy since the concept treats people holistically as people undertaking activities. Rather than assuming that involvement in AFNs does or should represent a radical political act for any of its participants, we disentangle the multiple beliefs and motivations – including the most mundane – of the actors involved in two cases. We find that, because people are required to be actively involved in the production of their food, participants of both cases are neither only producers nor only consumers; they are both. The gardens show a 'sliding scale of producership'. Our research also shows that, although reflexive motivations are present, many participants are unwilling to frame their involvement as political, nor do all participants see themselves as part of a movement. Hence, although personal choices may become political, we have to be careful not to ascribe attributes to participants that they themselves do not formulate. Moreover, we found that mundane motivations are important as well, and that political articulations do not predict actual involvement perfectly. This means therefore, unlike what Watts et al. argue, that reflexivity is not necessarily connected to the strength of the network.

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Introduction

Grow your own is emerging as a trendy urban activity (Corrigan 2011).¹ Allotment garden associations have been around for decades, but recently the diversity of growing activities has expanded, including community gardens, city farms, and rooftop farms. Also, the market for balcony growing cushions, soil-filled window curtains and vermiculture compost boxes is booming.² Growing activities inside or on the fringe of cities are collected under the heading of 'urban agriculture'. However, it is not only the urban location that is implied with the current use of this term. On a symbolic level, practices of urban agriculture are thought to communicate strategies of 'doing things differently'.³ In the media, on the Internet and in policy discourse, becoming involved in 'farming' inside the city is framed as an emergent food movement.⁴

In this article we look at urban food growing practices and situate these within the debate on Alternative Food Networks (AFNs). These practices function as a mirror to reflect on the nature of alternative food networks. It also helps us to respond to two of Tregear's (2011) main critiques on the AFN debate. Tregear found four deadlock arguments that cease to be productive in bringing this body of knowledge further. She argues that the AFN literature has an overreliance on 'fuzzy concepts': key concepts are insufficiently clear and consistent. There is also a tendency to make assumptions about inherent qualities of AFNs, i.e. that local food is inherently healthier or safer. Third, there is insufficient acknowledgement of the problems of marketplace trading: buyer–seller interactions are surrounded by beneficial claims. Finally, there is a lack of consumer perspectives (Tregear 2011). Besides these critiques Tregear notices that, although AFNs can be beneficial, they can also be problematic or adverse. There may be problems with how they interact with and impact on wider systems and economies, with how actors internal to AFNs relate to each other and, notably, with personal values and motivations of AFN actors; motivations to be involved in AFNs are not necessarily radically different from or in opposition to those associated with mainstream food systems (Tregear 2011).

We closely studied two cases of food production within the city: a shared allotment garden and a 'harvest it yourself' garden. These cases have features similar to but also crucially different from the main body of AFNs thus far described, most notably the fact that the people that eat the food grown take part in growing it. Hence, we focus specifically on consumer perspectives, moving beyond the producer–consumer dichotomy. Moreover, we study

¹ See farmingthecity.net, cityfarmer.org and similar websites.

² See Chongchua (2011).

³ In June 2011, Tabak writes in *VNGMagazine* (a magazine for Dutch municipalities): 'Eetbaar Rotterdam, Food and the City, Foodscape Schilderswijk: new-style allotment garden conquers the city using funky names. 'Stadslandbouw', or urban agriculture because the mania started in the US, is not only seen as an alternative for 'green to watch', but also as a way to counter the alienation from food, for social cohesion and many other things'. In August 2011, *Binnenlandsbestuur* (Internal Affairs) writes: 'A harvest-your-own garden in the urban park, allotments in the public gardens. More and more municipalities make space for 'urban agriculture', the production of vegetables and fruit in allotments, parks and backyards for consumption by inhabitants'.

⁴ See contributions in *The New York Times* (Muhlke 2010) and *Huffingtonpost* (Samuelsson 2011). The search engine for newspapers Lexus Nexus delivers 316 entries for 'stadslandbouw' (urban agriculture), of which 182 in 2011.

people's motivations for being involved in 'urban agriculture,' including the extent to which these are embedded in strategies of doing things differently. Our cases show that growing food within the city is not necessarily politically motivated and that political motivations do not always lead to actions.

Beyond the producer–consumer dichotomy

Alternative Food Networks

To date the debate on alternative food production and consumption has focused largely on the market, where new producer–consumer relations are crafted and contested. Examples of AFNs are farmers' markets, box schemes and Community Supported Agriculture. Being mainly producer-oriented, a consistent criticism is that the consumer perspective has been largely neglected (Tregear 2011; Cox et al. 2008; Eden et al. 2008; Holloway et al. 2007; Winter 2003; Goodman and DuPuis 2002). Even where work has been done on consumption, this often concerned 'the sign and 'imaginariness' of marketing and advertising' and not on how products 'are bought and eaten' (Eden et al. 2008: 1046). Indeed, the AFN literature assumes a separation between 'producer' and 'consumer', who are being reconnected in 'physical and topological space through shorter supply chains' (Eden et al. 2008: 1046). The market is assumed to be a necessary means for trading goods between producer and consumer (Tregear 2011), so that 'food networks' cannot escape commodification (cf. Hinrichs 2000). They operate within the rules of the market economy – not as an alternative but as a differentiation. This orientation on the producer requires the construct of 'consumer'; it presumes both a market where the producer offers their goods and an exchange value for which the consumer receives the goods.

Tregear (2011: 427) identifies this dual construct of producer and consumer as a deadlock conceptualization: '[T]he term 'consumer' has been applied to denote actors who are typically the recipients of outputs from food systems, as distinct from those invested occupationally in production... it may be argued that this term conveys a rather reductive view of such actors [and] in the future such actors should be researched more holistically as 'people', in all their complexity, ambiguity and multiple social contexts'. Thus, we need a different view on the producer–consumer dichotomy and a different orientation when studying food networks, also because of the constant evolution and increasing heterogeneity of AFNs. The number of networks where the distinction between consumer and producer is obscure or irrelevant is increasing, especially within cities. Therefore, rather than investigating market-based producer–consumer constructions, we follow Tregear (2011) and study people, their actions and their decisions with regard to food. We use the concept of 'food provisioning practices' as this includes all activities related to eating: 'Food provisioning is a construct that extends food choice research by examining the sociocultural and environmental context in which food consumption actually occurs (...). It includes a breadth of complex activities, including the acquisition, preparation, production, consumption and disposal of food, where technical skills (e.g. growing, shopping, meal planning, food preparation, cooking) and resources are tacitly

coordinated by a primary food provider within the social context and demands of household members, as well as the broader environment in which they live' (Mcintyre and Rondeau 2011: 117–118). The concept of food provisioning practices enables us to overcome the producer–consumer dichotomy, as it does not confine people to either one of these categories but treats them holistically as people undertaking activities. Food growing is one such activity that people may undertake as part of their food provisioning practices. Hence, urban food-growing spaces such as community gardens or allotments are places where the boundary between consumer and producer is vague and/or irrelevant – people can be both at the same time.

Food growing within cities

Urban food growing is no new phenomenon (Van der Berg et al. 2010; Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999), but for a long time productive gardens did not receive the positive attention they receive now. Until recently food production and cities were not seen as a fit spatially and mentally. Largely ignored in the industrialized West (Kortright and Wakefield 2011), 'urban agriculture' was seen as a significant food provisioning activity in urban centres in the global South (Mougeot 2000), contributing to food security of poor households. However, while a significant activity inside these cities, it was not treated as such but rather as unsuitable for a city and was seen as the 'antithesis of modernisation' (Hampway et al. 2007: 557). Allotment gardens were tolerated rather than championed and neither their production aspect nor their share in food provisioning practices were taken seriously.

However, the value of food production inside cities is being reframed. 'Urban agriculture' symbolizes the mental shift towards a revaluation of the growing aspect of productive city gardens.⁵ These include newer activities as bee- and chicken-keeping and balcony gardening, as well as the exchange, networking and learning around it. Hence, the term 'urban agriculture' signals activities 'that are somehow different from the mainstream' (Tregear 2011: 423). This difference makes it worthwhile to study food-growing activities in cities as part of the debate on AFNs. However, keeping Tregear's critique in mind, we have to prevent reifying the inherent 'goodness' as well as the inherent 'politicalness' of this new trend in its reframing process.

The concept of 'urban agriculture' knows many definitions (Hodgson et al. 2011; Thornton et al. 2010; Moustier and Danso 2006), with differences regarding the activities it entails, what is being produced, the place where the activities occur, who is involved, and whether the activities are public or not. Moreover, the word 'agriculture' may invoke connotations to farming or producers. Not only does this implicitly bring back the producer–consumer dichotomy, it does not resonate with how urban gardeners see themselves either. Apparently, 'urban agriculture' is the next 'fuzzy concept' at the horizon. For both reasons we do not use the term 'urban agriculture' but deconstruct it by looking more closely at what happens in urban food-growing spaces, exploring urban food growing as part of people's wider food-

⁵ See notes 3 and 4.

provisioning practices. By studying two food-growing initiatives and the food-provisioning practices present, we can better grasp different degrees of involvement in AFNs, thus bridging the gap between producer and consumer. Moreover, those instances where the consumer is to some extent producer as well have received little attention in the literature so far (Kortright and Wakefield 2011).

Personal values and motivations of urban residents

The second critical point of Tregear's (2011) review is the way in which the AFN literature deals with personal values and motivations of actors involved. Are these really 'radically different from, or in opposition to those associated with mainstream food systems' (Tregear 2011: 423)? There is a tendency to see food production and consumption practices that can be marked 'alternative' as morally superior to 'unreflexive' practices, and as a critique of industrialized food (Guthman 2003). If a higher morality is the assumption behind the label 'alternative', then studies are prone to be biased towards finding authenticity amongst its participants. Therefore the 'alternative' label has been questioned as problematic (Eden et al. 2008; Holloway et al. 2007; Guthman 2003). Both consumers and producers have been prone to the critique that their practices are not necessarily representing a deeper morality beyond making a difference in the market. For instance, Hinrichs (2000) argues that farmers' markets do not challenge the commodification of food. Others have argued that the local branding of 'typical' or farm-direct products is better understood in terms of strategic niche marketing (Cox et al. 2008; Jarosz 2008; Qazi and Selfa 2005; Watts et al. 2005).

Instrumental economic versus more highly regarded reasons to participate can also be found in Watts et al.'s (2005) distinction between stronger and weaker forms of AFNs, which they base upon AFNs' engagement with and potential for subordination by conventional food chains. They argue that there are differences between alternative *food* networks and alternative *food networks*. In the former, the networks are 'weaker'; the use of labels to communicate the product's speciality – such as PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) or PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) designated products – is founded on the same logic of competing in markets as any other product of the food industry. Such foods then become vulnerable to subordination. Hence, Watts et al. (2005: 30) argue that AFNs focusing on quality labelled food 'can be considered as niche market foods whose production does not challenge the current trend towards standardised and globalised food production'. Alternative *food networks* on the other hand, focus on the networks around food, minimizing their involvement with conventional food chains. They create alternative networks, either vertical or horizontal, in which trust plays an important role. This means that stronger alternatives can be built by revalorizing short food-supply chains. These are potentially alternative spatially (shorter distances and reaching food desserts), socially (traceability, personal interaction and community integration), and regarding their produce (a wider range, including little processed foods). Foremost, however, these networks operate outside the norms of capitalist evaluation since they may be run by people 'whose commitment goes beyond 'making a living'' (Watts

et al. 2005: 33).

The problem with identifying stronger and weaker alternatives is that this judgement, based on the importance of network relations over market relations, inscribes these 'stronger' networks with a high/higher morality for producers (Watts et al. 2005) and – although not mentioned in their article – their customers, on whose ability to see this deeper morality the network is founded. Tregear (2011: 424) argues that such conceptualisation leads towards 'screening for authenticity' by researchers and an 'either/or' situation where instrumental economic reasons and other reasons mutually exclude each other. The way out of this seems to reside in unpacking idealized ideas on what reflexivity is and the connection between reflexivity and political activism, which is often implicitly made. Reflexivity itself can degenerate into a fuzzy concept if not defined explicitly. DuPuis (2000: 289) defines the reflexive consumer as someone who 'listens to and evaluates claims made by groups organized around a particular food issue, such as GE [genetically engineered] foods, and evaluates his or her own activities based on what he or she feels is the legitimacy of these claims'. Hence, the reflexive consumer is someone who thinks about what they buy and eat, making conscious decisions about their food behaviour. Or, in the words of Guthman (2003: 46), 'the reflexive consumer pays attention to how food is made'. Still, reflexivity itself may also involve 'false consciousness' – the tendency to be moved by advertisements or status purchases (DuPuis 2000). Moreover, the fact that the reflexive consumer makes conscious choices does not mean that these are always the 'best' choices (e.g. most environmentally sound). Furthermore, the convention theory approach showed how different conventions can lead to trade-offs between green and more 'mundane' domestic conventions (Evans 2011), indicating that reflexive behaviour is situation specific and contingent. Therefore, there are many things that the reflexive consumer is not: he or she is not necessarily a social activist, nor necessarily committed to a particular point of view or ascribing to the ideologies of social movements around food (DuPuis 2000). This means that even though people may have reflexive thoughts about why they make certain decisions, if they do not link these to their own political goals we cannot assume that this reflexivity is political. As Starr (2010: 480, emphasis added) argues 'the meaning people are making when they make shopping (or farming) decisions *might* be political', but this needs to be asked. Hence, rather than assuming that involvement in AFNs is or should represent a political act (Tregear 2011) for any of its participants, we need to carefully disentangle the multiple beliefs and motivations of the actors involved - including the most mundane.

Methods

We used case studies to look at the motivations of people involved in urban food growing and the extent to which these can be considered political. Cases were selected by scoring a range of little-studied Dutch urban food-growing initiatives on several characteristics (i.e. participation, ownership). We selected two cases with divergent characteristics: Witte Vlieg and Bioakker. Witte Vlieg is a group of eight people who farm a plot of 2,300m² together. Each individual works one morning per week on the plot; the produce is shared amongst each

other. Bioakker is run by an entrepreneur, farming a plot of 6,000m². Members harvest the vegetables themselves and pay for them on the internet.

Several research methods were used to study the two cases. By combining their results, findings could be compared and tested, thus becoming more valid. Participant observations were used to understand the dynamics of the gardens and to get to know participants. From November 2010 until December 2011 both gardens were visited regularly. One of the authors spent ten mornings working with the gardeners of Witte Vlieg. In addition she participated in the three social activities organized during the fieldwork time. Bioakker was visited seven times. Reports were made of all individual visits. Participant observation was supplemented by a questionnaire (Bioakker) and semi-structured interviews (both cases). The questionnaire was used to shed more light on the motivations of people involved in the garden and their harvesting behaviour. The semi-structured interviews made it possible to delve deeper into the findings and to unravel the various different motivations for being involved.

Table 3.1. Characteristics of the case studies.

	Witte Vlieg	Bioakker
City	Assen (± 65.000 inhabitants)	Zutphen (± 47.000 inhabitants)
Size (m²)	2.300	6.000
Number of members	±8	±144
Starting year	1995	2009
Farming style	Organic, manual work	Organic, vegan
Organisational system	Members pay €20 to €35 annually and agree to work in the garden one morning a week. Harvest is shared	People become a member by paying €100. they subtract the value of their harvest from their 'account'.
Important values	Sharing of work and labour	Organic food for all, responsibility, trust
Questionnaire	-	58 respondents
semi-structured interviews	8 current and 2 former participants (including initiator)	13 current participants

The members of Bioakker (144 in total)⁶ received an email with a link to an online questionnaire, preceded by an announcement of the entrepreneur. Fifty-eight participants filled out the questionnaire (40%). Respondents were asked whether they could be approached for further research; twelve of those who answered positively were interviewed. However, as the entrepreneur felt that this sample did not include enough members who harvest little, he suggested two other respondents. One of these agreed, leading to a total of fourteen interviews, including the entrepreneur. Eight current and two former participants of Witte Vlieg were interviewed, again including the initiator of the garden. All interviews were recorded

⁶ All the members at the time of the survey, except for two members with unknown email addresses.

and transcribed.⁷ The transcriptions were analysed in an iterative process, reading back and forth through the material. Field visit reports and additional documents (leaflets, websites, and emails) were screened for information about motivations and critical understandings of the industrialized food system. Table 3.1 gives an overview of some characteristics of the cases and the methods used to study them.

Witte Vlieg: food growing as provisioning activity

Witte Vlieg is a group of eight people who garden a plot of 2,300m² together, situated on an allotment complex in the city of Assen. The garden started in 1995; only the initiator, Gary,⁸ has been part of the group since the beginning. He started the garden based on anarchist principles. In those days he was associated with a 'leftist anarchist squatting community' (personal communication).⁹ The garden was to be a production site for people on a minimum income only, like himself. Working according to 'cooperative principles', such as voluntary membership and democratic management, was the most important feature of the garden at the time – organic production methods fitted this ideology. The garden had, however, never a big appeal to people with low incomes. Therefore, soon after the start, any new member who wanted to participate could join. Nowadays people on a minimum income are hardly represented and the garden no longer targets a specific group.

For all current participants growing food is one of the weekly activities in their wider pattern of food-provisioning practices. Participants have the (informal) obligation to work in the garden either Tuesday or Saturday mornings. People stick to the schedule and only stay away occasionally, after notifying Gary, who is informally in charge. This means that acquiring their weekly supply of vegetables costs each of them half a day's time and labour – apart from the activity of shopping for additional products elsewhere. Hence, the people producing the vegetables are also the ones consuming them. With the exception of one participant, who joined the garden to meet others in an informal setting, all participants and their families eat three to five meals a week from one morning's work. Clearly, it is impossible to distinguish between producers and consumers in this case.

Gardening at Witte Vlieg is organic and almost all the work is done by hand. In theory, most participants are responsible for one of the six vegetable beds, although in practice this responsibility is little felt or acted upon. Each gardening morning the garden is evaluated, mainly by Gary. He decides what work is required and assigns tasks accordingly. Harvesting is done collectively at the end of the morning; harvested produce is laid out in heaps around an improvised coffee space. The vegetables are divided equally amongst those present, according to taste. There is no system to keep track of who takes what. People take what they like and need for a few meals. In times of abundance people harvest more; vegetables are

⁷ Except for one; this respondent did not want the interview to be recorded. Notes were therefore made instead.

⁸ All names have been changed.

⁹ All quotes from the case studies – emails, interviews, texts from websites – are our own translations.

frozen for winter or given away.

The garden shows minimal relation to market logic. In its starting phase there was a detailed registration system for hours worked and harvest taken, but this is no longer needed. Participants pay a small annual fee to cover expenses such as seeds and tools, which is kept as low as possible. A few times per year small plants and vegetables are sold at local markets. Sometimes vegetables are sold – a local household receives a weekly food box – but excess harvest is given to a food bank as well. In some years expenses exceed income, which is registered as a loan from Gary. Currently the garden is in debt because in the last season some larger investments had to be made while income was low due to limited opportunities to sell on markets. Therefore the gardeners decided to raise the annual contribution and participants are free to give a €50 loan to the garden so that Gary is not the only one responsible. Interestingly, it was the participants themselves who brought this up; they felt uncomfortable with the situation.

Participants' motivations

There are a few reasons why participants joined Witte Vlieg. First of all, the social component of this garden is vital (see table 3.2). For all participants it is important that the gardening is carried out collectively. It is about gardening together, meeting others and relating to people from various backgrounds. Working together is more fun, and easier – work is continued when one is away and to some it is a solution for their limited knowledge about gardening. Also, most respondents mentioned that because the group is a mix of characters, the group itself is interesting as well. Secondly, participants like the activity of gardening. Interviews show that the garden is foremost a hobby; people like gardening as a leisure-time activity.

Table 3.2. Why did you join Witte Vlieg? (n=9), more than one answer possible (source: interviews).

Why did you join Witte Vlieg?	# respondents
I like to work in a group	9
- More fun/social contacts	9
- Easier	4
I like the food	6
- Organic	5
- Healthy	1
I like gardening	4
I like eating food I grew myself	3
I like making an effort for my food	2
Gives me something useful to do	1

There are several things to be said about whether or not the motivations of the participants can be seen as reflexive. We defined reflexivity as making conscious decisions about food

behaviour. There are three signs of reflexivity in the explanations people gave in the interviews. First of all, although the garden is clearly a hobby, it does fit a lifestyle in which ideas and concerns about the environment and sustainability are important. People gave evidence of environmental awareness; almost all respondents mentioned aspects of environmentally conscious behaviour, such as recycling waste or cycling.

I have a car, of course, and I live in a house, and when I am out of petrol I go to the petrol station, but I would really like to have an electric car... I want to act decently in many aspects of my life. Keep the earth as it is... In my work, you know, paper with paper, plastic with plastic... they are little things, but... (WV4)

I try to do things for the environment, use the car as little as possible, everything by bike, separating my waste. And well, the energy here, we don't heat our house very much. Those are the things we do. (WV2)

The social activities that are organised occasionally reveal an orientation towards an environmentally conscious lifestyle too. For instance, members went away for the weekend to prune trees in the garden of a befriended activist leading an 'environmental information centre'. During another excursion organic farmers with close producer–consumer linkages were visited. The second point of reflexivity is that the organic produce coming from the garden is an important reason for people to join the initiative. The garden is situated in the corner of a traditional allotment complex where people have individual plots and where spraying and other conventional methods are allowed and indeed regarded as normal. (Organic production and consumption has been a small niche in the Netherlands until its recent rapid market increase; in 2010 organics accounted for only 1.7% of total sales. Ministerie van Economische Zaken, Landbouw en Innovatie 2011.) Hence, organic gardening principles signal beliefs that divert from mainstream gardening and agriculture. Many of the participants – though not all – buy organic products in the shops as well.

We have been going to the organic shop since I was twenty. So yes, that's our lifestyle I think, well, it has always been. (WV1)

We started to buy more organics. that is because Albert Heijn [major supermarket] has many green brands now and it has just gotten more reasonable priced... We eat only a little meat, because we want it organic. (WV7)

Third, there is reflexivity about where food comes from and the environmental consequences of this. Participants showed a particular reluctance to buy products that are flown in from afar, relating this to the concept of food miles and seasonality.

I have to say that I have stricter principles than my wife. I have the tendency to, well, when I see that the beans are from Ethiopia, then I think what nonsense, we won't buy them. (WV5)

Yes, I think that vegetables determine [the meal] more because they depend on the season. I really think that, I feel that one should eat with the seasons. So that is what determines my meal... Beans from Egypt and so on, I don't think that's such a good idea. (WV8)

Hence, the participants grow food for a combination of reasons: some more mundane and personal, such as hobby and leisure time, some stemming from an environmental awareness that is expressed in activities to reduce one's own impact on the world. The question is whether these personal actions towards a reduced impact are also part of political 'acts of resistance' against the industrial food system, as Cox et al. (2008) found in their study. Political discussions were not part of the working days and problems in the food system were not debated generally; even when visiting organic farms these issues did not come up. Moreover, although people spoke negatively and worriedly about the industrial food system when asked in interviews, they were reluctant to state that they are part of any countermovement:

Respondent: It is just a little against the current... I do not think like a movement, you know, but I think it is good to make the point. Interviewer: You do not see it as a movement? Respondent: No. No, I do not feel that. (WV5)

The participants of Witte Vlieg joined the garden because it fits their beliefs about what is a good thing to do. Motivations are part of reflexive lifestyles but also firmly rooted in searching social and leisure time. This is interesting particularly since the garden started from anarchist principles. According to Gary, and one of the participants who used to be a member of the anarchist community, those principles are still valid:

It is still something that fits my anarchist ideas. By the way, I do not consider Witte Vlieg a pure anarchist project, just something that, as a supporter of anarchism, it is just logical that you would join. (WV5)

However, when asked in private, the other gardeners involved do not subscribe to or recognize these principles, nor are these ideas debated at all during working days. It is interesting to see that despite its anarchist starting principles, both individual political motivations and collective political identities are hardly articulated in this garden.

Bioakker: food harvesting as provisioning activity

Bioakker is an organic 'harvest it yourself' garden of 6,000m² in Zutphen. The garden is run by John, an entrepreneur. John does not live on a farm in the traditional sense of the word; he is an urban resident farming three plots in Zutphen and nearby towns, of which Bioakker is one. John uses the other plots to produce organic vegetables that he sells on the local market twice a week. One of John's main goals is to make organic vegetables available and affordable to everyone. The garden's vegetables are therefore relatively cheap – approximately half the

price that John sells them for on the market. Bioakker is organic and vegan: John does not use any manure on his lands. He feels that plant seeds contain everything a plant needs and that using manure is inefficient as cows take the most valuable parts from the plants they eat. Moreover, manure contains antibiotics and bacteria that are not good for people's health, and he feels that keeping cattle goes against animal welfare and nature itself. Manure is therefore 'one of the most traditional fairy tales from the history of agriculture' (personal communication).

There is a certain market logic to Bioakker. People become a member of the garden by paying an initial amount of €100. They can then harvest anytime they want and choose from whatever is being grown. Members pay for their harvest by subtracting the value of what they have taken from their initial payment. Product prices are published on the website. Leftovers of the market are also sold at the garden, but then members determine their own price. Nevertheless, Bioakker is far from a 'normal' market initiative. First of all, there is no control over whether members pay for everything harvested; the system relies heavily on trust. Secondly, Bioakker is not a general market initiative for John either. Although it is part of how he makes his living, it is not merely a strategy to market his produce. John is led by strong idealistic motivations, wanting to give everyone, also those with limited resources, the opportunity to eat organically. He even gave some people a free membership; they can harvest produce without paying for it.

Table 3.3. Different volunteering behaviour at Bioakker (n=58) (source: questionnaire).

Amount of times people volunteer	Respondents in questionnaire (%)
Several times a month	3%
Once a month	5%
Occasionally	30%
Never	60%

Members of Bioakker are invited to help with the work in the garden, on a voluntary basis. Most members do not volunteer, or do so in very limited way (see table 3.3). This implies that the consumers of the food grown at Bioakker are not the same people as the producers of that food, as was the case at Witte Vlieg. John is the main producer, as he is responsible for all the work in the garden; he plans the vegetables to be grown, plants, weeds and waters. He organises social activities and is the contact person when someone else wants to organise an event. He sends emails to all members about what is ready to be harvested and is available for questions. Finally, the fact that members pay him for the vegetables they harvest enhances his producer status, even if the payments are made out of sight (on the internet). This does not mean that there is a producer–consumer distinction in the traditional sense of the word. Although members do not maintain the garden, they are engaged in food production; they harvest the vegetables themselves. Harvesting involves making an effort as it requires visiting the garden, looking for the vegetables, deciding what is good to harvest, digging the soil or picking the produce from plants, maybe getting dirty if it has been raining. Making people

harvest their own produce is a conscious strategy of John's; he aims not only to make organic food available, but also to encourage people to take responsibility.

Bioakker plays various roles and has different degrees of importance in people's food-provisioning practices. There are large differences between people regarding the number of times they harvest (see table 3.4) and thus the amount of vegetables they eat from the garden. Most members also get vegetables from John's market stall, in organic shops or from the supermarket. Hence, the degree to which Bioakker is part of people's food provisioning strategies differs between members.

Table 3.4. Different harvesting behaviour at Bioakker (n=58) (source: questionnaire).

Amount of times people harvest	Respondents in questionnaire (%)
Once a week or more	47%
Two to three times a month	23%
Once a month	11%
Less than once a month or never	18%

Important to mention here is that according to John, there are far more people that do not harvest regularly than our figures show. It is possible that this is due to people harvesting less not filling out our questionnaire.

Participants' motivations

We found that there are roughly two to three reasons why people decided to join Bioakker (see table 3.5). The first is that they enjoy the vegetables; people feel that organic food is better for the environment (38 respondents) and more healthy (14 respondents), and that the food is cheaper (15 respondents). The second reason for people to join is that they 'like the initiative' (36 respondents) and they 'want to support a sustainable project' (22 respondents). Respondents feel sympathy towards the project and want to contribute to it. They like John, appreciate his courage and ideals, and want to support him in making the project work:

He told me about the initiative. He also organised an information evening, and I thought that was so nice. Especially the fact that he was going to do that with so much faith, and the whole system is so much based on trust. You can just go there, take what you want, weigh it at home and pay over the internet. I think that's special, that someone has the courage to do this with so much faith. So that was the most important reason, that I like him and I thought, that's really nice. (BA4)

Table 3.5. Why did you join Bioakker? (n=58), more than one answer possible (answers suggested) (source: questionnaires).

Why did you join Bioakker?	# respondents
Organic food is better for the environment	38
I like the initiative	36
It is nice to harvest one's own food	25
I want to support a sustainable project	22
The food is cheaper than in the supermarket	15
The products are more healthy	14
Other reasons	29

'Other reasons' include, amongst others; good way to show children about food growing; nice to help in the garden; gain knowledge on gardening; garden offers different products than supermarket.

A third reason for people to become a member is that they like harvesting; the hobby aspect is important here too. The next question is what these motivations reveal about the extent to which members' motivations can be seen as reflexive, as conscious decisions about food behaviour. We recognize similar signs of reflexivity as in Witte Vlieg. First, although the garden is also a hobby, being a member fits a particular lifestyle. A certain commitment to sustainability can be recognized; people use a bicycle, recycle waste and try to save energy.

I have always been somewhat environmentally conscious. When I was 21, I was ringing doorbells with leaflets on environmentally conscious housekeeping. I was a member of Milieudefensie [Friends of the Earth Netherlands]. (BA5)

We do not use the car that much. We don't do that. We do many things by bicycle, to the annoyance of our children because sometimes they say 'mum, do we have to take the bike again?' Yes, you have to... Furthermore, I use organic cleaning agents as much as possible. All the time, actually. (BA9)

Secondly, an important reason for people to become a member is because the food is organic. All respondents buy organic food products, either at the market (at John's and other stalls) or in the supermarket or health shop. As we stated before, buying organic signals beliefs that divert from mainstream gardening and agriculture. Some respondents find it also important that John doesn't use animal manure.

I think the way he practices agriculture is very special and I can learn a lot from it. Because he doesn't use any manure and he says give to the earth and take from the earth. You know, what is left we dig it under and that just results in good things. I think that is very inspiring. (BA2)

A third testimony of reflexivity is people's concern with where the food they buy comes from. They are conscious about food miles, prefer to eat local and seasonal food and are well

informed about the trade-offs in certain aspects of sustainability.

You eat what is there and you do not think I want Egyptian beans today and so I go to the shop and look for Egyptian beans. And they are from Egypt and they take longer and they have a different... No. You eat what the season gives you, which in fact, that's how nature meant it to be. Those are the things that are good at that moment. (BA2)

I think it is just insane when something is grown here, that I would buy it from north Groningen [part of the Netherlands]. Then I think that makes no sense. Or you hear that cattle go from here to Spain and are being slaughtered there... so I think it is important that people are a bit more conscious about what they are doing with the earth, with the environment, I think it is important to think about that together and to be a bit conscious about that. What kind of mess are you making of the earth? Can my grandchild also enjoy the earth in thirty years' time? (BA4)

Hence, being involved in food growing by harvesting food is done for mundane and personal reasons on the one hand, and environmental awareness on the other. The respondents have negative feelings about the conventional food system and try to make a contribution to 'a better world'.

It is something that I can do, in my own little circle. There is a lot in the world that I think could be better, but I do not have control over that. This I do control, in some way. (BA1)

I think that by your own behaviour, by what you do, by your own acts, that's where it starts. So you can also be an example, or make a statement. In the past I may have pointed the finger and this and that and you have to this and that. Now I feel okay, I am just doing positive things myself, with my own behaviour. I can speak about it enthusiastically and then people have to make their own choices. (BA6)

Participants are thus making individual decisions to support 'a good cause'. For part of the participants, however, supporting a good cause is similar to donating money to NGOs; taking part in Bioakker is for some members not connected to going to the garden to harvest. These members feel that they are doing something good by supporting the garden financially, but do not translate this into their food provisioning practices. Many of them know John personally and want to support him in his ideals. Although that sounds promising, this is actually problematic as it undermines the idea of the garden. John has to make sure that there is always enough produce to be harvested; when people do not harvest regularly, the vegetables waste in the field. John can partly overcome this problem by selling at the market, but members that do not use their payment also leave him in debt with them. Members are not always aware of this problem. Consider the answer from the interviewee who did not harvest regularly when asked whether she felt part of a countermovement:

I rather feel that I support John, because he is an idealist and gets things done. (BA13)

An informal conversation with another member who did not participate in the harvest showed the same reasoning. He felt that he had contributed his share – financially. However, as Bioakker is not a charity but a garden that requires people to be actively engaged in the production of their food, it is not enough. The garden only functions if people take their contribution further and make the effort to harvest; the system only works if people treat it as the non-conventional system it is:

You can be nice and sweet to your clients, to people that are positive towards you, but in the end this can cost you your business. John should make that clearer to the members. For me it's not a problem if he would say 'you have to spend your €100 within a year, if you can't, you lose it'... He should encourage people to harvest more, you know, I have to go harvesting or I lose my money. This way he cannot keep it up.
(BA6)

Interestingly, this failure to commit to the harvesting system seems to be connected to the hobby aspect we mentioned earlier. We found that 38% of all questionnaire respondents like harvesting, while only 17% of the people that 'know John very well' like harvesting. Many people in this last group do not harvest regularly. Hence, there is a group of people that became a member because they know John, but as they do not like harvesting they find it hard to live up to their membership.

Like John, some members are involved in the local exchange trading system or the local transition towns division. These can be seen as expressions of social movements supporting an alternative lifestyle. Although not necessarily involving food, the initiatives claim to build or be involved in an alternative economy or society, referring to particular alternative ideologies such as local resilience. However, while there is a small group of participants that know each other through these networks, Bioakker itself hardly mobilizes people beyond vegetables. Harvesting does usually not result in meeting others and no meetings are organised to discuss or run the garden.

Discussion and conclusions

Beyond the producer–consumer dichotomy

Participants of both cases are required to be (more or less) actively involved in the production of their food. They are therefore neither only producers nor only consumers; they are both at the same time. Even in the case of Bioakker, where an entrepreneur runs the garden, he can be seen as facilitator rather than as sole producer of the garden. It is therefore not useful to draw a clear cut between producers and consumers. Rather, there seems to be a 'sliding scale of producership'. We saw that participants of Witte Vlieg are more involved in food production than members of Bioakker. Even in the latter case, however, people have variant producing

roles: some members harvest regularly and help out as volunteers, others harvest occasionally and are not involved in other ways. In that sense Bioakker is similar to a CSA farm, where the person picking up their weekly food basket is involved differently than someone who spends two mornings a week packing boxes. Hence, the debate in the AFN literature on producer or consumer bias needs to move beyond these categories, as 'producer' and 'consumer' are no straightforward terms in any case. Furthermore, these categories link to concepts such as 'market' and 'economic exchange', whereas much of the AFN literature is about aspects beyond the instrumental economic logic of buying and selling. Implicitly, the categories of 'producer' and 'consumer' lock us into this economic logic, indicating that judgments of 'good' and 'better' involve everything beyond pure economic instrumentality (beyond making a living, as argued by Watts et al. 2005). Witte Vlieg showed that the economic logic is not necessarily present in food growing. There is an economic system around Bioakker, but this does not relate to why some people harvest and others do not.

With current developments of citizens organizing themselves in solidarity purchasing groups all over Europe, the term food provisioning can be used to analyse the meaning of the various activities that these networks undertake and that are not making sense from the producer–consumer dichotomy point of view. For the future, it would be useful to study different ways of food provisioning, with which we have made a start in this paper. Using and further elaborating on the concept of food provisioning is a useful starting point to tackle Tregear's critique on the producer–consumer dichotomy in the AFN literature.

Participants' motivations

A second point that Tregear (2011) recognized as being problematic in the AFN literature is the limited knowledge about personal values and motivations of the people involved in AFNs. This includes knowledge about the extent to which these motivations are embedded in strategies of doing things differently, in reference both to ideas on political consumerism (Seyfang 2006; Micheletti 2003) and to food movements (Johnston et al. 2009; Hassanein 2003). Our research shows that reflexive motivations – mainly environmental – are indeed present. Respondents are involved in the gardens as part of a wider set of choices to contribute to a 'better world'. The gardens fit their belief systems of what is right to do, and in that sense being involved in it is a moral choice. However, this involvement can be seen as a private activity. Considering this, being part of the garden is no political statement, it is a personal decision to make a small change. Such decisions can be seen as 'everyday acts of resistance', as described in the anarchist literature. Conscious differentiation towards what is seen as 'mainstream' is integrated in everyday life, thereby changing society (Gordon 2007; Pickerill and Chatterton 2006). Even though this may seem to fit easily with theories on political consumerism, where personal choices become political, we have to be careful not to ascribe attributes to participants that they themselves do not formulate. We found that participants are not willing or at least very reluctant to frame their practices as political. Similarly, people were reluctant to frame their behaviour in terms of 'a countermovement'. There is a difference between the two gardens in this respect, however. Respondents of Witte Vlieg did not recognize themselves as part of

a countermovement at all; at Bioakker the situation is more diverse as part of the participants were involved in alternative economy movements. However, while environmental reflexivity was articulated more strongly in political terms at Bioakker, members did not always manage to act upon their concerns.

This brings us to our next point: besides our conclusion that reflexive motivations are present – but that only a small number of participants frames these *politically* – the cases also reveal that being motivated to contribute to ‘a better world’ is not enough to be actively involved in the gardens. Hence, people’s motivations are not only and consistently about doing things differently. We found that in both cases simply enjoying gardening – or harvesting – is an important condition for successful involvement. For the participants of Witte Vlieg the pleasure of gardening is the most important reason to be involved. Also, members of Bioakker who did not enjoy harvesting had more difficulty visiting the garden regularly than members who did enjoy it. We conclude, therefore, that there are various motivations present at the same time, which are difficult to disentangle, and that political articulation is not necessarily connected to the success of an initiative. People may be politically motivated but not act upon it. People may join an initiative for hobby reasons with little reflexive thoughts. Practical motivations play a role too. Is there enough time to cycle to the garden? Will it rain today? (On the competing demands of day-to-day living, see Evans 2011.) This is something that needs further study. What is clear is that motivations are complex, and that they need careful unpacking in order to fully understand them.

As public attention for ‘urban agriculture’ is rising, it is useful to deconstruct the initiatives of growing food in the city, in order to understand what these new phenomena are about. In contrast to most AFN cases so far, the initiatives of growing food in cities often have a different involvement with the market economy compared to farmers’ markets or other short supply chains. Since our entire society seems to be entrenched in the market economy nowadays, the absence of the market logic in these initiatives leads to perceptions of such spaces being (politically motivated) alternatives. But again, caution is needed. Witte Vlieg is being maintained by all participants equally without the use of a payment system, and the food producing commitment of the participants is strong – much stronger than that of the participants of Bioakker. However, in the way it is framed by some participants, Bioakker is more clearly a form of resistance. Respondents framed their involvement more strongly as acts of everyday resistance than participants of Witte Vlieg, and John is more overt in his statements than Gary. This means that while producers and consumers are being criticized about not necessarily representing a deeper morality, the opposite is also true: those that do represent this deeper morality do not always get to the action (of harvesting in this case), even when their reasons to be involved (in Bioakker) are articulated politically.

Less market involvement resonates with the findings of Watts et al. (2005) on food networks. We argue, however, that the ‘network’ is much more pragmatic than suggested by their analysis. Watts et al.’s distinction in weak and strong AFNs suggests that strong networks are in some way more reflexive, because they resist incorporation into the conventional food system. This is not in line with our findings; reflexivity is only one of the reasons for people to be involved,

and may be stronger for some participants than for others. We explained that people have more mundane reasons to join these gardens as well, which is in fact an important driver behind these networks. Hence, even when reflexivity is present, political articulation of these reflexive motivations is not straightforward nor necessarily connected to the strength of the network. Therefore, we should be careful with the analytical category of 'political consumer'.

Incorporating urban food-growing initiatives within the AFN literature broadens our vision on AFNs and what they are. The presented initiatives bridge the gap between producer and consumer and give more insights in participants' motivations. That way we can make a start with tackling Tregear's deadlock arguments, taking the literature further.

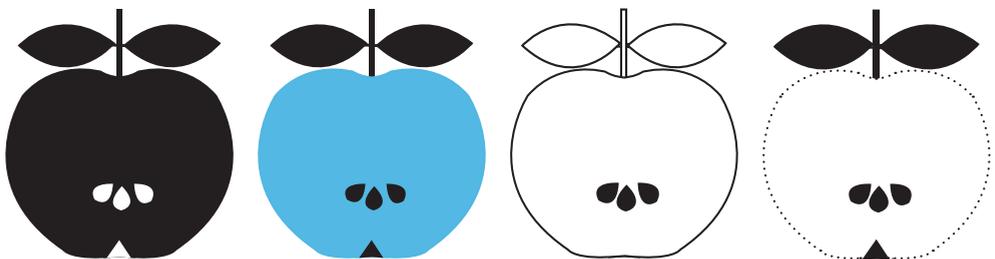






Chapter 4

Growing Urban Food as an Emerging Social Practice





Abstract

In this chapter we compare two cases of urban food growing - a community garden in Amsterdam and a professional rooftop farm in New York City – in order to investigate to what extent different urban food growing initiatives can be seen as variations of one single social practice and to what extent the practice can be seen as emerging. By comparing the internal dynamics of these two cases and their relations with other social practices we contribute to a better understanding of what delimits a social practice and how practices interact.

The practice of urban food growing can be seen as a shared bundle of activities that integrates meaning, competences and material (Shove et al. 2012). In our analysis we particularly look at these three elements and found both similarities and differences between the two cases. While both cases are exemplars of contemporary urban food growing, the community garden is less formalised, restricted in activities and of a smaller scale compared to the professional rooftop farm. The main differences, however, relate to the meanings practitioners attach to the practice: in the Amsterdam case this is essentially 'growing food in allotment gardens', while in the New York case it is a combination of producing local food, contributing to green cities and promoting social entrepreneurship.

We conclude that growing urban food may be considered an emerging practice, not because it is completely new, nor because it is becoming an increasingly popular (already existing) practice, but because it combines different new and established practices under one single heading. Growing urban food is therefore an example of a compound practice rather than a single integrative practice (Warde 2013). Hence, we argue that the diversity in a broad categorisation as 'the urban food movement' should be better recognised when trying to understand the dynamics of specific urban food growing practices. Our analysis also shows the usefulness of studying meanings, materials and competences to distinguish and delimit practices; the framework enabled us to distil the different dynamics present in two examples of one activity.

Dobernig, K., E.J. Veen and P. Oosterveer. Growing Urban Food as an Emerging Social Practice. *All authors contributed equally to this chapter.*

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Introduction

Social practices come and go; they emerge, merge, evolve and disappear amidst a range of other social practices. How these dynamics take place, how we can identify emerging social practices and how social practices develop over time are interesting questions, the answers to which can contribute towards a better understanding of what makes up a practice and how different social practices interact. Grasping how social practices emerge, persist and disappear also aids in assessing their role and potential in inducing societal change (Shove et al. 2012; Warde 2005). In this chapter we aim to address these issues by taking a closer look at the practice of urban food growing and the following questions: what is growing urban food as a social practice, and how does it relate to other relevant social practices which are already existing and unfolding in an urban context?

In recent years, urban food growing has attracted much interest from science, the public and policy in Western societies (Sonnino and Spayde 2014; Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld 2012; Lovell 2010; Kneafsey et al. 2008; Steel 2008). While often framed as an emerging food movement (see for example Specht et al. 2014; Mah and Thang 2013; Renting et al. 2012), growing food in cities is not a new practice per se. The United States, for example, saw victory gardens during World Wars I and II (Kortright and Wakefield 2011; Lawson 2005) and a community gardening movement that took hold in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Lawson 2005; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). In Europe, allotment gardens have existed for centuries; even as early as in the fourteenth century, Dutch workers grew food to supplement their diets in rented gardens or on land donated by philanthropists (Berendsen 2001). Today, what we observe is a vast diversity of urban food growing projects, ranging from small-scale window farming to allotment and community gardens to large-scale rooftop farms and hydroponic greenhouses. Some scholars (e.g. Cohen et al. 2012) have categorised urban food growing initiatives into *community gardens* (which are managed by a group of local individuals or volunteers), *institutional gardens and farms* (which are affiliated with schools, hospitals or churches), *community farms* (which are managed by a non-profit organisation) and *commercial farms* (which are managed as for-profit businesses).

In public and largely also academic discourse, these various types of urban food growing tend to be subsumed under the notion of 'urban agriculture' (e.g. McClintock 2014). However, given the diversity of urban food growing initiatives, is it warranted to talk about 'one social practice'? More specifically, can and should we regard urban food growing as a recognisable entity (Shove et al. 2012)? Although it may be analytically helpful to employ an umbrella concept such as urban agriculture, one risks losing sight of the multiple logics, dynamics and forms which are present within the practice of urban food growing. For example, while in former times, the practice was linked to meanings of self-sufficiency and community empowerment (Lawson 2005), urban food growing is increasingly framed as an innovative activity for young and hip urbanites who want to foster new skills and capabilities, gain new experiences, and help change the relationship that urban people have with food and the environment. Thus, categorising all urban food growing initiatives under the heading of urban agriculture induces

us to treat them as if they were characterised by the same doings and sayings, which might not necessarily be the case.

In the course of this chapter, we use social practice theory to gain a closer and more nuanced view of the heterogeneity of food growing activities unfolding in the urban centres of OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries today. We focus on developments in OECD countries because for many years, growing food in cities was considered a disappearing phenomenon there, while today it seems to have become part of a modern urban lifestyle. In the United States, for example, the recent popularity of urban food growing is reflected in the vast number of websites and blogs, the growing number of dedicated print and online publications, the emergence of educational training programmes as well as in the coverage of the topic in US news media.

By employing a social practice perspective we also go beyond a too restricted perspective on food growing per se, aiming to develop a more grounded understanding of the social dynamics that are taking place. This enables us to recognise differences between multiple urban food growing initiatives and assess whether urban food growing can be defined as an emerging social practice, as a resurging, existing practice, or as a combination of both. For this purpose, we apply Shove's concept of competence, material and meaning as integrated elements of social practices (Shove et al. 2012) to two cases of urban food growing: an urban community garden in Amsterdam and an entrepreneurial urban farm in New York City. These cases have been purposely selected to reflect the diversity of urban food growing practices. By choosing two cases that appear from the outset to be rather different, we hope to gain a more in-depth understanding of how the meanings, competences and skills associated with urban food growing may differ. This way we will further develop the understanding of what constitutes a practice, as well as which elements make up a practice, and how different practices interact. Moreover, these two cases are likely to be differently related to other practices, and will have developed differently over time, which enables us to better grasp such practice-dynamics. In the next section we discuss our arguments for conceptualising urban food growing as a social practice. Subsequently, we present the two case studies and then compare them in order to gain a better understanding of their dynamics as social practices. Finally, we discuss the contribution these cases provide to a better understanding of how social practices change over time and present our main conclusions.

Urban food growing as a social practice

Some consider producing food within city boundaries as a way of increasing food security in an era where natural resources are becoming scarce and future food supply is under pressure (Mansfield and Mendes 2013; Morgan 2009). Others regard it as a more sustainable alternative to contemporary food provisioning; growing food in the city is presented as a possible response to concerns about mass food that is anonymously produced in contemporary industrialised and globalised societies (McClintock 2010). These accounts also claim that

urban food growing brings food production closer to food consumption and thereby bridges the separation between producers and consumers, something which is considered essential to assure safe and sustainable food provisioning (Mah and Thang 2013; Mansfield and Mendes 2013; McClintock 2010; Sonnino 2010; Morgan 2009; Sonnino 2009; Jarosz 2008). Several authors have indicated that the benefits of urban food growing go beyond the production of food only; Grewal and Grewal (2012), for example, summarise the potential benefits of urban food growing as follows: access to healthy and nutritious food, reduced human impact on the environment, strengthened local economies and an increased sense of community. Others have found that participating in community gardens helps build social capital, mutual trust and reciprocity (Teig et al. 2009), and may provide wage-earning opportunities for community members (Ferris et al. 2001).

In this chapter we conceptualise urban food growing as a social practice; a particular nexus of doings and sayings (Schatzki 2002). These doings and sayings are linked by the understanding of the practice – knowing how to do it, knowing how to identify and attribute it, knowing how to prompt and respond to it (Schatzki 1996). We draw on the work by Shove et al. (2012) and conceptualise the social practice of urban food growing as a shared bundle of activities that integrates materials (such as technologies, physical entities, and the body itself), competences (skills and know-how), and meanings (encompassing symbolic meanings, ideas and aspirations) and evolves as these ingredients change. Practices come into existence, persist and disappear when links between these three elements are established, sustained or broken (Shove et al. 2012). Thus, the framework of social practices also provides a way to conceptualise stability and change across time and space.

By using a practice perspective, we go beyond the separate studies of management, organisation and planning of urban food growing on the one hand, and people's motivations on the other hand. Instead, we recognise that urban food growing is a social and cultural activity involving issues of lifestyle, community and fun, in combination with the material production of food and income. We are particularly interested in whether different urban food growing initiatives can be seen as variations of one single social practice, or whether they should rather be treated as different social practices. Addressing this question increases our understanding of urban food growing and its internal dynamics. Moreover, we contribute to a conceptual discussion on social practice theory by suggesting what defines an activity as a single social practice, and when we should see an activity as several distinct ones.

In our discussion, we recognise that practices can be seen as 'emerging' in different ways and for various reasons. For instance, when innovative technologies are being introduced, the new materiality might require novel competences and generate new meaning. Hydroponics, for example, involves growing food in mineral nutrient solutions instead of soil and thus demands specific knowledge and skills from the people working with this technology. A practice may also be seen as emergent when an existing practice becomes more popular through changing relationships with other practices. Hence, allotment gardens may attract new groups of people for whom this activity has a different meaning, for instance because they see it as a way to live more sustainably, linking it to other practices to increase their

self-sufficiency. Finally, a practice may emerge through combinations of existing practices creating new meanings, sometimes followed by new competences and materials as well. Urban residents may, for instance, combine the practices of food growing and socialising, creating a meeting place out of a garden, simultaneously improving competences regarding cultivation.

We apply the building blocks of materials, competences and meanings (Shove and Spurling 2013; Shove et al. 2012) to the cases of community gardening in Amsterdam and entrepreneurial rooftop farming in New York City. We first analyse their specific combinations of materials, competences and meanings; then we focus on the dynamics of these two cases of urban food growing practices in their interactions with other social practices. In our analysis, inspired by Shove et al. (2012), we pay particular attention to the constitutive role of the material elements of the practice.



Community gardening in Amsterdam: the case of Trompenburg

The major cities in the Netherlands are relatively small (even Amsterdam has less than one million inhabitants) and planning regulations strictly limit urban sprawl, so the countryside is never far away. Dutch cities do not have 'ghettos', and food deserts are virtually non-existent (Van der Schans 2010). Medium-sized supermarkets are present in most parts of the city and all sell fresh fruit and vegetables. Although this suggests that food is not as far from its consumers as it is in the US for example, urban food growing has taken off in the Netherlands as well. Urban food growing initiatives build on a long tradition in the Netherlands. Allotment gardens (Groening 2005) emerged in combination with urbanisation – particularly since the end of the 19th century/early 20th century (Barthel et al. 2010). Allotments are typically located at the edge of the city, cover an area of 300 to 400 m² with a tool-shed or small cabin, and are rented by individual citizens. They are used for food production as well as recreation, although over time the second purpose has taken precedence over the first. In recent years, other urban food growing initiatives have been taking hold and community gardens have been popping up everywhere, often stimulated or facilitated by city governments. For example, Cupidohof in Almere was started by a group of local residents, aiming to create a neighbourhood meeting place. Children maintain small plots in this community garden, which they cultivate under the supervision of one of the residents. Tuin aan de Maas in Rotterdam, which was also started by a group of local residents, is a means to use a plot of land due for development – which was deferred as a result of the recent economic crisis. The garden brings together neighbours who communally practice their hobby, meet others and beautify the area. To further assess the novelty of recent urban food growing initiatives in the Netherlands we present the case of Trompenburg community garden in Amsterdam.

Trompenburg community garden was established in 2009 at the initiative of one of the local

residents. It occupies a narrow strip of land next to a playground, unsuited for most other uses because of its small width (two and a half meters). The strip is divided into fourteen individual plots and one communal herb garden. Each plot is approximately two and a half meters long (hence, a total of five square meters). Gardeners visit their garden once or twice a week on average.

We designed an online questionnaire to determine the gardeners' use of the garden and the produce, as well as their social connections at the garden, and received twelve filled-out questionnaires. Five respondents were also interviewed face-to-face. The interviews focused on similar themes as the questionnaire but made it possible to speak about the topics in more detail.



Figure 4.1. Trompenburg community garden.

The initiator of Trompenburg community garden started the garden in an effort to combine food growing with building social relations in the neighbourhood, inspired by his involvement in networks related to growing food in the city. Hence, the initiator was attracted by the social meaning of urban food growing. Our case study material shows, however, that the other practitioners engaged in Trompenburg community garden are primarily interested in the actual activity of growing food. This illustrates that although Trompenburg may be seen as a manifestation of the emerging practice of urban food growing, the competences (skills and knowledge of growing food), the meaning (the enjoyment of eating one's own vegetables) and the material (the produce resulting from gardening) involved in this practice are not all that new; urban food growing in Trompenburg largely resembles that of the more traditional allotments. Unlike at Brooklyn Grange (see the next section), the relationship with food does not seem to have changed, nor has the garden turned into a cool place to be. Urban food growing in Trompenburg seems to be a conventional social practice that is being transformed rather than a newly emerging practice. To further elaborate this observation we discuss the practice of gardening in Trompenburg, in particular the competences employed to maintain it; the most important material associated with it; and the societal meaning of this garden.

Enjoying trial and error

Although urban food growing is often a broader social activity (for example involving culture, leisure and social networking) people involved in Trompenburg are primarily engaged in the practice of growing food. Figure 4.2 shows that respondents' main reason for being involved in the garden relates to their enjoyment of growing food. The main meaning of Trompenburg therefore lies in the fact that it gives gardeners the opportunity to practice their hobby.

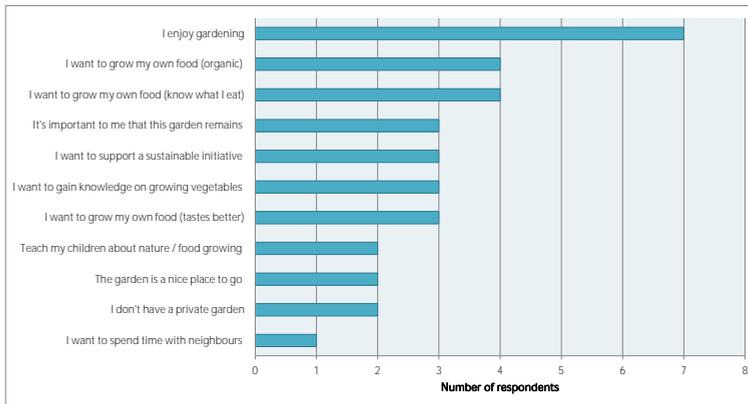


Figure 4.2. What were your main reasons for joining Trompenburg? (n=12). Up to three answers possible. Statements which were not ticked were removed (source: questionnaire).

Although being engaged in the practice of urban food growing requires a specific set of competences, not all incoming participants are proficient gardeners. This gap is individually solved by trial and error; if a certain cultivation technique does not work, practitioners try something different. This experimenting increases people's skills over time; they get to know which vegetables grow best on this particular plot and which techniques work well. Hence, people become skilled practitioners by being engaged in the practice of gardening over a longer period of time. Learning and becoming a skilled practitioner is in itself a source of pleasure for many gardeners, as illustrated by this quote:

The best part.... seeing how the plants are doing, does it work, and should I do it differently, and if it doesn't work this year, then I try another spot and it works, trying out these kinds of things. (TB2)

Practitioners also learn from each other; they share experiences and give each other advice. Most interviewees clearly stated that they look at others' plots:

I look at the others and I think, my, they still have endives, I didn't even consider that this vegetable grows so late in the season. (TB3)

Hence, gardeners need skills and competences to engage in the practice of urban food growing, which they gain over time, a process which most of them enjoy. The required skills

are not limited to the practice of gardening, however; practitioners also need to be able to process the produce which they harvest. People thus also develop skills in the related practice of cooking.

Eating the harvest

The practice of urban food growing comprises different activities, such as sowing and weeding, and also harvesting. The harvested produce is therefore a result of the food growing practice; being engaged in urban food growing means being involved in the acquisition of vegetables (see Veen et al. 2014). Trompenburg's plots are only small however, so the urban-grown vegetables play a limited role in people's diets – most respondents cook two to three times a month with home-grown food and the produce constitutes less than half of the vegetables they eat (see figures 4.3 and 4.4). Thus, while engagement in the practice of urban food growing leads to eating the harvest, the actual role of this garden in people's diets is modest.

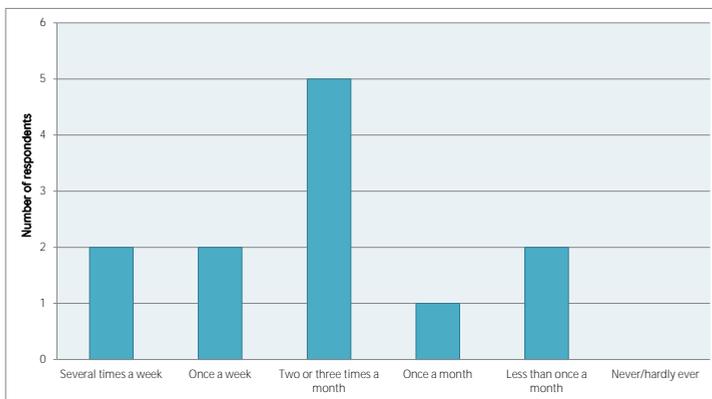


Figure 4.3. How often do you eat vegetables from the garden? (n=12). One answer possible (source: questionnaire).

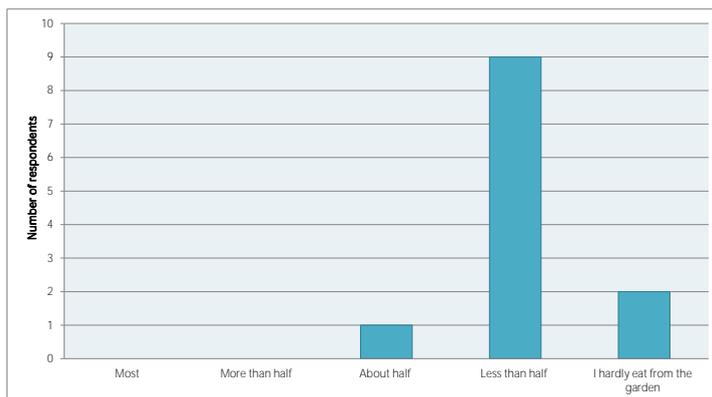


Figure 4.4. What proportion of the vegetables you and your family eat comes from the garden? (n=12). One answer possible (source: questionnaire).

Although the quantity of vegetables people harvest is relatively small, the importance attached to eating one’s own grown vegetables is high. Our questionnaire shows that gardeners attribute specific qualities to their vegetables, which are important reasons for growing them; respondents state that they enjoy the vegetables because they are local and organic, and that they appreciate the idea of eating freshly harvested produce because such vegetables taste better than those bought from the shop. Clearly, the meaning of the harvest encompasses more than what one would expect if judging by the volume of the produce alone; eating one’s own harvest symbolises eating pure and real food, in contrast to the perceived uniformity of food purchased in the supermarket. Hence, the meaning of the practice of urban food growing lies at least partly in the meaning of the resulting material (vegetables), to which a higher value is attached than to similar produce that is not home-grown. Gaining access to these vegetables requires specific competences – i.e. cultivation – which in itself infuses that material with meaning. This shows the strong integration of the three elements (Shove et al. 2012).

Knowing your neighbours

Figure 4.2 showed that most Trompenburg gardeners did not have social motivations for becoming involved in the garden. However, by engaging in the practice of urban food growing, practitioners meet others who do the same. They have conversations whilst gardening (‘Sarah sometimes comes along when I’m working, or Jill, I see her and then we chat and then we continue working and we greet each other’, TB3). Such small chats increase the pleasure of engaging in the practice, even though they are only considered ‘nice extras’, as expressed by this interviewee:

Well no, they are not important, but it is fun. I enjoy it when somebody else is there too. (TB3)

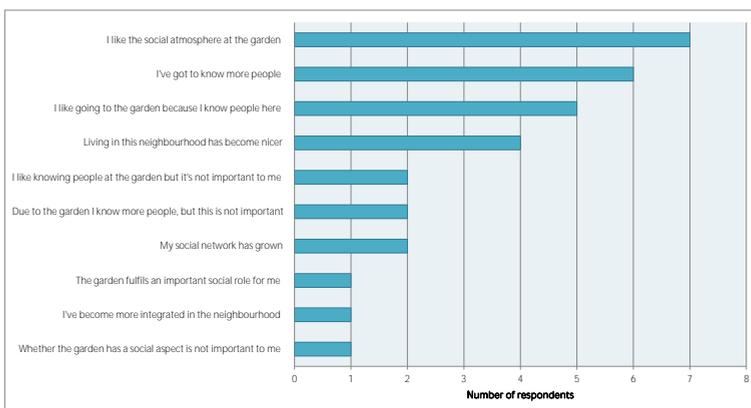


Figure 4.5. Which of the following statements apply to you? (n=12). Up to three answers possible (source: questionnaire).

Hence, although the contact with others at the garden could be considered relatively shallow, the garden does indeed have a social meaning. This is also reflected in the answers to our questionnaire, in which we asked respondents to tick up to three of a range of statements. Figure 4.5 shows that respondents like the social atmosphere at the garden, and that only a small number of them agree with the statement that knowing people at the garden is *not* important. Figure 4.5 also supports our finding that the garden does not fulfil an *important* social role.

So, while the meaning of urban food growing in Trompenburg lies in the practice itself – cultivation, learning, eating the harvest – exercising the practice with others makes it a nicer experience. As summarised by one of our respondents:

It's hard to weigh what's important. See, if there wouldn't be a garden, then I wouldn't have these contacts. (...) So the garden is first of all... gardening is the first motivation. I chose to do it, I thought it was a nice idea because it's in the neighbourhood. (TB4)

This finding shows that the meaning that Trompenburg gardeners attach to the practice of urban food growing is similar to the meaning allotment gardening has for its practitioners; allotment gardeners are also engaged in the practice primarily because they enjoy both cultivation and the resulting harvest. Social benefits such as chatting to others while gardening are perceived as added benefits, rather than as a reason for becoming involved in the practice in the first place (Veen et al. under review).

To conclude the Amsterdam case, urban food growing in Trompenburg is primarily a neighbourhood activity and has not become an initiative that changes the world of food. It attracts people who see the garden in their local neighbourhood as an opportunity to engage in growing vegetables, but does not appeal to practitioners aiming for wider social goals. We therefore conclude that growing urban food at Trompenburg is not so much a new practice but a merger of two already existing practices, namely (allotment) gardening and neighbourhood building.

Entrepreneurial rooftop farming in New York City: the case of Brooklyn Grange

New York City presents a node of urban food growing practices unfolding in a cultural and political context that stands in contrast to most European countries, including the Netherlands. Although the city is characterised by high population density and immense property values, its economic and cultural robustness as well as vibrant food culture provide an attractive context for urban food growing initiatives. New York City's industrial and manufacturing areas are especially suitable for rooftop agriculture due to the existing infrastructure, access to capital, and public interest and support (Ackerman 2011). At the policy-level, urban agriculture

is integrated into the city government's plans to transform New York City's food infrastructure and promote more sustainable food consumption patterns among its citizens (Brannen 2010; Stringer 2010).

Brooklyn Grange considers itself the leading rooftop farming and intensive green roofing business in the United States. It currently operates the world's largest rooftop soil farm on two roofs located in Long Island City, Queens (0.4 ha) and in the Brooklyn Navy Yard (0.6 ha). In addition to vegetables and herbs, the farm keeps egg-laying hens and has launched a commercial apiary where bees are bred and cultivated. Moreover, Brooklyn Grange provides green roof consulting and installation services to clients, and rents out the farm for dinner parties, wedding ceremonies and yoga classes. The farm also has an educational non-profit arm which hosts thousands of New York City's school kids each season for educational tours and workshops. Furthermore, the farm collaborates with the Refugee and Immigrant Fund in offering job training to immigrants and refugees.

Brooklyn Grange was established in the spring of 2010 by three motivated food entrepreneurs who transformed the vacant rooftop of an industrial building in Queens into a functioning commercial venture. For the opening of their location in the Brooklyn Navy Yard in the summer of 2012, the farm received a grant issued by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to support green infrastructure projects. The business is financed through private equity, loans, and money generated through grassroots fundraising events and crowd funding platforms; it reports steady growth every season after having broken even in its first year of operation. The farm currently employs eleven staff members and also runs a trainee programme in which hundreds of people have already participated. Their mission is to 'create a fiscally sustainable model for urban agriculture and to produce healthy, delicious vegetables for the local community while doing the ecosystem a few favours as well.'¹ Since its establishment, Brooklyn Grange has received considerable media attention, both across the United States and abroad.²

To gain deeper insights into the social practices unfolding at an entrepreneurial urban farm such as Brooklyn Grange, data have been gathered through participant observations at the farm from April until November 2013, semi-structured interviews with employed staff members and volunteers (n=13), an online survey with volunteers who took part in the urban farm's trainee programme during the 2013 season (n=45) as well as a review of documents and social media content. In the analysis, we outline the material elements that constitute the practice of entrepreneurial rooftop farming (that is bodies, soil, vegetables and roof) and their integrated connections to competences and symbolic meanings.

¹ <http://brooklyngrangefarm.com>

² See for example Cardwell (2010), Baum (2011) and *The Guardian* (2014).

Knowing where your food comes from

The routine farming practices of planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting which are unfolding at the rooftop farm hardly entail any advanced technology or machinery. Instead, the bodies of the practice carriers (in particular their hands) represent the key material which is required for the practice to be enacted on a daily basis. Notions of 'I enjoy doing physical work' (BG1) indicate the appeal this way of 'doing work' has for the people at the farm. Urban food growing is positioned as an antithesis to traditional office work practices, which are strongly associated with New York City, and especially the borough of Manhattan. It is perceived as a practice of active co-production that offers people the possibility to reconnect to the outcomes of their own work:

To me that's the perfect environment to be in. You know, an environment where you're happy and you feel fulfilled but you're also getting something done and you're also learning. Which is completely different from Corporate America. (BG2)

This statement also illustrates that the bodies of the practice carriers are linked to another key material element of the practice - the soil as the medium which essentially all natural food comes from. The soil has high symbolic quality as it connects to meanings of 'knowing where food comes from' which is seen as being essential in order to induce change in the current food system:

So, I think it's silly or naive to think that urban farming is the saviour of these issues of the food system. But I think it is part of the solution, especially with education; to have people in the city be exposed to food that comes from the ground and not from the supermarket. (BG3)

Being demarcated by the materials of soil and hands, the practice of rooftop urban farming is a practice of reconnecting to food, nature and the community (e.g. Dobernig and Mincyte under review). It is also a process of 'collective remembering', as opposed to the notion of 'collective forgetting' that Shove et al. (2012) coined in their analysis of the practice of 'driving', whereby certain competences (such as reading a map) are described as vanishing irreversibly as their linkages with other elements of the practice break. However, competences may also lie dormant, persisting in the memory for years without being activated (Shove et al. 2012). Indeed, we find that growing (urban) food is talked about as a skill that has been forgotten because of the convenience-oriented industrial food system but that is now being resurrected:

I mean, our parents' generation, our grand-parents' generation, everybody knew how to grow food. Maybe they chose not to but they all knew how. And then in our generation, none of us knew and now all of a sudden we are getting back interested in it again. (BG4)

Indeed, in some circles, it is becoming important to know how to produce food for one's own consumption; cooking, canning, baking, bee-keeping and composting are also trendy things

to do nowadays. Also in other contexts, seemingly defunct – or even pre-modern – skills and competences such as knitting, soap making or other artisanal activities are experiencing a sort of renaissance. Hence, urban food growing has found its place in a wider constellation of practices and skills that have been resurrected in certain sub-groups of the population and linked to new meanings, while the meaning of growing food as a daily duty and an essential means of survival, known from the past, seems to have changed forever.

Lifting yourself up from the ground

In contrast to Trompenburg Community Garden, the farmers at Brooklyn Grange do not consume the vegetables they harvest. Instead, the 50,000 plus or more lbs (around 22,7 tons) of organically-cultivated produce³ that are grown annually at the farm are sold to local restaurants and retailers, to the public via several weekly farm stands, and through a 40-member Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programme which runs from mid-May to October. However, rather than being solely production goods, the vegetables and flowers which are planted, grown and harvested on the farm present key constituents of the practice and are loaded with symbolic meanings:

But just to understand some of how food is grown. It's kind of a miracle to see plants growing. That definitely is a beautiful thing to me too. (BG5)

Indeed, in the daily routines of the urban food growers, and even more so in the routines of the trainees, seemingly mundane products such as carrots, kale and tomatoes become artistic artefacts. In the discursive space provided by social networks and the blogosphere, one also finds a vast number of images celebrating vegetables of all sorts.



Figure 4.6. Brooklyn Grange on Instagram (<https://instagram.com/p/aTXsfUns-t/?modal=true>).

³ While the farm is dedicated to using organic principles in the growing process and does not use any synthetic or chemical fertilisers, insecticides or herbicides, its food production is not certified organic by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

For those enacting the practice, growing food up on a roof is also a symbol of escaping from city life, as the following statement illustrates:

When you get up there, it's hard work. Definitely hard work. But there's moments like when we were picking the carrots the other day, it's very meditative, it's very peaceful; you're going above the city and you don't have to be down, you know, in all the mock and everything like that. (BG2)

I am an urban farmer

In the case of entrepreneurial rooftop farming, the meaning of the key material element (i.e. the roof) is newly negotiated by linking it to the competence of growing food. The roof is often talked about as the forgotten part of a building or a neglected space within an urban environment. As Shove et al. (2012) point out, rather than the physical relocation of the material elements of the practice, the issue is access (in our case a roof) as well as the reframing of the material's usability. Hence, the meanings of a vacant lot or roof are altered when they are connected to other material elements such as flowers, vegetables, dinner parties, as well as to competences such as growing food or running a business.

Indeed, as Brooklyn Grange demonstrates, urban rooftop farming is about much more than simply growing food for sale. Its economic success has been accomplished through diversification in its products and services: ranging from sunset yoga classes, over farm dinners, to weddings and corporate events. Thus, urban food growing has been effectively linked to meanings of mental and physical health, pleasure, and self-determination by embedding the practice in contexts related to these meanings. The success of the practice can thus partly be attributed to the opening up of the farm space (which is essentially a production space) for collective consumption practices and experiences, as well as linking a production practice to meanings normally related to consumption practices.

The material elements of the practice – comprising the roof, the cultivated produce, soil, and working hands – also serve as means to distinguish the practice from other food growing practices which exist in the city such as hydroponics or community gardening:

I say I am an urban farmer and I work at a rooftop farm in Brooklyn and it's a really cool thing to be able to say not just you are an urban farmer but you work at a rooftop farm. (...) So, it's better than saying 'I am a farmer', it's better than saying even 'I am an urban farmer' that would peak people's interest but the second you throw in the fact that you are farming on a roof, EVERYBODY wants to hear more. (BG4)

Thus, it is the difference in the material elements of the practice that its carriers employ to position themselves in the small yet diversified community of food growing practices in New York City. The material elements become part of the practice carriers' identity projects (see also Dobernig and Stagl under review) and are employed to demarcate specific variations

within the practice of urban food growing.

The case of Brooklyn Grange illustrates how a novel integration of materials (most prominently the roof and grown produce), competences (business knowledge and farming skills) and meanings (of health and pleasure) has attracted carriers of the practice from all walks of life. These new linkages are spread and reinforced through social media users, national and international documentary film-makers, authors of newspaper articles, and most obviously through the vast number of trainees who are enacting and thereby renewing the practice on a daily basis by working on the farm:

I just feel the people who are doing urban farming, they are awesome people and they are well-educated and they're really cool and they are interesting and fun but there is just like this grounded quality to everybody. I feel like everybody is really real and easy to talk to, and to me it's the easiest group of people I found that I click with, socially. (BG6)

As Shove et al. (2012) point out, in order to remain effective, the connections between the different practice-elements have to be constantly renewed. In the case of Brooklyn Grange, the trainees mirror the competences concentrated in the farm's founders and employed staff members who are all college-educated and bring in knowledge, skills and experience not only in farming but also in business, marketing, law and engineering. What is clear is that urban rooftop farming constitutes a collective experience, encompassing materials, competences and meanings that go far beyond the traditional conceptualisation of urban food growing as food production. Looking at Brooklyn Grange through the lens of practice theory reveals (1) how a seemingly old and mundane practice (i.e. urban food growing) has become re-positioned through a novel combination of materials, competences and meanings; and (2) how subtle differences in materials (e.g. roof versus vacant lot) serve as a means for distinguishing different peculiarities in the greater realm of urban food growing practices. This case differs in several respects from the social practice of urban food growing in Trompenburg community garden presented in the preceding section. Comparing both cases is therefore the subject of the following section.

Comparing Amsterdam and New York; illustrations of the same emerging social practice?

Community gardening in Amsterdam and entrepreneurial rooftop farming in New York represent two examples of urban food growing. Although they do not capture the diversity of initiatives in this domain, the cases allow us to reflect on the question as to whether they are illustrations of one single or of multiple social practices. We discuss this question through a comparison of their internal dynamics as well as of their relations with other social practices.



Whether or not these two examples form one social practice is not only interesting from an urban agriculture point of view – as argued, we should be careful not to subsume activities under one heading if this is not warranted – it is also useful for the theory of practice itself, as one of the issues in the literature is how to delimit a practice (Shove and Spurling 2013). Comparing two examples of the internal dynamics of the activity urban food growing may reveal different meanings of this activity. Similarly, studying two examples of the relationship between urban food growing and other practices may show different ways in which this activity fits into people's lives. We expect that insights into the degree to which the two case studies differ regarding these two points may help us understand when one activity should be seen as part of several practices. This issue is important because the moment we talk about social practices, we are delimiting it.

Comparing the internal dynamics of urban food growing: materials, competences and meanings

In terms of materials, in both Trompenburg and Brooklyn Grange, food is grown on soil, both initiatives are located in urban centres and cultivation is mainly done through manual labour. The absence of more technically-elaborate farming methods makes growing food in both places comparable with traditional farming practices and distinguishes it from modern intensive, high-tech agriculture. In fact, the carriers of the practice consider the absence of advanced technologies an essential characteristic of their way of growing food because it strengthens their connection with the cultivated food (and the soil). Hence, the bodily activity of food growing is an essential element in both cases; human bodies, soil, and crops are central elements of the material identity of the practice. However, the cases differ in terms of scale, the technical dimensions, the environment in which the growing spaces are embedded and the degree to which they are caught in complex webs of technologies. At Brooklyn Grange, the roof is an additional key material element as it indicates how (and where) the food is grown; it also presents an important aspect of the identities of both the farm and the practice carriers. There is, however, also an important similarity between the locations of Trompenburg and Brooklyn Grange; both are located in unexpected food growing places. Not only is a roof a relatively new growing space, but Trompenburg's location on a narrow strip of land is surprising as well.

With respect to competences, the two cases are less similar. While Trompenburg community garden requires practitioners to be competent in growing food only, their counterparts at Brooklyn Grange exhibit additional competences in business management, marketing, social media and event management. These skills make urban food growing at Brooklyn Grange a more diversified practice than at Trompenburg. Secondly, acquiring the necessary competences is more formally organised in New York City through an extensive and structured trainee programme. This well-organised introductory programme makes it easier for new recruits to become experienced carriers of the practice than does the individual trial-and-error approach which prevails in Trompenburg. A survey conducted among trainees of Brooklyn Grange in the 2013 season also reveals that their main reasons for becoming involved in the

trainee programme were to learn about growing food (95,5%) and the business aspects of urban farming (73,3%), as well as spending time outside (71,1%).

Like competences and materials, meanings are inherently dynamic because they emerge through initiatives by many different people in many different places and build on the meanings of already existing practices, such as urban farming in developing world cities and traditional allotment gardening. Trompenburg community garden illustrates how urban food growing can be essentially a continuation of already existing practices; it seems to be a carry-over from traditional allotment gardening. The main transformations from allotment practices taking place in Trompenburg are the movement from the outskirts of town to an inner city neighbourhood as well as an increased attention for interactions with local residents. Trompenburg simultaneously illustrates the resilience of traditional practices as several attempts to transform it did not go very far: gardeners tried cooperating with the local school, worked with a programme to support homeless people, and considered organising communal dinners for the elderly. While these initiatives were intended to develop Trompenburg from a food gardening initiative into a more locally embedded social activity, none of them were very successful because gardeners were not organised enough to make it last, the scale was too small and gardeners seemed not to have enough time for them:

Alex wanted to do something with the school. And we also wanted to cook for the senior club from the playground society, but our harvest is not so large so... And the people have less time than one hopes when you start such a garden. So it's not very active. But there were initiatives and thoughts. (TB4)

Hence, the main carriers of the practice in Trompenburg held on to the traditional meaning of growing food in allotments. This meaning of the practice differs from the meanings attached to entrepreneurial rooftop farming at Brooklyn Grange, which vividly demonstrates that the practice of urban food growing can shake off old connotations of growing food and successfully initiate a process of reclassification. This has worked through positioning the narrative of urban rooftop farming with reference to already established discourses and practices in the city, mainly revolving around local food, green cities, and sustainability. The practice of urban food growing more generally is also increasingly integrated into other policy agenda issues such as obesity, storm water runoff, and youth unemployment. Practitioners at Brooklyn Grange understand growing urban food as a new way not only of re-establishing connections between food production and consumption, but also of fostering social food entrepreneurship and transforming life in the city. The rooftops, the involvement of many young people, the story-line, and the combination of consumption, leisure and production against the background of a vegetable farm are all innovative and distinguish it from the social practice of community gardening in Trompenburg.

Practices attract the new recruits they require for their continued existence in different ways. At Brooklyn Grange, a well-organised trainee programme was set up to spread the initiative, recruit new members and train them in the necessary skills. Overall, more practitioners are involved here than in Trompenburg's community garden and they invest more hours per week.

The result is a more established and formalised social practice. In Trompenburg, recruitment is more informal because only when a plot is vacant can new members be attracted, and this is facilitated by the visibility of the garden in the local neighbourhood. Gardeners thus respond to a latent desire to grow their own food ('...and it caught my eye and I thought, that's nice, I'll do that', TB2). Although these new recruits often do not have the necessary skills, there is no formal training arrangement and it is left to the individuals to find their own way in developing their capacities.

Connections between growing urban food and other social practices

Growing urban food does not take place in isolation; it has several links with other social practices, food-related or not. In Trompenburg, none of the gardeners is engaged in other food growing activities and several of them have no previous skills in this respect either. As people grow their own vegetables, the practice potentially competes with the practice of shopping for food. However, the harvested volume is small and replaces only a minor proportion of the need for buying vegetables from shops. This means that the practice of urban food growing in Trompenburg community garden slightly changed the practice of food acquisition, but did not replace one activity with another. Rather than completely transforming existing practices, people squeezed an additional practice into their daily lives.

Trompenburg garden also plays a social role for local residents who are not participating in it. The interviews show that the garden elicits conversations with neighbours, that children stop by to water the plants and that passers-by ask questions or give their opinions.

The only thing that I noticed in the last years, is that when you were working in your garden, you got contacts because people started talking to you. Ooooh, that is nice, or, you're making it look good, or, what have you planted? (TB3)

While this social networking is only loose, the garden is highly visible; urban food growing in Trompenburg entails creating social bonds across the neighbourhood. Hence, in the competition for people's time and attention, the practice of urban food growing managed to find its place in terms of growing vegetables and social networking, but not in terms of some of the other elements that characterise urban food growing at Brooklyn Grange.

As Brooklyn Grange was able to attract trendy, local restaurants and famous celebrity chefs as customers, urban rooftop farming has become integrated into the 'foodies' culture' of New York City. The distinction between food production and consumption as two separate practices thus becomes increasingly blurred, and new carriers of the practice can mentally dock on to already established narratives and carry over their symbolic meanings to the practice of growing food on a rooftop:

Well, first of all, I think the food, the sort of local food movement is really sexy right now. Like, people are like really into it, you know. And I think this idea of there being

this urban farm in Lower Manhattan is like really exciting. (...) That's why I have been sucked in for five years, it's totally sexy. The day-to-day may not be but the idea of it, the concept, is so. (BG6)

By propagating this meaning in the performance of the practice, Brooklyn Grange particularly attracts young and well-educated people, types of carriers that are less prevalent in Trompenburg.

To recapitulate, the Trompenburg and Brooklyn Grange cases differ in many respects. Although they are both exemplars of contemporary urban food growing, Trompenburg is less formalised, restricted in activities and of a smaller scale compared to the professional rooftop farming operation of Brooklyn Grange. Answering the question of whether we are dealing with two different social practices or a singular one requires a more conceptual discussion, which is the subject of the following sections.



Discussion

The two case studies offer interesting input for a broader debate on the emergence of social practices and on what grounds different sets of materials, competences and meanings which are spread across time and space can be categorised as a single social practice. In the recent literature on social practices we find some important insights into this issue; these are presented in this section.

Firstly, urban food growing overlaps with other social practices and consists of multiple sub-practices, which does not make the practice easily identifiable on the basis of a strict definition. As Shove et al. (2012) argue, a social practice is defined by the people who are involved in it as well as by outsiders who recognise it as such. People recognise practices because 'they are characterised by their public and practical intelligibility' (Schmidt and Volbers 2011: 429). Urban food growing has been emerging recently because the actors involved present it as a distinctive practice whereby 'agents configure a set of bodily-mental activities by integrating elements of meaning, material and competence' (Røpke 2009: 2494). Different actors notice other initiatives and refer to them as belonging to the same 'urban food movement'. So, although a lot of diversity exists between different concrete practices, they may still be seen as similar by their carriers, because a single practice as an organised nexus may be performed in multiple ways (Warde 2013). On the other hand, when distinct practices display many commonalities while the carriers do not recognise them as the same practice, for instance because they attach different meaning to their practices as in our cases, these practices remain different ones. In this respect, urban food growing confirms Warde's (2013) observation that recognising a practice is not straightforward and that drawing the boundaries of a practice is highly problematic.

Secondly, social practices are subject to change through the creation of new (links between)

meanings, materials and competences, or through the breaking-up of existing links between them (Shove et al. 2012; Shove and Walker 2007). They thus have a history of emergence, change and eventually of dissolution (Crivits and Paredis 2013; Schatzki 2013; Giddens 1979). However, as Schmidt and Volbers (2011: 424) argue, practices should not be studied only via their elements and in isolation, 'but also their contexts and linkages' should be included in the investigation. Hence, an analysis of their transformation should also entail their linkages with other practices. We have shown that while the material dimension shows several differences, there are also similarities in this respect, most importantly the fact that soil, crops and human bodies are central elements of the identities of both cases. Hence, what the practitioners do is similar, but they do it in a different temporal-spatial setting. Differences regarding competences are more profound – the practice carriers at Brooklyn Grange need additional competences compared with those at Trompenburg – but the largest differences were found in the dimension of meaning that the carriers attach to the practice. In the case of Trompenburg this meaning is essentially 'growing food in allotment gardens', while at Brooklyn Grange it is a combination of producing local food, contributing to green cities and promoting social entrepreneurship. As an emerging and re-positioning social practice, urban food growing still seems to be searching for its meaning, particularly with respect to already existing practices (in the case of Trompenburg) and regarding its links with other, especially consumption-related, practices (in the case of Brooklyn Grange). This explains that while urban food growing itself may be nothing new, the practice may still be considered to be emerging; i.e. the meaning of the practice changes, the links between meaning, competences and skills are being transformed, as well as the relations with other practices.

Thirdly, as their carriers, people are essential in practices' existence and development. Recruitment of new members for emerging social practices is complicated because actors need to combine this engagement with their involvement in other practices and take the constraints of time and space into consideration (Shove et al. 2012; Røpke 2009). Analysing this process involves understanding the portfolio new carriers need for their entrance, the strategies that are applied when recruiting them, and, once recruited, the competences that have to be passed on to these new carriers (see also Schmidt and Volbers 2011). The two cases illustrate that recruitment for urban food growing is not uniform but rather highly diverse, ranging from formal recruitment and training - as in private companies more generally - to informal recruitment and individual trial-and-error to acquire the necessary competences, although several of these required competences are similar. Studying the recruitment process and the processes through which new carriers become competent performers of the practice is a promising entry point when trying to identify a particular social practice.

Finally, a social practice like urban food growing builds on already existing food production and consumption practices such as commercial farming, home gardens, allotment gardens, buying food through box schemes or on fresh markets, on engagement in other alternative food networks, as well as on other community-building and recreational practices. Schatzki (2013) suggests different modalities for the relationships with such other practices. Our cases show that the practice of urban food growing has rather close connections (a merger or coalescence of rules and understandings) with several other practices such as food acquisition

and cooking, but also with other sustainable practices (Dobernig and Stagl under review) and with consumption practices such as attending a dinner party or joining a yoga class. This is necessary because the domain of food in which the food growing practice emerges is packed with many already existing practices in the spatial context of a city so that emerging practices have to accommodate each other in a restricted area. Growing urban food thus faces tough competition for people as carriers, for attention among consumers and in the public sphere, and for time and space in an environment which is crowded with other food-related social practices.

Conclusion

Studying urban food growing from a social practice point of view contributes to a better understanding of the actual dynamics which are going on. We used this perspective to compare two different cases, specifically looking at materials, competences and meanings, and their relationships with other practices. Both cases are examples of urban food growing, and could therefore be considered occurrences of one social practice. However, the cases also illustrate that although 'urban food growing' may be considered a common element, substantial differences exist in terms of the meanings, competences, materials and carriers involved. As Brooklyn Grange shows, cultivating food may not be the only reason attracting people to engage in urban food growing; they may consider other social, economic or recreational elements to be equally relevant. Trompenburg, on the other hand, illustrates that a social practice may seem to be emerging while in fact it builds on already existing practices. Growing urban food may thus be considered an emerging practice, not because it is completely new, nor because it is becoming an increasingly popular (already existing) practice, but because it combines different new and established practices under one single heading. Growing urban food is therefore an example of a compound practice rather than a single integrative practice (Warde 2013).

While it might be analytically convenient to talk about urban food growing as if it was a standardised practice, it is important to recognise that multiple ways of 'doing' urban food growing co-exist, both in time and space. Hence, broad categorisations such as 'the urban food movement' may combine diverse social practices under one single heading, some of which are new while others have existed for much longer. Despite their similarities, practices of urban food growing are therefore different in many respects, within the practices themselves and in the ways in which they relate to other social practices such as buying and cooking food. This diversity should be better recognised to prevent superficial generalisations and complications when trying to understand the dynamics of specific urban food growing practices. Our analysis shows the usefulness of studying meanings, materials and competences to distinguish and delimit practices; the framework helps to distil the different dynamics present in multiple examples of one activity. As such, we also respond to Shove et al.'s (2012) discussion on the relation between standardisation and persistent diversity which emphasises that while practices are localised, situated instances of the integration of

the practice elements, the elements themselves can and do circulate across time and space creating compounded practices whereby their singularity may become contested.

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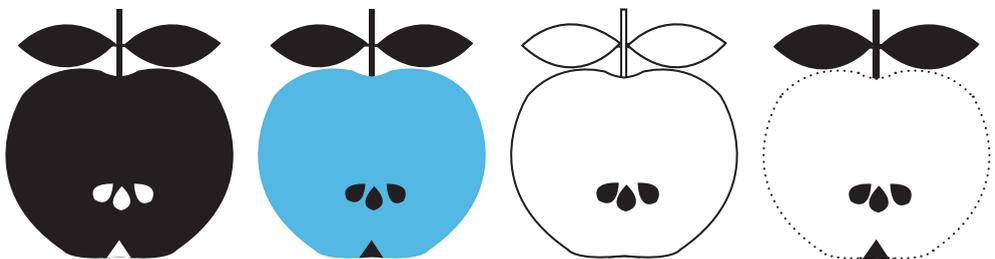
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Chapter 5

Shopping Versus Growing: Food Acquisition Habits of Dutch Urban Gardeners





Abstract

In this paper, we explore how urban food growing gets interwoven with other areas of life and show how this differs between people actively engaged in gardening and people not or only limitedly involved. We compare four urban food-growing initiatives: two allotments and two Alternative Food Networks (AFNs); the AFNs do not require active participation. Using the theory of practice, we show that allotment gardeners are mainly involved in the practice of gardening. Having responsibility over a garden stimulates them to perform the gardening practice, turning it into a routine that has its place in everyday life. As a result, the harvest is easily integrated in the daily meal. Members of the AFNs studied engage in the practice of shopping. These AFNs therefore remain in competition with more convenient food acquisition venues such as supermarkets and members have difficulty eating from them regularly. We conclude that whether members are involved in shopping or growing impacts the degree to which they manage to eat urban-grown food. This also implies that motivations to change the current food system 'only go so far'; such motivations are embedded in the context of everyday life, in which routines may forego conscious choices.

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Introduction

Over the last decade, new types of producer-consumer cooperation in food networks have emerged, sometimes directly involving citizen-consumers in food production and often interpreted as a reaction towards our current food system (Renting et al. 2012). These initiatives can be situated within the literature on Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) (Veen et al. 2012). In this paper, we focus specifically on *urban food growing initiatives*, sometimes collected under the heading of urban agriculture, which also emerge in Dutch cities.

While such initiatives emerging in Dutch cities are a relatively new trend, the first *allotments* came about in the Middle Ages. In the fourteenth century, workers grew food to supplement their diets, either in rented gardens or on space given out by philanthropists (Berendsen 2011). Allotments increased workers' access to fresh food and were seen as a healthy form of recreation (Bellows 2004). In the eighteenth century, the 'Society for the General Benefit' stimulated the development of allotments further, as did both World Wars. Today, allotments are mostly populated by hobbyists, some of whom mainly grow vegetables while others prefer ornamental plants. After decades of decline, allotments are gaining popularity; waiting lists have reappeared. Moreover, typical allotment gardeners—pensioned men—are now joined by women, families, and migrants (Berendsen 2011).

Although allotments are urban initiatives in which citizen-consumers engage in food production, literature on AFNs hardly discusses them (e.g. Renting et al. 2012). A potential reason for this is that research often focuses on newly emerged initiatives, while allotments have been part of the urban landscape much longer. Hence, allotments are largely ignored in discussions on the shifting role of consumers 'from passive end-users and mere buyers of food products towards more proactive 'citizen-consumers'' (Renting et al. 2012: 290).

While studying various urban food growing initiatives we noticed that the allotment gardeners in our research were more engaged in eating locally grown food than respondents involved in initiatives regarded as AFNs. As participants in AFNs are seen to 'reshape their relations with different stages of the food system' (Renting et al. 2012: 290) it is an interesting observation that these participants have more difficulty integrating the urban harvest in their daily meals. It is this paradox that we try to unravel in this paper. Why is it that members of such AFNs have trouble making urban grown food part of their diets although they are highly motivated to do so, when allotment gardeners - hobby-growers not necessarily interested in reshaping their relations with the food system - succeed in doing this much better? And what does this tell us about the alternative food movement in general?

In this paper we compare four urban food growing places in the Netherlands and investigate to what extent urban food becomes part of participants' daily meals. We see a difference between allotment gardeners and citizen-consumers involved in AFNs. We show that this last group is more interested in consuming urban grown food than allotment gardeners. Hence, motivation cannot clarify our paradox. Therefore we turn to the wider enabling or constraining

context of everyday life. Using the theory of practice, we study people's food provisioning practices. Rather than looking at what motivates people, we look at what they actually do. We show that the organisation of the initiatives is crucial for the degree to which urban grown food becomes part of people's diets. People with responsibility over a garden visit it regularly, getting vegetables as a result. People that buy vegetables have a non-committal relation to the project, making it harder to integrate it in their lives. Hence, initiatives in which people acquire food because they grow it, more easily find a place in the rhythm of daily life than those in which people acquire food by shopping.

This paper is organised as follows. In the next section we shortly discuss food growing in the Netherlands. We introduce practice theory in the third section. The fourth section discusses our methods and presents our cases. We then give some first results, showing how much respondents eat from and work in the gardens and discuss their motivations. The sixth section is dedicated to the theory of practice applied to our cases, showing what people do at the gardens. We analyse this in the seventh section, where we show the difference between gardening and shopping and discuss the effects of routines, responsibility and convenience. Finally, we present our conclusions.



Growing food in Dutch cities

Major cities in the Netherlands are relatively small. Even the capital Amsterdam has less than one million inhabitants. The countryside is therefore never far away, reinforced further by planning regulations that keep urban sprawl within limits. While some neighbourhoods are relatively poor, Dutch cities do not have 'ghettos'. Food deserts are virtually non-existent (Van der Schans 2010); supermarkets are never far away and sell fresh fruit and vegetables.

Dutch urban food growing initiatives vary in characteristics of size, set-up and organisation. There are community gardens, school gardens, and urban farms. Motivations to start initiatives are generally fairly similar. They are about health (physical activities), have social purposes (meeting neighbours) and offer an alternative to the industrial food system. Every initiative has its specific motivations, often in a unique mix of goals. Some examples; an intergenerational garden brings elderly people and school children together¹, a rooftop garden offers a meeting place and fresh lunch products for office workers² and an urban nursery with on-site restaurant creates jobs for long-term unemployed³. This difference in goals is reflected in the variety of organisational models. Some people grow their own food in community gardens, either on individual or on communal plots. Such gardens are started by residents, housing corporations, local councils, or welfare organisations, in disadvantaged neighbourhoods or in localities with better socio-economic positions. Other initiatives do not require people to work the land but sell the harvest. These may be started by entrepreneurs or local organisations, sometimes

¹ www.saffierderesidentie.nl/huize-royal-royal-rustique/99-de-generatietuin

² <http://zuidpark.nl/over-zuidpark/>

³ <http://www.restaurantdekas.nl/>

working with volunteers. The extent to which people involved in these initiatives intend to regain control over the ways in which their food is produced (Renting et al. 2012) varies; in some cases the food itself is of more importance than in others. All initiatives, however, are about people engaging more directly with food production. Moreover, in the media and in policy discourse the rising number of people growing food inside the city is framed as an emergent food movement (e.g. Samuelsson 2011 and Muhlke 2010).

Allotment refers to 'a collective of garden plots that lie adjacent to each other, effectively subdividing a larger piece of land' (Bellows 2004: 250). Gardeners hire plots individually. They are members of the allotment association, usually managed by a board staffed by gardeners. Communal areas are generally maintained by the allotment collective. Most, though not all, allotments organise social activities for its members and maintain a garden magazine (Berendsen 2001). Gardeners grow several types of vegetables and fruits⁴ and may have a glasshouse or shed on-site. Dutch allotments faced declining demands for several decades, but have recently started appealing to new target groups such as families with children. Overall gardeners come from various social classes (Berendsen 2011). In 2006 there were 1.984 allotments in the Netherlands, on 3.906 hectares (0.12% of the Dutch surface, average size 2 hectares).⁵ An allotment contains between 50 and 500 individual plots, with an average of about 120.⁶ Land surface dedicated to allotments is larger in more urbanized areas as urban residents more often lack private gardens. Between 1996 and 2006 the total surface of land for allotments decreased with 200 hectares, often because of housing developments.⁷ Allotments are mostly located on the city fringe.

As stated, the literature on AFNs generally ignores allotments, even though they are about people growing food in an urban context – comparable to many AFNs. This is probably so as they have been around for so long, and can therefore not be seen as a direct reaction to 'dominant globalization and concentration trends in food markets' (Renting et al. 2012: 289). Moreover, unlike several other urban food initiatives, they have not been started by 'young urbanites on a mission'. Even though the elderly are no longer their only members, allotments are simply not as trendy and largely attract a different crowd.

Practice theory

In order to study the interaction between daily life and the organisation of urban food initiatives, we use practice theory. Practice theory revolves around the reality of everyday life and how people shape and give meaning to that reality. People are constantly involved in practices (Røpke 2009). A practice is defined as concrete human activity, 'a routinized type of

⁴ Some Dutch allotments are mainly used as recreational spaces. This type is disregarded in this paper.

⁵ Dutch Bureau of Statistics: www.cbs.nl

⁶ The National Organisation for Hobby-gardeners states that 215 allotments are associated members, representing 26.500 plots: www.avvn.nl/userfiles/files/AVVN%20Folder%20Tuin%20Gemeenten%20LR.pdf

⁷ Dutch Bureau of Statistics: www.cbs.nl

behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge' (Reckwitz 2002: 249). Examples are driving, playing tennis and growing food.

Practices are carried by individuals (Reckwitz 2002); people perform practices. By performing a practice people reproduce it and create routinized forms of behaviour (Reckwitz 2002). Such routines are important in juggling different responsibilities, especially as time is limited in everyday life. Practices 'compete' for the attention of practitioners (Røpke 2009) because in order to be reproduced they need a place within that limited time (Gregson et al. 2002, in: Jackson et al. 2006).

Hence, social practices are routines; routines of moving the body, understanding, wanting and using things, all connected in the practice. The routine nature of action leads to practical mastery (Bourdieu 1977). People develop a practical sense for what is to be done in a given situation (Bourdieu 1998). Routinized activities are thus often based on a practical consciousness, which does not require conscious reflection (Røpke 2009). Hence, performance in a familiar practice is mostly not fully conscious or reflective (Warde 2005). The circumstances in which people perform practices, however, are never the same. People adapt, improvise and experiment (Warde 2005) and change their behaviour when needed or when circumstances change (Jackson et al. 2006).

In this paper we want to understand to what extent and how people use an urban grown harvest in their everyday lives and meals. To this end we study people's *food provisioning practices*, which we define as a range of activities, 'including the acquisition, preparation, production, consumption and disposal of food, where technical skills (e.g. growing, shopping, meal planning, food preparation, cooking) and resources are tacitly coordinated by a primary food provider within the social context and demands of household members, as well as the broader environment in which they live' (McIntyre and Rondeau 2011: 118).

Methodology

Case studies

We employed a case study analysis to study people's food provisioning practices. This allowed us to study practices in detail, understanding how people integrate urban food into their diets. We presumed a difference between allotments – in which people garden – and initiatives that can be regarded as AFNs and that do not require active gardening participation. We therefore studied two cases from both categories; we refer to these as either 'allotment' or 'AFN'.⁸

⁸ In the remainder of this paper we added 'allotment' or 'AFN' as a suffix to the names of the respective cases, to increase readability.

As argued, urban food initiatives vary enormously. To do justice to this broad spectrum we searched for cases as varied as possible: as allotments require active participation, we used AFN initiatives that demand limited or no gardening by members. We composed an initial list of cases (found on the internet, in newspapers and by word of mouth) and specified characteristics like ownership, degree of participation required and organisational structure. We selected cases with divergent characteristics (see table 5.1); they differ regarding how the harvest is divided, who performs most gardening work, who takes decisions, role of volunteers, number of people involved and starting year. Three cases are situated in medium-sized towns of under 100.000 inhabitants; one is located in a larger city. All lie within the city boundaries but outside of major living areas. In the subsequent sections we more fully discuss the cases and why we selected them.

Table 5.1. Characteristics of case studies.

	Allotments		AFNs	
	Windhoek	Witte Vlieg	Bioakker	Doarpstún
City (inhabitants)	Almere (± 192.000)	Assen (± 65.000)	Zutphen (± 47.000)	Leeuwarden (± 97.000)
People involved	± 120 members	± 8 members	± 144 members	± 180 members
Decision making	Allotment board	Group, led by initiator	Entrepreneur	Garden board
Maintenance	Gardeners maintain private plots	Gardeners work communally at set times	Entrepreneur and volunteers	Volunteers
Harvest	Individual, from private plot	Shared, from communal plot	Harvest your meal, pay for vegetables taken	Buying harvest at shop
Starting year	1980	1995	2009	2001

Windhoek allotment exists of 200 plots, rented out to 123 members. There is a waiting list for new members. Members are obliged to spend three mornings a year on common maintenance work like tidying the pathways. The allotment association is run by a board, assisted by several volunteers; these organise social activities, staff the bar, make sure technical equipment are functioning and edit the allotment magazine. Organic farming is not obligatory, but farming without chemicals is appreciated.

Windhoek allotment is situated at the edge of Almere, a city of almost 200.000 inhabitants. Most members live in the neighbourhood adjacent to the garden (see figure 5.1). They are not further away than three kilometres; they bike or take the car.

Looking at size and organisational structure Windhoek is a typical Dutch allotment, with a relatively lively social component. Its typicality was the main reason for including it.



Figure 5.1. Location of Windhoek allotment (red) and its members (blue) (source: questionnaire).

Witte Vlieg allotment is a gardening group, consisting of eight people that together maintain one allotment plot. Gardeners are divided into two groups. Each group gardens one specific morning a week during set times (9:00 to 12:00). After each working morning they divide the harvest and take it home. Gardening is organic. Members pay a small fee to cover costs.

The plot is situated at an allotment but is larger than a regular allotment plot, as it consists of several aggregated plots. The allotment is situated at the edge of the provincial town of Assen, approximately 65.000 inhabitants. One member lives in a nearby village and cycles thirty minutes to the garden, all others live in Assen (see figure 5.2). They visit the garden by car or bike (up to twenty minutes).

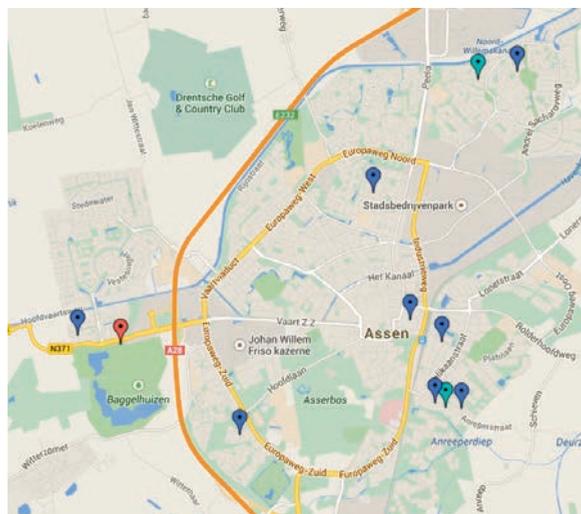


Figure 5.2. Location of Witte Vlieg allotment (red), its current members (blue) and its former members (light blue) (note that the one member from another town is not shown on the map) (source: interviews).

We selected this case because it contrasts Windhoek allotment. It is a non-typical allotment example as gardeners do not maintain individual plots but work communally and share the harvest. Moreover, members share characteristics with those of many AFNs – middle-class and highly educated.

Bioakker AFN is run by an entrepreneur growing vegetables, fruits and potatoes in the provincial town of Zutphen (just under 50.000 inhabitants). He grows organically and ‘vegan’; without animal manure. Bioakker’s 144 members can come to the garden anytime to harvest fresh produce. People become a member by paying €100, to be regarded as a prepayment for the harvest taken. The garden website lists vegetable prices (low compared to the supermarket); once a month members calculate the value of what they harvested and subtract it from their prepayment. After having spent their €100, members make a new payment. They are invited to perform maintenance tasks like weeding, but this is voluntary.

Bioakker AFN is located in Zutphen’s city centre, but outside of a highly populated area. It is surrounded by a pond, green fields, a park and an allotment. All members are from Zutphen itself or from the nearby village that borders it, Warnsveld (see figure 5.3).

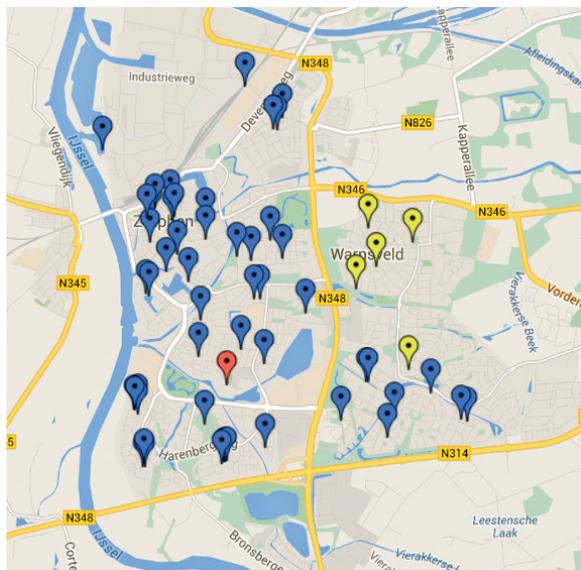


Figure 5.3. Location of Bioakker AFN (red) and its members (blue: Zutphen, yellow: Warnsveld) (source: questionnaire).

The main reason to select this case is that it is maintained by an entrepreneur, and that required involvement is limited to harvesting.

Doarpstún AFN is a garden located in a former village – Snakkerburen - now part of the provincial town of Leeuwarden (just under 100.000 inhabitants). All gardening work is done by a group of about 25 volunteers. They use no chemical inputs. Some volunteers work at the garden almost every day, others an afternoon a week. The harvest is sold in the garden shop,

also run by volunteers. Buying produce in the shop is only permitted to garden members; one becomes a member for €6 a year. Harvest needs to be paid for on top of that, but prices are comparable to supermarket prices (for non-organic vegetables). There are 180 members - volunteers get their membership for free. Doarpstún is also used as a cultural and social meeting place.

Although Doarpstún AFN is situated in a village, it is at the city's borders. For members that live on the other side of Leeuwarden, however, the garden may be a fifteen-minute bike-ride away. Most members walk or cycle to the garden (see figure 5.4).

We selected this garden because volunteers maintain it while others buy and eat the fruits of their work.

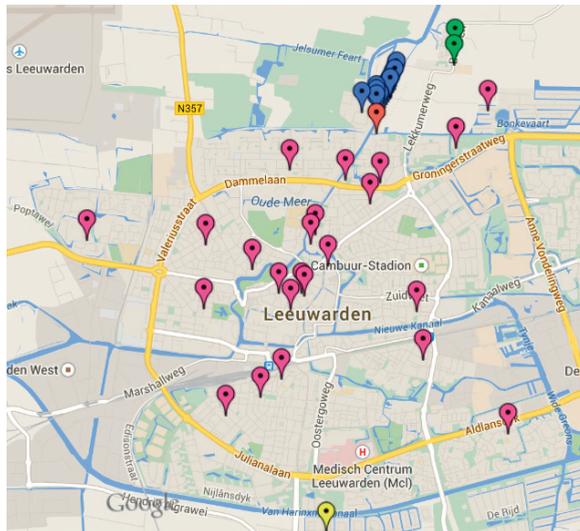


Figure 5.4. Location of Doarpstún AFN (red) and its members (blue: Snakkerburen, green: nearby villages, pink: Leeuwarden, yellow: other) (source: questionnaire).

Methods

In three of our cases we used questionnaires⁹ to shed light on people's gardening, harvesting and buying behaviour. Questionnaires were similar in set-up, but adjusted to the specifics of the respective gardens. We used different distribution techniques. All 123 members of Windhoek allotment received the questionnaire by post, together with a stamped return envelope; 81 members returned it. Members of Bioakker AFN received an email with a link to an online questionnaire, resulting in 58 respondents (144 emails). Our mail was preceded by an email of the entrepreneur, announcing our request. For Doarpstún AFN we used an online

⁹ Due to the small number of members a questionnaire at Witte Vlieg allotment was not feasible.

questionnaire as well, filled out by 48 respondents (180 members). As we did not have access to mail or home addresses we placed a notice in the biweekly newsletter and repeated our request in person at an information meeting.

Semi-structured interviews gave us more in-depth insights into people's food provisioning practices. We discussed respondents' food provisioning practices step by step; from planning the meal to acquiring food, from cooking to discarding. Again, the interviews were relatively similar, but adjusted to the specific gardens. We used different sampling strategies. In Witte Vlieg allotment, all current and two former members were interviewed. In Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs, the questionnaires were used to find interview respondents; one of the questions was whether members were willing to be interviewed. When more people than needed responded positively, we selected based on characteristics like age, gender and degree and length of participation in order to get as diverse a set of respondents as possible. The Bioakker AFN sample contained mostly members who harvest often (while the group of non-harvesters is bigger). Therefore an additional respondent - not harvesting often - was found through the initiator of the garden. Regarding Windhoek allotment, the first author volunteered to conduct interviews for the allotment magazine. The magazine editor approached respondents, representing a wide range of members. All interviews (but one) were recorded and transcribed.

Finally, we used participant observations in all cases, studying the empirical reality of food acquisition. From November 2010 until the summer of 2012 the first author visited all cases several times, until a saturation point was reached. She worked with members of Witte Vlieg allotment once every three weeks during one growing season and visited Bioakker AFN during working afternoons. At Windhoek allotment she attended the monthly board meetings as well as several 'common work mornings'. Doarpstún AFN was visited during working days and the researcher ran the garden shop a few afternoons. She attended social activities at all gardens.

Although the researcher was open about her research, she found writing in public too intruding. Therefore, she jotted down notes immediately after leaving the field, e.g. in the car before driving off. More extensive field reports were written upon returning. Experiencing involvement at the cases enriched an understanding of the practices performed. In general, the observations supported and confirmed questionnaire and interview data, but also placed them in context (e.g. what 'dividing the harvest after a working morning' means for a daily meal is better understood when experiencing that specific moment).

The field notes, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were complemented with written case material, such as emails, newsletters and information leaflets. We searched the material for descriptions of food acquisition practices and critically read with the constituting elements of a practice as understood by Reckwitz in mind. During the analysis, gardening, shopping, convenience and responsibility were found as recurring themes. Therefore all material was scanned for these specific elements again. Table 5.2 gives an overview of the methods used.

Table 5.2. Methods used per case study.

	Allotments		AFNs	
	Windhoek	Witte Vlieg	Bioakker	Doarpstún
Questionnaire (response rate)	81 respondents (66%)	-	58 respondents (40%)	48 respondents (27%)
Semi-structured interviews	10 members	8 current and 2 former members	14 members	14 members
Visits	22	16	7	19

Figure 5.5 shows the age of respondents. Figure 5.6 gives their level of education, which we use as an indication for class and/or income.¹⁰ All respondents were white and from Dutch origin. Immigrants are virtually non-present in our cases. Only in Windhoek allotment there are one or two members with a foreign background. This is only to a certain degree coincidental. AFNs are known to frequently attract mostly white, highly educated, middle-aged members (see for example Hinrichs and Kremer 2002 and Guthman et al 2006). Inner-city community gardens are often more visited by immigrants, but such a garden is not included in this research. Immigrants do form a new target group for allotments. We would therefore expect them at least in Windhoek allotment; it is unclear why this is not the case.

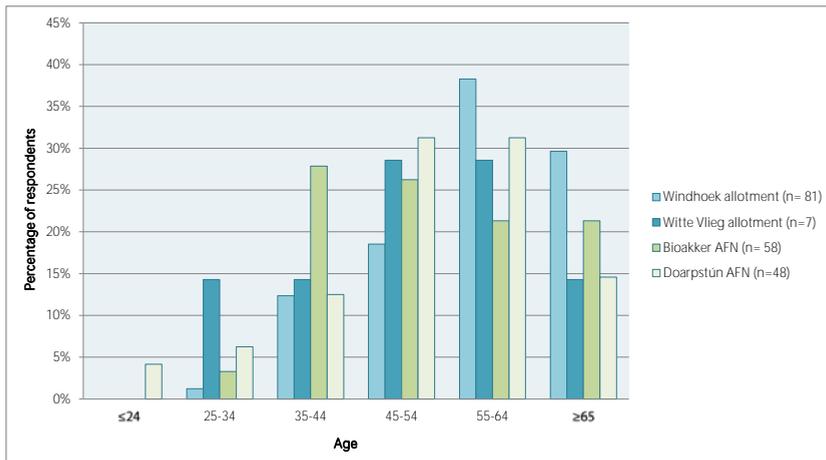


Figure 5.5. Age of respondents (source: questionnaires, in case of Witte Vlieg interviews).

¹⁰ We considered this a less intruding question. Class is not a much used concept in the Netherlands. Education level was only asked to respondents of the semi-structured interviews (not in the questionnaires).

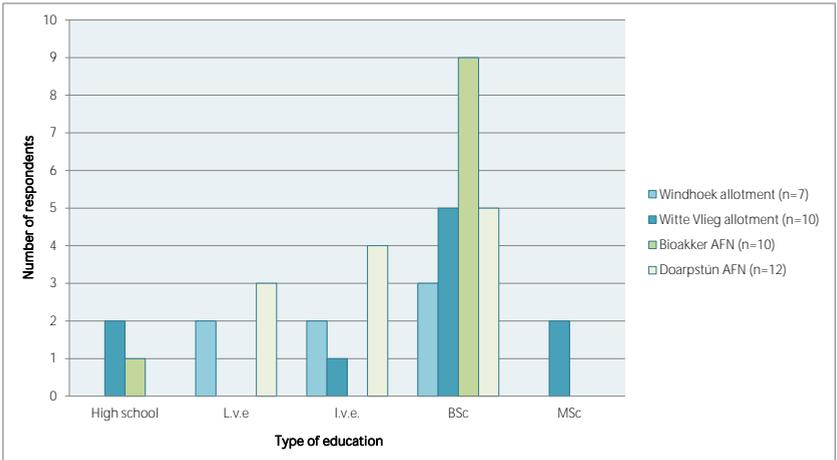


Figure 5.6. Education of respondents (source: interviews). L.v.e.= lower vocational education. I.v.e. = intermediate vocational education.

Results

Eating from the gardens

The four gardens show major differences considering the amount of produce people eat from them. The harvest of the two allotments plays a large role in people’s diets. Interview respondents of Witte Vlieg allotment stated that they eat four to five days a week or at least more than half the time from the garden (see figure 5.7). Most respondents to the questionnaire conducted at Windhoek allotment use store-bought vegetables only to complement their harvest. Only a small part of the vegetables they eat is *not* from the allotment (see figure 5.8).

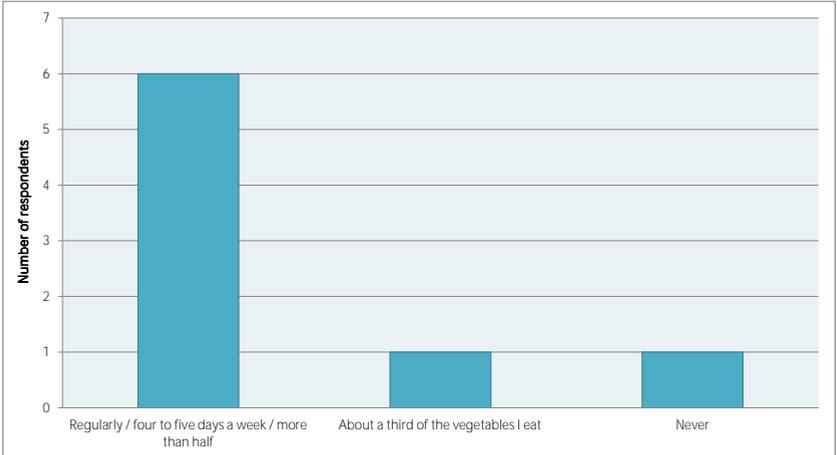


Figure 5.7. How much/often respondents eat from Witte Vlieg allotment (n=8) (source: interviews).

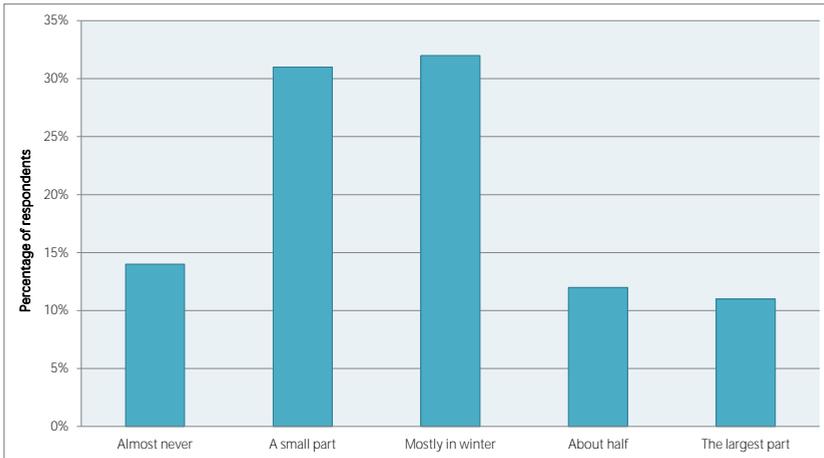


Figure 5.8. How often Windhoek allotment respondents buy vegetables (n=81) (source: questionnaire).

Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs show a different picture. Figures 5.9 and 5.10 make clear that the harvest of both initiatives makes up a limited share of people's diets. Most questionnaire respondents stated that vegetables from the gardens form less than half of the total amount of vegetables they eat. Hence, while members of both allotments eat substantial amounts from their gardens, the harvest plays a much smaller role for members of Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs.

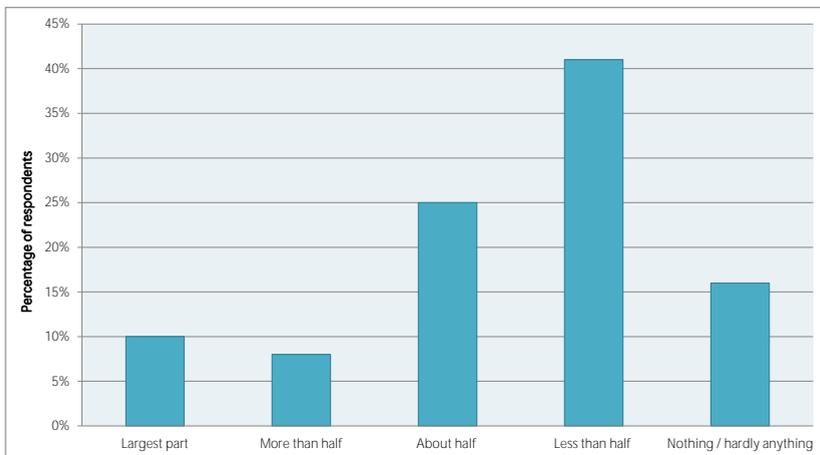


Figure 5.9. The share of vegetables respondents eat from Bioakker AFN – as related to the total amount of vegetables they eat (n=58) (source: questionnaire).

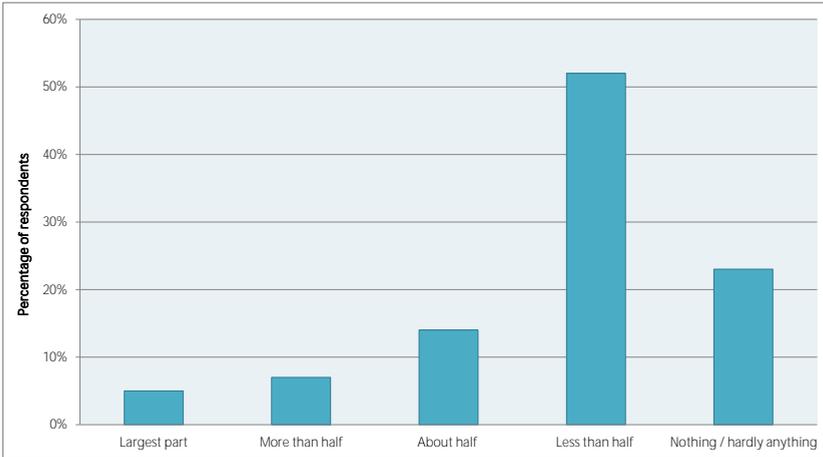


Figure 5.10. The share of vegetables respondents eat from Doarpstún AFN –as related to the total amount of vegetables they eat (n=48) (source: questionnaire).

Working at the gardens

Members from the four cases also show different working behaviours. The structure of Witte Vlieg allotment dictates that members spend one morning a week - three hours – at the garden, even in winter. Gardeners stick to this structure; they only stay away occasionally, for example when on holidays (source: field visits). Our questionnaire shows that most members of Windhoek allotment visit their garden several times a week in summer (see figure 5.11).¹¹ In winter they do this less often, although many respondents still visit the garden at least every week.

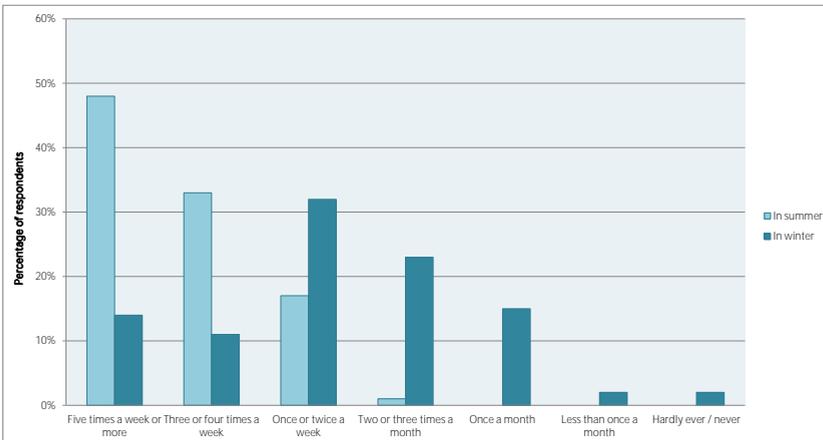


Figure 5.11. Number of times respondents visit Windhoek allotment in summer and in winter (n=81) (source: questionnaire).

¹¹ Visiting is equivalent to working; members never visit their garden without performing at least certain maintenance tasks.

Again, the picture is different in the other two initiatives. At Bioakker AFN work consists of both harvesting and volunteering. Almost half the respondents visit the garden at least once a week for harvesting, the others visit it less than that (see figure 5.12). Volunteering however, is a much less popular activity - the largest share of respondents never participate this way (see figure 5.13). Moreover, it is important to realise that harvesting once a week at Bioakker AFN is not comparable to, for example, spending a weekly working morning at Witte Vlieg allotment; solely harvesting is much less time-consuming. Furthermore, according to the entrepreneur that started Bioakker AFN, people that harvest regularly are overrepresented in our sample.

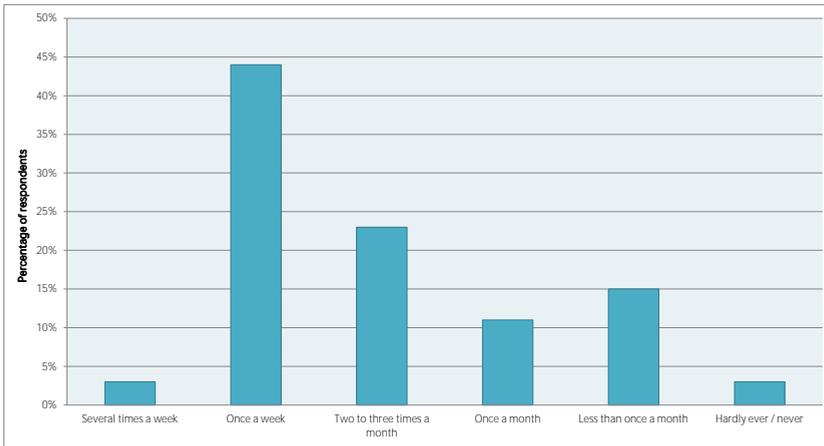


Figure 5.12. Number of times respondents visit Bioakker AFN in order to harvest vegetables (n=58) (source: questionnaire).

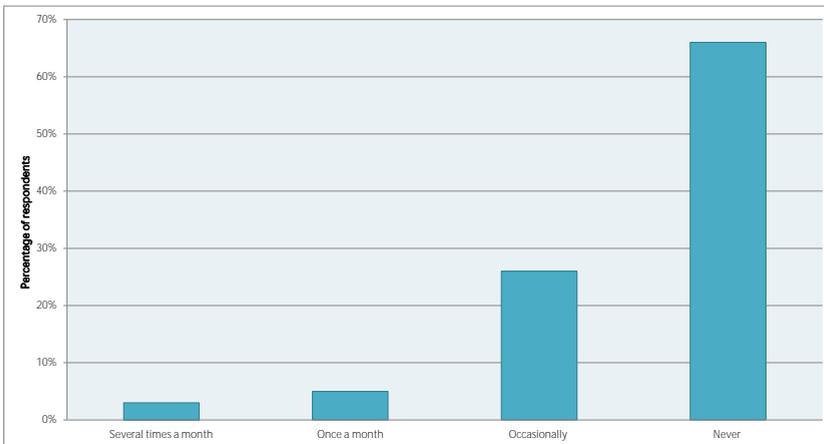


Figure 5.13. Number of times respondents voluntarily work at Bioakker AFN (n=58) (source: questionnaire).

Like members of Bioakker AFN, most members of Doarpstún AFN do not spend time volunteering (see figure 5.14). They do not harvest vegetables either, as they simply buy them in the garden shop. People do need to visit the shop, however. While this cannot be seen as working, we present figure 5.15 to be complete; about a quarter of respondents buys

vegetables at the shop on a weekly basis, for others this is less. To conclude, members of Windhoek and Witte Vlieg allotments spend substantially more time working their gardens than members of Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs.

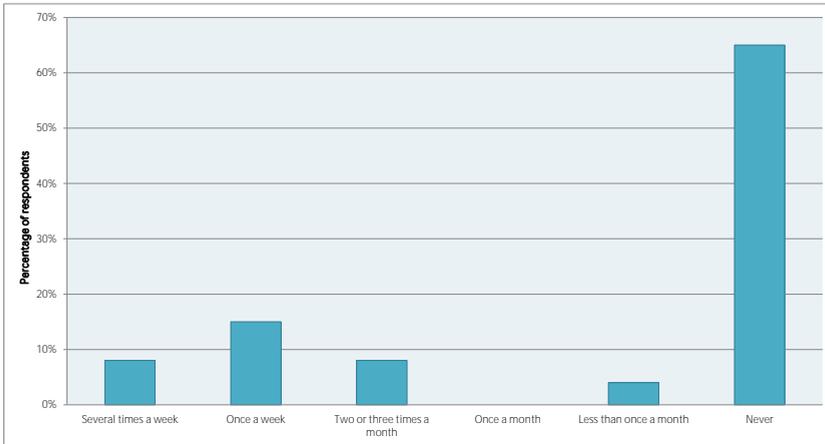


Figure 5.14. Number of times respondents of Doarpstún AFN volunteer (n=48) (source: questionnaire).

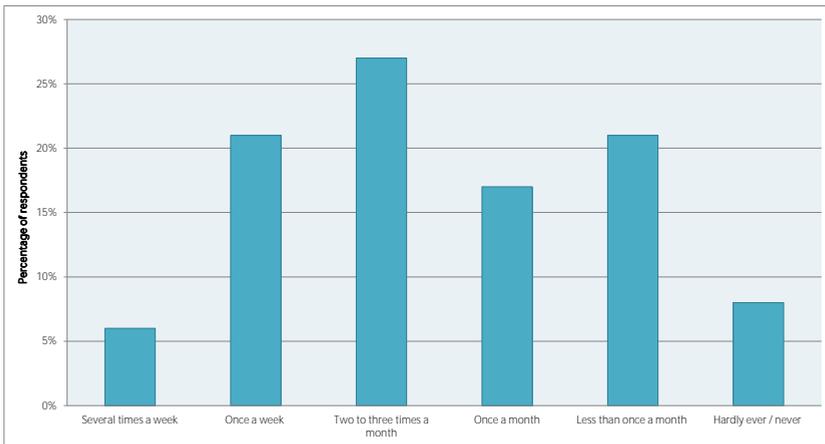


Figure 5.15. Number of times respondents of Doarpstún AFN visit the garden shop in order to buy vegetables (n=48) (source: questionnaire).

Motivations

To recapitulate, the harvest plays a larger role in the diets of members of Witte Vlieg and Windhoek allotments than in the diets of members of Doarpstún and Bioakker AFNs. Moreover, members of the allotments spend more time maintaining their gardens. A potential explanation for this is that members of the allotments would be more motivated to eat locally grown, (organic) food. Our results, however, demonstrate that this is not the case, with figures

5.16 to 5.19 showing members' main reasons to be involved.¹² These make clear that acquiring organic vegetables is an important motivation for members of *all* gardens. The figures also show that other motivations are important in all gardens too; members of Witte Vlieg allotment enjoy working as a group, members of Windhoek allotment enjoy gardening, members of Bioakker AFN want to support a sympathetic project and for members of Doarpstún AFN the garden shop is close. This finding is backed up by our interviews; respondents have several reasons to be involved in the gardens. In the words of one of our respondents:

It is good to be self-supportive. (...) Take initiative to organise things for yourself, literally. (...) And it is good to eat healthy food. (...) Also the social aspect is very important to me. (...) Doing something with the people in your city. (WV5)

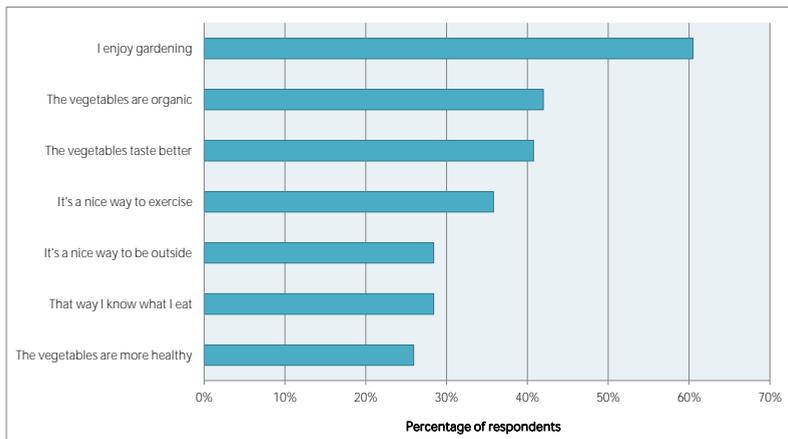


Figure 5.16. Motivations to be involved in Windhoek allotment (n=81). Answering categories with less than 25% of respondents were removed (source: questionnaire).

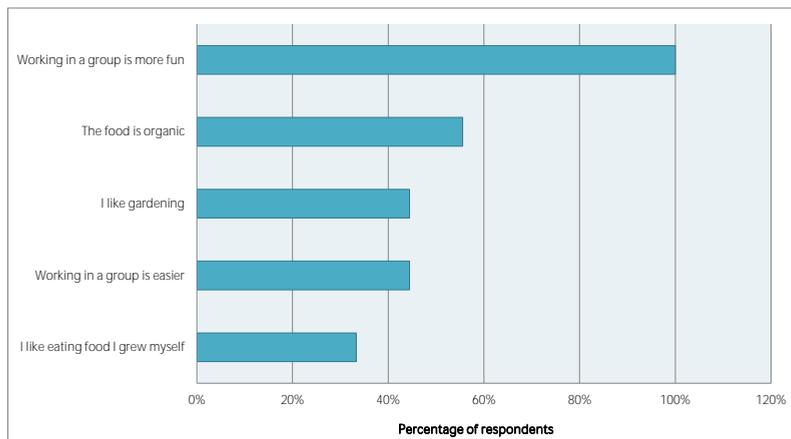


Figure 5.17. Motivations to be involved in Witte Vlieg allotment (n=9). Answering categories with less than 25% of respondents were removed (source: interviews).

¹² For Windhoek allotment, Doarpstún AFN and Bioakker AFN we used results from the questionnaires; people could tick up to three reasons. For Witte Vlieg allotment we used interview data. We only show the most given answers.

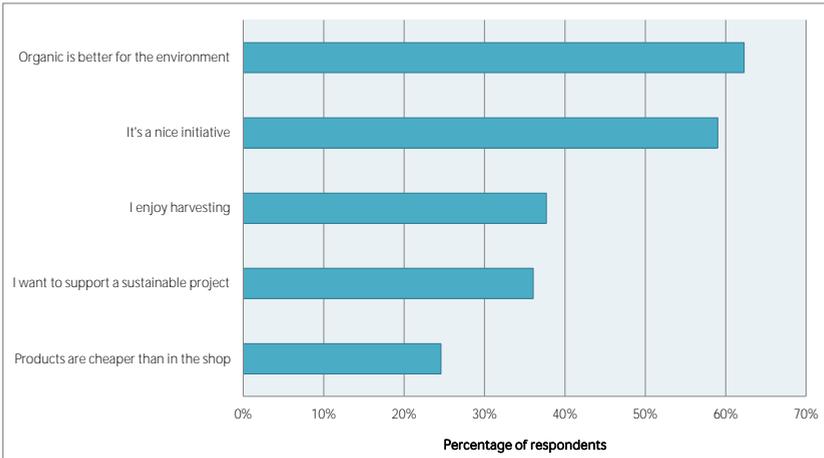


Figure 5.18. Motivations to be involved in Bioakker AFN (n=58). Answering categories with less than 25% of respondents were removed (source: questionnaire).

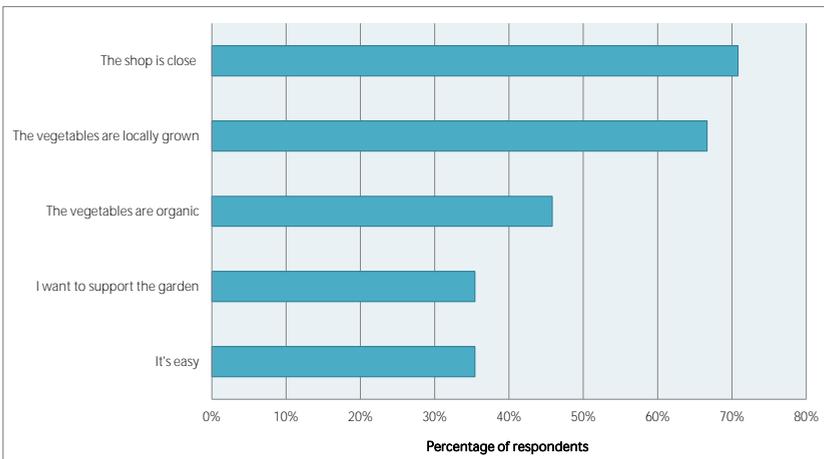


Figure 5.19. Motivations to be involved in Doarpstún AFN (n=48). Answering categories with less than 25% of respondents were removed (source: questionnaire).

Studying people’s motivations to be involved in the gardens makes clear that members of Doarpstún and Bioakker AFNs are no less motivated than members of Witte Vlieg and Windhoek allotments to eat locally grown (organic) food. If anything, they are more motivated to do so. Therefore, motivations do not solely explain the different degrees to which the harvest is part of people’s diets. In the next section we argue that it is the organisation of the gardens that influences their role in people’s daily lives.

Participating in the practice

In order to analyse food provisioning practices in the context of the gardens, we started by deconstructing the practice according to the interconnected elements that Reckwitz (2002) distinguishes (forms of bodily activities and of mental activities, things and their use, and background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge). We paint pictures of the gardens, touching upon these elements, some more than others. We look at the collective elements of the practice as well as at individuals' understandings of the practice. As understanding the reality of the practice asks for participation in it, the sections below describe the practices members engage in and the way in which they shape them. We describe what 'life at the gardens' looks like. The sections have been written in a first person narrative, reflecting time at the gardens as lived through by the first author. They are based on field notes, but have been rewritten for this paper. The text is supplemented with quotes from the semi-structured interviews and documents like emails and newsletters. We use this combination of methods to paint as rich a picture of the gardens as possible.



Hands in the soil

As argued, the most striking difference between the gardens is that in Witte Vlieg and Windhoek allotments membership requires active gardening involvement, whereas in Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs this is not the case. Hence, the *bodily activity* of gardening plays a more important role in the first two gardens.

At Witte Vlieg allotment the work starts at nine. I am the first to arrive, but the others follow swiftly. We drink the coffee we brought, talk a little, and set to work. Gary¹³, the initiator and informal manager of the garden, tells us what needs to be done today. He asks for our preferred tasks and divides the work. Most men engage in the harder work, like digging. One of them explains that after sitting behind his desk all week, he gets irritated if he doesn't get his physical exercise. I feel the pleasure of aching muscles and not having to think too much. It's like the statement on one of the flyers that the garden advertised with years ago; 'No parades, just digging, sowing and weeding'.

Most of the women are responsible for the finer tasks like sowing. We work in groups to be quicker and more efficient – one of us making the gully, another following with the seeds. At around ten thirty, someone calls for coffee. We drink from our thermoses, eat a sandwich. After fifteen minutes we get back to work. Just before twelve, we harvest and share it. Some sigh that we've done a lot of work today. We feel pleased with ourselves, having caught up with tasks that were lagging behind. Then it's time to take off, waving goodbye to the others. (Source: field notes.)

¹³All names were changed.

Working as a group, also *mental activities* play a role:

Although during some mornings most of us work silently, today we chat, joke and tease each other. We also talk more seriously, about our jobs and families. Working side by side, it's easy to talk because it creates an atmosphere of trust and togetherness. (Source: field notes.)

Indeed, all interview respondents argued that gardening with others is an important motivation for being involved in this particular garden:

This [garden] appealed to me because you do it together, the group, and that's still why I enjoy it here. (WV9)

I think it's special that you grow your food together and together you try to make it work and everyone makes an effort, that's special, compared to the other work we do in life. (WV4)

Working as a group is also convenient, especially as not all gardeners have the necessary *know-how and skills*:

When we have questions – how deep to sow this, how far apart do these plants go - we ask Gary, who is running around finding the right seeds for the right plots. He enjoys his coordinating task, extending it to our excursions and yearly meetings. (Source: field notes.)

The situation is different at Windhoek allotment. People are responsible for their own plots. I met people during social events, board meetings or interviews; the gardening itself is an individual activity in which I hardly got involved. People are only engaged in the *bodily activity* of gardening together during the so-called 'common work mornings':

One of the board members tells us what tasks there are today. We divide ourselves into groups and clean tiled paths, pick berries for the harvest festival or dig the new pond. During the work we talk a little and inquire about each other's gardens. Many people around me complain about having to do this work. They express their dislike by calling these mornings 'work duty' - a term the board tries to get rid of. (Source: field notes.)

While members dislike common work days, they enjoy gardening. They are simply more motivated to work privately, in their own gardens. The semi-structured interviews show a glimpse of the pleasure – both *bodily and mentally* - gardening gives them:

You feel more healthy here. You're outside all day, you walk all day. You need to bend, and so on. I am still flexible and that's because you're outside. (WH7)

I never got rid of my gardening things. It was brooding somewhere, that feeling like, I

want to feel the earth again. (...) I am here every free hour and I always do something. (WH1)

At Windhoek allotment, *know-how and understanding* develop over time. Some people have been at the allotment for thirty years and willingly share their knowledge; newcomers ask their neighbours for advice. One interviewee explains:

Often it's sociable in the evenings, when you are in the canteen and you are with everyone else, you play cards and you talk but you also exchange experiences. How do you do that, when do you do that? (WH3)

The similarity between the two allotments is that people are involved in the entire process of growing food. Gradually they learn to discover good conditions for specific crops, recognise diseases in plants, and when to harvest. Learning about and understanding nature gives them pleasure. Again, we use a quote to illustrate this:

It's just nice to see it grow and flower. I didn't know how a zucchini would grow, or a broad bean. That it comes from a flower, I didn't know. (WH6)

The two gardens show an interesting difference regarding *the use of things* and machines. In Windhoek allotment, these play an important role:

The canteen features an ice-cube machine and professional dishwasher, there are plans to install wireless internet and new pumps have been installed all over the allotment. During social activities, the canteen just looks perfect. I enjoyed an Easter brunch with the tables set stylishly, the butter made into little curls. (Source: field notes.)

Using professional equipment and making the canteen look smart is a symbol of professionalism and expresses people's pride in their organisation. The situation at Witte Vlieg allotment is the complete opposite; there is pride in spending little money and using what others would call waste:

Mayonnaise buckets function as screens around seedlings, butter cartons are cut up into sticks for noting the names of plants, old windows serve as a glass house. People are generally not bothered by the fact that we do most work by hand and need to use bucket lids as cake plates. (Source: field notes.)

The above shows that gardeners at Windhoek and Witte Vlieg allotments are indeed gardeners; they are involved in all stages of producing vegetables, including the learning process. The particulars are different – working together, working alone, using the newest equipment, using whatever one can find – but the extent of involvement in growing is the same. People work and get vegetables in return.

The experience of having your hands in the soil is generally lacking for the members of Bioakker

and Doarpstún AFNs. Bioakker AFN members are invited to help John, the entrepreneur, with his work but are not obliged to do so. John writes underneath all his emails: 'Working at the garden is for fun and no obligation'. We already showed that only a few members volunteer and that participation is minimal in Doarpstún AFN as well. Hence, unlike in the two allotments, in Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs those that eat the harvest are not necessarily the ones that maintain the gardens. In Bioakker AFN the entrepreneur grows vegetables for the members (who then harvest these themselves), in Doarpstún AFN volunteers maintain the garden. These volunteers may or may not choose to buy the products of their work (for a reduced fee), but others can do so as well.

Harvesting

Harvesting is an essential aspect of gardening and at Witte Vlieg allotment it is done collectively. After each working morning Gary asks people what they want to take home, and goes and gets it. Members also discuss amongst themselves what is ready, and harvest it. Doing it together makes up for a lack of know-how:

As I do not know how to harvest I accompany the others, or ask Gary which stalks of rhubarb are ready to be cut, examining the colour with other members. We bring back the vegetables to our coffee place and divide them over different piles, one for each member present. Personal preferences are taken into account. We do not leave anything behind ('Come on, who takes this last zucchini?') while also making sure that everyone gets some of the precious gooseberries. We end up with a heap of vegetables for everyone, enough for a couple of days or even the whole week, depending on the season. (Source: field notes.)

In Windhoek allotment the harvesting is individual, but the fact that people eat what they sow is an important similarity with the harvesting process at Witte Vlieg allotment. As argued, the harvest strongly influences the meal for members of both gardens. Although gardeners choose what they grow ('You plant what you use', WH3), their meals depend on what is ready to be harvested. We illustrate this dependency on the garden and its harvest with interview quotes:

In the weekend I take home what is ready to be harvested and then we eat it the following week. (WH8)

Tuesday is always a special day, that's when I bring food, and we see whether we eat from the garden on Tuesday or whether we do that the rest of the week. (WV4)

At Bioakker AFN people are also involved in harvesting, but the relation between the harvest and people's meals is much weaker. Making people harvest their own vegetables is a conscious strategy of John's. Not only does he feel that people should take responsibility for their food, it also keeps prices low. However, we saw that in practice many members hardly

engage in the bodily activity of harvesting. One of the reasons for this is related to know-how and mental activities; interviews reveal that members have a certain shyness or reluctance to harvest. Some find it difficult to find the vegetables, especially since they are hidden in between weeds. Several respondents stated that the garden should have signs telling where to find which crops. Some people lack the skills to see when vegetables are ready to harvest, or do not know how to pick them – cut them with a pair of scissors or tear them off? The fear of doing it wrong and embarrassing oneself makes members self-conscious and hesitant, as these quotes illustrate:

You need to look for it! Weeds everywhere and you need to search because the signs have been overgrown and you think, where is it? (BA6)

There are potatoes, but I hate that job. I just get them in the store, otherwise I need to use some fork.... (...) I don't feel like that, a little lazy. (BA10)

John sends weekly emails informing people what is available for harvesting and writes short explanations about how to harvest. In those emails John also mentions when he will be at the garden - available for help - and sends his phone number along in case he is not there. Occasionally he gives tours to explain about the garden.

However, it is not only a lack of knowledge that keeps people from visiting the garden. Another point is that they have no regular business there, which also goes for members of Doarpstún AFN. As questionnaire respondents of both AFNs explained, the garden is not part of their 'system' and they often cannot find the time to make a stop:

The garden needs to 'become part of your system': we live too far away to drop by and bring vegetables home: most convenient is to stop by on the way to somewhere else. That needs to become a habit. (Open answer questionnaire Bioakker)

I do not realise that I can buy vegetables from Doarpstún AFN when I am shopping for groceries. I get my vegetables at the supermarket, together with my other shopping. (Open answer questionnaire Doarpstún)

For members of Bioakker AFN harvesting is an essential activity in order to eat from the garden. However, unlike in the allotments, it is not part of a wider gardening practice. Members of Doarpstún AFN are not involved in gardening at all. Below we argue that members of our cases are involved in different practices.

Analysis: The logic of urban food growing

We showed how at Witte Vlieg and Windhoek allotments food provisioning is embedded in a wider set of meaning-making social practices associated with the garden, like learning,



working and socialising. In this section we expand the analysis by making a distinction between acquisition-by-growing and acquisition-by-shopping. After that we come back to the theory of practice by emphasizing the routines people engage in, relating these to responsibility and convenience.

Gardening practices versus shopping practices

We saw that the harvest plays a larger role in the diets of members of the allotments than in those of members of the AFNs, and that members of the allotments are much more involved in the gardening process. Going back to our definition of food provisioning, we see that members of Witte Vlieg and Windhoek allotments are involved in another practice than members of Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs. We defined food provisioning as consisting of a range of activities 'including the acquisition, preparation, production, consumption and disposal of food' (McIntyre and Rondeau 2011: 118). In this definition both 'acquisition' and 'production' are activities leading to the possession of food. 'Production' points rather straightforwardly to 'growing', but 'acquisition' potentially includes both 'shopping' and 'growing'. This may seem unclear and therefore problematic, yet this dual meaning of acquisition helps us understand the different acquisition strategies we recognised.

In the two allotments people are involved in the practice of gardening. They maintain their gardens, either as a group or individually. They perform a practice that is meaningful in itself – gardening. The vegetables acquired are a direct result of this, especially as harvesting is an essential part of the gardening practice. People visit the allotments to do their gardening work, so bringing home vegetables involves no extra effort. Although it is in itself time-consuming to maintain an allotment, bringing home harvest is hardly an extra time investment. People's structural presence at the allotments results in a structural access to vegetables. As long as working the garden is a routine, getting vegetables from it is as well. Moreover, by physically and emotionally engaging in the practice of growing food, gardeners perceive their food as 'good food'; flavourful and fresh (Hale et al. 2011). Hence, involvement in the practice of gardening leads to the acquisition of good vegetables. We call this acquisition-by-growing.

Members of the AFNs are not involved in the practice of gardening, but in the practice of shopping.¹⁴ Although members of Bioakker AFN harvest their own vegetables, their involvement resembles shopping more than gardening; they have no responsibility for the maintenance of the garden. Furthermore, acquiring vegetables at the AFNs is weighed against other acquisition strategies every time. Unlike the allotments, where acquisition is a result of another practice (gardening), members of Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs visit the gardens with the specific goal of acquiring food - buying or harvesting it. We call this acquisition-by-shopping. Buying/harvesting is a deliberate choice, comparable to any other act of food acquisition (e.g. shopping, visiting a restaurant). Visiting the gardens is an additional stop in the shopping process, especially as people cannot buy all their daily groceries there. This makes it

¹⁴To be sure, in some AFNs people are involved in a gardening practice; this is not the case in our examples.

an extra time investment. Moreover, not being engaged in the practice of gardening means that the satisfaction of growing food is lacking, so that the food itself is no more meaningful than any other (Hale et al. 2011).

We conclude that although maintaining an allotment is more time-consuming than buying/harvesting produce without further maintenance responsibilities, the mere practice of acquiring vegetables is more time-consuming in Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs. Requiring an acquisition-by-shopping practice, these gardens compete with more efficient food acquisition places, like supermarkets. The extra time needed often interferes with people's willingness to shop at the gardens. The two most given reasons for not buying at Doarpstún AFN were 'it is not on my way' (29%) and 'it is too far' (15%). Not one respondent stated that the vegetables are of bad quality, or that the garden isn't a nice place to go. The main issue is that people find it hard to integrate the gardens into their food acquisition routines. Rather than developing into a habit, going to the garden remains a conscious choice and an effort.

To tackle this, many involved in Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs combine a visit with other activities, as the following quotes illustrate:

I walk a tour, pass the garden, and the IJssel, and back, and I can directly see what's available for harvesting and... I come and harvest it. So that's very easy. (BA1)

I often drink coffee here on a Wednesday and then I also do some shopping. (DT12)

When combining different errands visiting the garden is no longer a specific shopping practice and getting vegetables no longer merely acquisition-by-shopping. Visiting the garden becomes part of another practice, e.g. relaxation, comparable to how shopping at a farmers' market can be experienced as a leisure activity (McGrath et al. 1993) – and to how gardening is a leisure activity for members of the allotments. Nevertheless, it remains one amongst several available food acquisition options. This is the main difference with the allotments, where the harvest is a direct result of the gardening practice so that the acquisition of vegetables does not require a conscious choice.

Routines, responsibility and convenience

To recapitulate, the organisation of the gardens influences how members acquire food from them. Whether people are engaged in acquisition-by-growing or acquisition-by-shopping affects their meals. We elaborate on this in terms of the routines associated with these practices.

In Witte Vlieg and Windhoek allotments visiting the garden is a routine. People visit the garden every Tuesday or Saturday (Witte Vlieg), or several times a week (Windhoek). Working at the garden has its own place in the routine of daily life. It is a way to relax, a way to meet others or an alternative to a work-out. The gardening routine is also reproduced by the responsibility

(or accountability, see Hale et al. (2012)) that comes with having an allotment. Feelings of responsibility are created by the fruits and vegetables themselves; these grow and require tending to. There is also a social responsibility, or 'social agreement' (Hale et al. 2012). Four times a year a representative from the garden board at Windhoek allotment checks all gardens; if they do not look neat enough, the respective gardener receives a warning. Members of Witte Vlieg allotment feel social pressure to regularly visit the working mornings in order to do their fair share of the work. Interview quotes illustrate this responsibility:

[Every day?] Yes. You have to. (...) When you are alone, you need to be able to maintain it. That's how it is. (WH7)

We agreed that it is reasonable that we start at nine. When everyone is here and had some coffee, we start. (WV3)

This two-fold responsibility – created by both plants and people – stimulates people to perform the gardening practice, turning it into a routine that has its place in everyday life. Learning by doing, members acquire practical mastery. Hence, responsibility results in mastery through a routinely reproduction of the practice, leading to the use of the harvest in the daily meal. Feelings of responsibility are largely absent in Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs. For some Bioakker members the garden is appealing precisely because of this lack of responsibility, and the resulting sense of freedom:

I thought about an allotment, but that's really something extra. You have to maintain it yourself and here it is... you can just take a holiday if you want. (BA10)

Harvest from Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs can only become a regular in the daily meal if these gardens are incorporated in people's shopping routines. Shopping routines are closely intertwined with convenience. A body of literature describes the importance of convenience for shoppers, and how it interferes with other values such as ethics, sustainability and quality. Jackson et al. (2006), for instance, found that convenience is one of the three most important factors that determine where people get their food. Shove (2003) argued that people look for convenient solutions as they are coping with time pressure and the coordination of activities.

Shopping routines are thus closely interwoven with a wish for convenience. Visiting the gardens to buy food, however, is not specifically convenient when compared to a one-stop-shop like the supermarket. Although both AFNs are located in the cities where people live, they are not in the direct vicinity of other shopping places. And while the gardens are easily accessible by car, bike or even foot, visiting Bioakker or Doarpstún AFN requires a detour - it simply takes time. This makes it hard to integrate them in food provisioning routines. For Bioakker this is even more so as the harvesting process itself is sometimes considered inconvenient, as the following quotes illustrate:

When it rains, I slither through the whole garden and my walking is not great. (BA11)

You have to walk over the land, look for it, where is it? Sandy, muddy... (BA13)

Supermarket-like convenience is also absent for shoppers at Doarpstún. The shop is run by volunteers who do not receive any training. Customers cannot expect the shop attendant to be able to answer all their questions. Sometimes the shop closes because of a lack of volunteers. As a result getting vegetables can get somewhat complicated:

Sometimes you do feel like, oh they have to look for the price list when you come and get your shopping, and the scale doesn't work properly... (DT14)

To conclude, in the juggle of everyday life acquisition-by-shopping at the AFNs competes with other shopping practices. Every time a practitioner engages in food acquisition, he weighs the garden against other options; shopping at the garden does not become a routine. Hence, motivations to eat locally grown food keep competing with the practical reality of everyday life.

This is not to say that convenience is not important in Witte Vlieg and Windhoek allotments. If one accepts allotment maintenance as a given, it is rather convenient to bring vegetables along the way; acquisition-by-growing fits conveniently within the gardening routine. The practice in which one engages - and the associated routines - thus defines convenience.

A final note concerns the demography of our respondents; in theory differences in acquisition strategies can be related to class, race or age (see for example Markowitz 2010 and Paddock 2010). Figures 5.5 and 5.6 show, however, that ages of people involved are rather similar, as are education levels. All members are white with Dutch backgrounds.

Conclusions

'Food provisioning' involves a range of activities (McIntyre and Rondeau 2011), including acquisition. Acquisition has a dual meaning, referring to both shopping and growing. Respondents of Witte Vlieg and Windhoek allotments are first of all engaged in gardening (acquisition-by-growing), whereas respondents of Bioakker and Doarpstún AFNs are mostly involved in shopping (acquisition-by-shopping). Our research showed that whether members are involved in shopping or growing impacts the degree to which they manage to integrate the harvest in their daily meals. Hence, the way in which an urban food initiative is organised is of major influence on whether it is successful or not (defining successful as people eating its food). This implies that motivations 'only go so far'. Although people involved in urban food growing initiatives may be motivated by concerns about our food system, we need to see these concerns in the context of daily life. In their everyday reality, people do not always manage to effectively make urban grown food part of their menus, especially as they rely on routines, forgoing conscious choices (Jackson et al. 2006).

DeLind (2002: 217) invites academics to explore the role agriculture can play in the lives, bodies and minds of people, rethinking categories such as consumer, producer, commodity and private profit. Our research shows that categories such as consumer and profit lose meaning if people are involved in the practice of gardening. Our respondents perceive engagement in the gardening practice as a hobby, not an economic activity. The harvest is a reward for this engagement, but is not commercialised; all market logic is absent. Moreover, the embodied and satisfying experience of food production shifts the relationship gardeners have with that food (Hale et al 2001), an added value that is appreciated but not monetised.

In the AFNs studied in this paper categories such as consumer, producer and commodity remain in place. Members lack the embodied experience of gardening and as they are engaged in acquisition-by-shopping, they relate to the AFNs as to market initiatives. DeLind (1999) described a similar process in a Community Supported Agriculture initiative she started. However motivated for a better food system they may be, members of her and our AFN examples are first of all consumers: '[it is] a resistance primarily of consumers – not of citizens. The fight remains centred in the marketplace and not in the living place' (DeLind 1999: 8). Perceived as market initiatives, our AFN examples are in competition with other market initiatives, especially with respect to convenience.

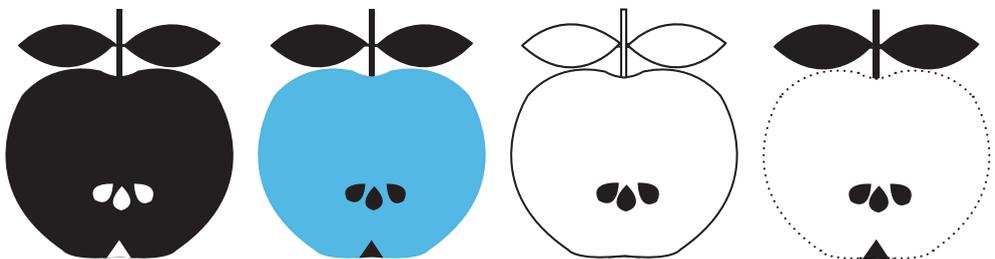
Our finding that motivations do not predict diets leads us to question their value; are urban food growing initiatives whose members do not manage to eat from them, truly 'alternative' food systems? DeLind (2002) argues that to be a citizen (rather than a consumer) one needs to be engaged in embodied, non-abstract work - such as gardening. For her, motivations alone are not enough, nor is shopping. She argues that such embodied work is not a now and again thing, but 'conflicts mightily with the mantra of our modern times – it is decidedly inconvenient' (DeLind 2002: 221). We showed, however, that if one engages in the practice of gardening for its own sake, acquiring urban grown food is a result and therefore not inconvenient. The question is then to what extent food growing initiatives need an alternative rhetoric and rationale in order to be defined as 'alternative'. Can we see allotments as AFNs because they manage to effectuate actual changes, even if gardeners are not necessarily trying to reshape relations with the food system? This needs further discussion, but it is clear that studying people's actual doings is a useful contribution to the research of AFNs.





Chapter 6

Community Gardening and Social Cohesion: Different Designs, Different Motivations





Abstract

Community gardens come in various shapes and sizes; they are cultivated by different types of communities in different locations, consist of individual or communal plots and may or may not require participants to garden (Pudup 2008). In this paper we study seven Dutch community gardens with varying organisational designs and objectives, and investigate the extent to which these influence the enhancement of social cohesion. In our work we heavily build upon that of Firth et al. (2011), and like these authors we recognise both place-based and interest-based gardens. However, we argue that in Firth et al.'s distinction between these types of gardens, too much emphasis is placed on a garden's location. We claim that besides location, organisational motivations also define whether a garden is place-based or interest-based. Hence, we define place-based gardens as those in which people participate for social reasons – aiming for social bonds in the neighbourhood as a place-making tool – whereas interest-based gardens are defined as those in which people participate because they enjoy gardening and growing their own vegetables. Despite these differences in motivations, we find that in all of the cases studied, people talk to and get to know others, and mutual help is widespread. We conclude, therefore, that community gardens contribute to the development of social cohesion, even if people are not motivated by that in particular. Moreover, while participants who *are* motivated by the social aspects of gardening naturally show a higher level of appreciation for them, these social aspects also bring added value for those participants who are motivated primarily by growing vegetables.

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Introduction

'Media depictions of old city districts convey [a] sense of nostalgia. Dilapidated districts are believed to have been 'like villages' at one time. Such a village symbolises the Gemeinschaft, where harmony, common bonds and solidarity prevailed' (Blokland 2003: 6, emphasis in original).

This quote illustrates a widely held feeling in western society that bonds between people are loosening and individualism is rampant. A commonly held belief is that people no longer know their neighbours and that society is characterised by a lack of unity (Blokland 2003). Due to urbanisation, traditional community ties have been replaced by anonymity, individualism and competition (Forrest and Kearns 2001) and the pressures of the information age, the global economy and a new competitively oriented social policy and welfare state are believed to have plunged western society into a crisis of social cohesion (Kearns and Forrest 2000). Hence, there are several reasons to believe that people are less socially integrated now than they were thirty years ago (Macias 2008: 1089).

We do not aim to analyse the extent to which social cohesion is indeed waning. Important is this general feeling that it used to be stronger. This also goes for the Netherlands (Blokland 2003). Van Ginkel and Deben (2002), who studied social cohesion in a Dutch city, argue that the Netherlands faces an era of neo-cultural-pessimism, with a widely shared view that social cohesion is loosening at various levels of society. They refer to a report by the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Bureau, which concludes that social cohesion has decreased over the last twenty years (Commissie Etty 1998, in: Van Ginkel and Deben 2002). Although Van Ginkel and Deben's book is more than a decade old, a recent report by the Social and Cultural Planning Bureau and the Scientific Council for Government Policy argues that the Netherlands faces both socio-economic and socio-cultural segregation and hints of polarisation between those with higher and lower levels of education (Bovens et al. 2014).

Problems with social cohesion seem to be more serious in cities. Deuning (2009) found that in the Netherlands, urbanised areas experience less social cohesion than rural areas. An established international trend is to deal with social problems in inner cities through spatial and physical interventions (Blokland 2003). Using community gardens as a potential solution to the demise of solidarity fits this tradition. Gardens can potentially act as 'third places', settings beyond home and work in which people relax in good company on a regular basis. In Oldenburg's (2001) book on third places, Cheatham (p. 16-17) explains that these public spaces make people feel welcome and create possibilities to interact; '[c]ustomers develop a sense of ownership for the places, feel restored, at ease and rooted there, and regulars talk freely about their lives, their community, and the world. Great good places unite the community'. Therefore, gardens are believed to enhance social life in urban neighbourhoods (Bellows et al. 2004). They stimulate the growing of bonds with other residents (Madaleno 2001; Armstrong 2000), and in so doing, nurture a sense of community (Schmelzkopf 1995) and contribute to community building (Hanna and Oh 2000).

While the international academic literature discusses various social aspects of community gardening such as sense of community and social capital, the public debate in the Netherlands focuses mainly on social cohesion. Community garden websites, newspaper articles and public institutions such as ministries and non-governmental organisations explain, justify and value the rise of community gardens in terms of their value for social cohesion, which is therefore the central concept of this paper. In this debate, the relationship between community gardens and social cohesion is often presented as straightforwardly positive. However, gardens come in various shapes and sizes¹; amongst other factors, they are cultivated by different types of communities in different locations, they may consist of individual or communal plots and they may or may not require participants to garden (Pudup 2008). While there is both scientific and practical anecdotal evidence that community gardens can lead to social cohesion, this large variance in organisational set-ups means that we should not simply assume that all gardens enhance cohesion. In this paper we focus on this organisational variance and its consequences: we studied seven very different Dutch community gardens and investigated to what extent their *organisational designs and objectives* influence the enhancement of social cohesion.

In our work we build heavily upon that of Firth et al. (2011), although they studied social capital rather than social cohesion; indeed, there are many similarities between these concepts, as we discuss later. Like these authors, we recognise both place-based and interest-based gardens. However, where Firth et al. specifically investigate the types of social capital that gardens build, we question how organisational designs and objectives fit with a distinction between place-based and interest-based gardens.

In the next section we conceptualise social cohesion and community gardens and present literature on how these are related. In the third section we explain our methods. We then present our results, exploring the width and depth of social cohesion and respondents' appreciation of cohesion. The next section consists of an analysis on place-based and interest-based gardens. We end with some conclusions.

Social cohesion and community gardens

Social cohesion is an ambiguous concept and different authors define it in different ways. In this paper we follow the definition of De Kam and Needham (2003), who see cohesion simply as people in a society feeling and being connected to each other. As social cohesion is about relationships between people, it is a characteristic of a system rather than a personal trait (Bolt and Torrance 2005). In order to study social cohesion most authors operationalise it by breaking it into several elements, but the number and composition of these elements

¹ For an overview of food growing in Dutch cities, please see Veen et al. 2014 and Van der Schans 2010. Major differences between the Dutch and the American situation are that Dutch cities are relatively small, so the countryside is never far away, and that ghettos and food deserts are virtually non-existent. Initiatives vary in terms of size, set-up and organisation.

differ. This practice of breaking up into elements is also common among authors studying concepts such as social capital or social networks. The elements of these concepts often partially overlap, implying that they are strongly related. For our operationalisation of social cohesion we were therefore also informed by authors measuring related concepts. Hence, besides Bolt and Torrance (2005), who studied social cohesion in the neighbourhood, these authors include Maas et al. (2008), Kuo et al. (1998), and Flap and Völker (2004), all of whom examined social networks, ties or contacts in the neighbourhood, but also Leyden (2003), who looked at social capital in the neighbourhood, Coleman (1998), who wrote about social capital in a broader fashion, and Van Ginkel and Deben (2005), who studied involvement in the neighbourhood. Based on recurring themes among these authors, we operationalise social cohesion as the extent to which community garden participants: 1) form relations with each other and 2) offer each other mutual help. The first of these should be seen as the necessary first step towards social cohesion. As it focuses on the existence of bonds between people, it measures the *width* of social cohesion. The second is a way of valuing these bonds, assuming that people help others and accept help from others with whom they have relatively strong and stable bonds. We therefore see this as the *depth* of social cohesion. We realise that these are only two elements of the concept; other authors have broken it up into more, and also more varying elements, usually including those that measure participation in society at large (e.g. political participation). For the purpose of this paper we prefer our relatively limited view as we expect these two elements to be of most relevance in community gardens (e.g. participation in society at large seems less significant since we are studying cohesion between garden participants). Also, rather than studying social cohesion in more detail, we chose to study a larger number of gardens with a larger number of respondents (see the methods section). Further research is needed to study more elements of the concept.

Community garden is a widely used concept which is not clearly defined; it is used to refer to everything from individual plot cultivation to collective gardening in a public space (Pudup 2008). Pudup argues that community gardens differ in three main ways, which we also recognise to be true in the Dutch situation;

1. 'Community' can refer to various affiliations. A community garden may be gardened by a group of urban residents living in the same neighbourhood; gardeners may reside in the wider city as well. Community can also refer to a group of people sharing a religion or a life circumstance (e.g. school enrolment) or simply the wish to use a certain cultivable urban space.
2. A garden may be collectively cultivated or divided into individual plots.
3. In some gardens the food which is grown is consumed by those who grow it, while in others it is sold, for example on local markets.

For the purpose of this paper, the fact that 'community garden' allows various forms is useful as it enables us to zoom in on the diverse organisational designs and objectives of community gardens, doing justice to the wide range of initiatives that exist in the Netherlands. Hence, we define a community garden as a plot of land in an urban area, cultivated either communally or individually by a group of people from the direct neighbourhood or the wider city, or in

which urbanites are involved in other ways than gardening, and to which there is a collective element. A collective element can be a shared responsibility for the gardening work, but may, for instance, also be collective ownership (Knapp et al. submitted). In this definition, 'community' does not assume the existence of community in the sense that people necessarily form bonds (Pudup 2008); instead, it refers to the fact that a group of people is involved.

Although these are often distinguished from community gardens (e.g. Firth et al. 2011), our definition includes allotments, defined as 'a collective of garden plots that lie adjacent to each other, effectively subdividing a larger piece of land' (Bellows 2004: 250). Our definition also includes gardens in which people are not necessarily engaged in cultivation, for instance because they buy vegetables rather than growing them; as there needs to be a collective element, we therefore exclude most private enterprises. Again, we include these types of gardens to accommodate for the large variety of urban initiatives in which groups of people engage in local food.

Community gardens are believed to contribute to social cohesion – and related concepts – for a few reasons. Firth et al. (2011) argue that they increase social cohesion, support networking and enhance levels of social capital by providing shared 'third spaces' and joint activities. In earlier work (Veen et al. submitted), a literature review revealed similar mechanisms: by creating beautiful places, gardens invite people to use public spaces, where they are likely to meet others to which they may bond over time (see for example Flap and Völker 2004; De Kam and Needham 2003; Leyden 2003; Van Ginkel and Deben 2002). The green aspect of gardens makes them specifically inviting for leisurely use (see for example Kim and Kaplan 2004; Kuo et al. 1998) while natural features and open spaces contribute to residents' sense of community (Kim and Kaplan 2004). Furthermore, social cohesion can be strengthened by working communally to beautify green areas (Van Ginkel and Deben 2002). Also, activities specifically associated with gardens – growing, cooking, eating – are sociable and offer possibilities for people with different backgrounds and from different age groups to interact (Firth et al. 2011).

Methods

Case studies

As we were interested in the organisational design and objectives of gardens we used seven case studies with different organisational characteristics. We selected our cases in such a way that they show both differences and similarities in three main respects, which we refer to as *parameters of organisational design*. These three parameters of organisational design, or organisational parameters, are the three main points of difference between community gardens that were recognised by Pudup (2008). Adapted to the Dutch situation, these are:

1. Community. We selected gardens that are located within an urban neighbourhood and maintained by people from that same neighbourhood (defined as

neighbourhood bound), and gardens for which this is not the case (defined as *non-neighbourhood bound*). Non-neighbourhood bound gardens are cultivated by people living in various parts of the city rather than in the specific neighbourhood in which the garden is situated. They are typically but not necessarily located on the city fringe.

2. Plots. We selected gardens in which participants cultivate a *communal* plot, and gardens in which people maintain *individual* plots.
3. Activities. We selected gardens in which the harvest is consumed by those who *cultivate* as well as gardens in which this is *not* the case. In this last group, involvement in maintenance is not compulsory and participants² typically buy vegetables. The gardening work is done by an entrepreneur or volunteers.

Table 6.1. The seven cases and their distribution over the three parameters of organisational design.

		Bioakker	Cupidohof	Doarpstún	Trompenburg	Tuin aan de Maas	Windhoek	Witte Vlieg
Community	Neighbourhood bound		X	X	X	X		
	Non-neighbourhood bound	X		X			X	X
Plots	Individual gardening				X		X	
	Communal gardening	X	X	X		X		X
Activities	Participants cultivate		X	X	X	X	X	X
	Participants do not cultivate	X		X				

Table 6.1 shows how the seven cases are distributed over these three organisational parameters. Three gardens - Cupidohof, Trompenburg and Tuin aan de Maas - are neighbourhood bound. They are located in urban neighbourhoods and cultivated by people living in those neighbourhoods. Bioakker, Windhoek and Witte Vlieg are located in less densely populated locations and are defined as non-neighbourhood bound. The seventh garden, Doarpstún, is both neighbourhood bound and non-neighbourhood bound, as it accommodates different groups of people: Doarpstún is located in an urban neighbourhood and maintained by some of its residents (hence neighbourhood bound), but most of its gardeners live in the wider city (hence non-neighbourhood bound). In two cases, people maintain individual plots; Windhoek is an allotment with more than 120 members, while Trompenburg is a narrow strip of land where each of its fourteen members maintains five square meters. Although Cupidohof contains individual children's plots, we defined it as communal since children garden collectively (under supervision) and other neighbourhood residents are also entitled to use the space for growing plants. Witte Vlieg, finally, is an allotment. However, unlike at

² As not all respondents are gardeners, we refer to people involved in the gardens as 'participants'.

Windhoek, eight gardeners maintain a larger plot communally and share the harvest.

Table 6.2. General characteristics of case studies.

	Bioakker	Cupidohof	Doarpstún	Trompenburg	Tuin aan de Maas	Windhoek	Witte Vlieg
City (inhabitants)	Zutphen (± 47.000)	Almere (± 192.000)	Leeuwarden (± 97.000)	Amsterdam (± 820.000)	Rotterdam (± 616.000)	Almere (± 616.000)	Assen (± 65.000)
Starting year	2009	2012	2001	2009	2007	1980	1995
People involved	± 144 members	Undefined	± 180 donors	14 gardeners	Undefined	± 120 gardeners	± 8 participants
Members' places of residence	Spread across the city and nearby village	In the surrounding streets	Spread across the village and nearby city	In the surrounding streets	In the surrounding streets	Spread across the nearest neighbourhood, some in wider city	Spread across the city, one in another village
Location	In the city, surrounded by park	In newly developed neighbourhood	In urban neighbourhood (former village)	In neighbourhood	In newly developed neighbourhood	In urban fringe	In urban fringe
Maintenance	Entrepreneur and volunteers	Children maintain private plots, supervised by volunteer. Others share rest of plot	Volunteers	Gardeners maintain private plots, communal herb garden	Voluntary board maintains communal plot	Gardeners maintain private plots	Gardeners work communally at set times
Harvest	Harvest your meal, pay for vegetables taken	Individual, from private children's plots, some shared	Buying harvest at shop	Individual, from private plot, herbs for all to take	Shared by those that volunteer, some shared broader in communal dinners	Individual, from private plot	Shared, from communal plot



In most of our cases, participants are themselves engaged in cultivation. Bioakker, however, is maintained by an entrepreneur. Participants buy the vegetables; other than harvesting, they do not perform gardening tasks. Again, Doarpstún fits into two categories; volunteers maintain the garden and are thus engaged in cultivation, but produce is also sold via the garden shop - most of its customers do not cultivate.

Hence, the seven gardens show both similarities and differences with respect to the three parameters of organisational design. Table 6.2 summarises more characteristics of the cases and gives details on their organisation.

Methods

Although the degree of social cohesion is a characteristic of a system, it is generally measured at the level of the individual (Bolt and Torrance 2005). In this research we combined semi-structured interviews (in seven gardens) with questionnaires (in six gardens³).

Based on our operationalisation of social cohesion, *semi-structured interviews* centred around 1) the number and strength of contacts (e.g. whether people meet outside of the garden and whether they consider other gardeners as friends), and 2) the existence of mutual help (including whether people help each other beyond work at the garden). As we also wanted to understand how people use the garden, and what role cultivation and vegetables play in that, we inquired after people's use of the garden's harvest (e.g. how many days per week they eat food from the garden).

In *questionnaires* we also asked about the number of garden contacts people have, as well as about their use of the harvest. Questionnaires did not ask about mutual help, but presented respondents with a range of statements on social aspects of the garden, to be ticked where applicable.

Both interviews and questionnaires started with questions on people's general involvement in the gardens (e.g. number of weekly visits). Whilst similar questionnaires and interviews were used for each case, they were adjusted to suit specific circumstances (e.g. different answer categories in terms of the number of garden contacts were given to choose between in smaller than in larger gardens).

Questionnaires were distributed in different ways; participants either received an email with a link to an online questionnaire (either preceded by an email from or sent directly by a contact person), or received a paper copy to be returned by post or given to a contact person. At Doarpstún, a note in the newsletter asked people to participate.

³ Witte Vlieg consists of eight people only; we therefore interviewed all of them as well as two former participants instead of using a questionnaire.

In most cases the questionnaire was used to find interview respondents. At Witte Vlieg, all of the current gardeners and two former gardeners were interviewed. To engage the participants of Windhoek, the first author wrote the column 'talking to gardeners' for the garden magazine and used this to interview people; respondents were nominated by the magazine's editor. At Cupidohof, the contact person provided the contact information of more prospective respondents. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.⁴ Table 6.3 summarises the methods used.

Table 6.3. Overview of methods used.

Method	Bioakker	Cupidohof	Doarpstún	Trompenburg	Tuin aan de Maas	Windhoek	Witte Vlieg	TOTAL
Questionnaire	58	19	48	12	19	81	-	237
Semi-structured interviews	14	6	14	5	4	10	10	63

Data analysis

The data analysis consisted of several steps, the first of which was analysing the semi-structured interviews. Transcripts were read in an iterative process, identifying emerging themes in the material. For each respondent, information was manually collected in a spreadsheet. In this paper this data is used primarily to analyse the width and depth of social cohesion, and to illustrate and confirm questionnaire results.

Secondly, we created a database with aggregated results from the six questionnaires. Where possible this was supplemented with information from interviews at Witte Vlieg (recall that we did not employ a questionnaire here), so as to include information from all gardens. This led to a total of 247 respondents, although for some questions the number is smaller since the questionnaires were not identical. We supplemented each individual respondent's questionnaire answers with information on whether he/she was involved in a neighbourhood bound garden, whether he/she worked on an individual or communal plot and whether he/she was involved in cultivation. This enabled us to group respondents on the basis of the parameters of organisational design and compare these parameters; for instance, we used the database to analyse whether respondents working on individual plots gave different answers than people working on communal plots.

Third, we performed analysis of variance on the outcome of four survey questions in the database, using Genstat 16 (VSN International 2013). Two survey questions allowed 0/1 outcomes only; these were analysed using the Bernoulli distribution. We present the arithmetic

⁴ One respondent did not want the interview to be recorded; notes were therefore made instead.

means and the probabilities of the approximate chi-square (X^2) test. Two survey questions allowed more than two outcomes⁵; the analysis of variance was therefore performed on the square root of the outcomes, assuming these were Poisson distributed. In those cases we present the arithmetic means and the probabilities of the F-test in the analysis. As our three parameters of organisational design have two levels only, a pairwise t-test did not provide additional insights. On one occasion, however, we compare three gardens; in this case a t-test is added at probability 0.05. We also present a contingency table, testing the extent to which the answers on two of our questions are related.

Results

Width of social cohesion

We operationalised the width of social cohesion as the degree to which people know other participants, which we see as the number of garden acquaintances participants have, and the extent to which they speak to others. Our results show that the participants of all of the gardens know and speak to others. 93% of questionnaire respondents indicated that they chat to others when visiting the gardens, most of them during every visit. Interviews confirm this:

Last week I was outside to decide where we are going to plant, and then John, Mary's boyfriend, and Pete came out and before you know it you are chatting. (CH3)

While this is often chitchat, people also discuss personal issues at the gardens, especially (but not only) when working side-by-side on communal plots. Being part of the same garden creates something in common, making it easier to share personal stories.

It's about life. (...) I think it's because you have something in common. I think that when you join a billiards club, you also talk about getting a grandchild. There is a connection, wherever it is that creates it. (TB4)

Then you just chat, but it's also about gardening. (...) It's also about people's families, but I don't visit these people [at home]. They tell that their husband passed away, for example, and then you discuss what that is like. (WH9)

By talking and sharing personal information, participants become acquainted with fellow participants and may get to know them at a deeper level. It is difficult to compare answers since some gardens accommodate much larger groups than others – Windhoek has 123 gardeners while Witte Vlieg consists of eight people only. What is important, however, is that only 7% of respondents indicated that they did *not* know any other participants. Interestingly, all but one

⁵ Categories of similar 0/1 answers were formed. For instance, regarding motivations: 'It's a nice way to teach children about food' and 'I want to learn about growing food' were grouped into the category 'education', with possible outcomes 0, 1 and 2.

of these fourteen participants are not engaged in cultivation – they spend less time at the gardens, and therefore have fewer chances of meeting others ('I don't always meet someone. Regularly I am there all by myself'; BA9). At the other extreme, 18% of participants indicated knowing more than fifteen other gardeners, by far the most of them being participants at Windhoek, where people have individual plots. While this is the largest garden in our research, it is probably also related to the fact that its gardeners have been engaged for decades and visit the garden several times a week. We will return to this later; for now, it is important to emphasise that almost all respondents who are involved in cultivation speak to and know others. While this is somewhat less self-evident in gardens where participants are not involved in the actual gardening work, even at these gardens, most participants speak to and get to know others too.

Depth of social cohesion

We defined the depth of social cohesion as the degree to which participants engage in mutual help. As we only asked those participants about mutual help who are engaged in cultivation, we cannot compare them with those respondents who do not garden. Interviews with gardeners indicate that mutual help with gardening chores is widespread in all cases where people are involved in cultivation. It happens in two main ways. First, people work together on common garden issues (e.g. maintaining paths). While this is inherent to the organisational design of gardens with a communal plot, it also happens in gardens with individual plots. In Windhoek, working on communal issues is organised by a structure of 'compulsory voluntary' activities, while in Trompenburg it happens spontaneously:

Sometimes we meet altogether. (...) Pete and I heightened the gate, but it turned out that it wasn't enough, and then not so long ago, I think two months ago, we strengthened it. (TB1)

Secondly, gardeners help each other with individual gardening tasks such as jobs that require two people, giving advice or exchanging seeds.

This cabin was built by Guy and Derek, with their cooperation. And we really worked hard on that for two, two and a half weeks. (WH3)

Helpfulness is really great here. (...) If I want something, or I think that I can't do it alone, then I ask, and there are always people that help me immediately. (WH9)

We also asked interviewees whether they give and receive help with tasks or issues *beyond the garden* (e.g. moving). Here we see a difference between respondents from gardens that are both neighbourhood bound and work with communal plots, and respondents from other gardens. Respondents from the second group indicated that there is a certain but generally limited extent of mutual help beyond the garden. Gardeners help each other, but not in a structural way. Interviewees often stated that help beyond the garden does not occur, but

nonetheless mentioned examples of such help during the interview; they helped someone move, brought vegetables to their neighbours or were given a lift by a fellow gardener on a rainy day. Occasionally, especially at Windhoek, gardeners expressed receiving a substantial amount of help:

He was here again this morning, then he brings the mail and everything, and asks whether I need some groceries and those kinds of things. Every day. (WH7)

Respondents from the two neighbourhood bound gardens with communal plots explained that help beyond the garden was extensive. However, respondents had difficulty drawing the line between help they receive from gardeners and help they receive from neighbours; fellow gardeners are usually neighbours as well. Still, several interviewees expressed that the large degree of mutual help was at least to a certain extent a result of the garden, as it strengthened people's bonds:

Our neighbour's car was set on fire the other day. And our car, we have two cars, and my husband happened to be away a week for work, so I had his car and I said well you can just use our car. For a week to at least survive until you found a new car. So in that way you help each other more than you would with a regular neighbour. Because you know each other better. (CH6)

Mutual help is thus common for all participants in gardens where people cultivate. It is more extensive in the neighbourhood bound gardens with communal plots, but in these cases it is difficult to distinguish between fellow gardeners and neighbours. We do not have data about respondents who do not cultivate, but we expect that help is limited here as people do not garden together and therefore do not need help with gardening tasks.

Appreciation of social cohesion

We now examine the extent to which participants value the social aspects of the gardens. Questionnaire respondents were presented with a range of statements on the importance of the (potential) social role of the garden and were asked to tick the ones that applied. Table 6.4 shows the average scores per organisational parameter. Hence, the numbers in the table are means; 0.882 gives the number of times an average respondent from a neighbourhood bound garden ticked a statement in the category 'the garden is important socially'. Please note that comparisons in this table can only be made within columns, not within rows.

The table shows some noteworthy differences between the organisational parameters. 1) Participants from neighbourhood bound gardens are more positive about their garden's social aspects than participants from non-neighbourhood bound gardens; the first group scores significantly higher on the category 'the garden is important socially', and significantly lower on 'the garden is not important socially'. 2) Participants with individual plots state significantly more often than participants from communal plots that the garden is socially *not* important.

However, there is no statistical difference in the category 'the garden is important socially'. The difference between these two groups is therefore less profound than that between neighbourhood bound and non-neighbourhood bound participants. 3) Participants who cultivate are more positive about the social aspects of the gardens than participants who do not.

Table 6.4. Average scores for two categories of social statements.

		Statements on social aspect of the gardens	
		The garden is important, socially ^a	The garden is not important, socially ^b
Community	Neighbourhood bound	0,882	0,162
	Non neighbourhood bound	0,423	0,577
	F-probability	<0.001	<0.001
Plots	Individual gardening	0,516	0,591
	Communal gardening	0,576	0,375
	F-probability	N.s.	<0.01
Activities	Participants cultivate	0,723	0,405
	Participants do not cultivate	0,270	0,551
	F-probability	<0.001	<0.05

N.s. = not significant

^a Consists of 'due to my involvement in the garden my social network has grown', 'I like going to the garden because I know people here', and 'the garden plays an important social role for me'.

^b Consists of 'I like knowing some people to chat to, but it is not really important to me', 'although I know more people in the neighbourhood due to the garden, this is not very important to me', and 'a potential social aspect of the garden is not important for me'. It also includes Bioakker respondents that stated 'I never meet anyone', or that didn't tick any of the 'positive' statements (negative statements were not present).

This last point is not surprising. We saw that participants who do not cultivate less often chat to others and probably experience less mutual help. These participants are therefore likely to experience fewer social effects and will value these less. We also know that participants in neighbourhood bound gardens with communal plots experience more mutual help than other respondents, but differences between the organisational parameters are small and these may not fully explain the differences in valuing social aspects. We therefore turn to participants' motivations to get involved in a garden.

Motivations for gardening

Questionnaire respondents were asked about their main motivations to join the garden by ticking up to three given reasons. Table 6.5 shows the results, broken down into the three parameters of organisational design.

As expected, the table shows that non-gardening participants were less motivated by the

social aspects of the gardens than participants who do cultivate. Furthermore, respondents from neighbourhood bound gardens and respondents from communal plots were more driven by motivations in the category 'social atmosphere' than respondents from non-neighbourhood bound gardens and respondents from individual plots.

Table 6.5. Average scores for motivations to be involved in a garden.

		Motivations				
		Vegetables ^c	Hobby/ gardening ^d	Education ^e	Social atmosphere ^f	Stimulating the initiative ^g
Community	Neighbourhood bound	0,224	0,633	0,306	0,239	1,119
	Non neighbourhood bound	1,169	0,946	0,115	0,073	1,010
	F-probability	<0.001	<0.05	<0.01	<0.001	N.s.
Plots	Individual gardening	1,366	1,237	0,108	0,011	0,500
	Communal gardening	0,625	0,538	0,212	0,197	1,099
	F-probability	<0.001	<0.001	<0.05	<0.001	<0.01
Activities	Participants cultivate	0,910	1,036	0,165	0,160	0,893
	Participants do not cultivate	0,899	0,466	0,155	0,067	1,191
	F-probability	N.s.	<0.001	N.s.	<0.05	<0.01

N.s. = Not significant

^c Consists of 'I know what I eat', 'the vegetables taste better', 'the vegetables are healthier', 'the vegetables are cheaper', 'the vegetables are organic', 'there is a better assortment than in the supermarket' (Bioakker only), and 'I want to buy vegetables here' (Doarpstún only).

^d Consists of 'I enjoy gardening', 'I was looking for a new hobby', 'it's a nice way to spend time outdoors', 'it's a nice way to get physical exercise' and 'I do not have a garden at home'.

^e Consists of 'It's a nice way to teach children about food', and 'I want to learn about growing food'.

^f Consists of 'I already knew people in this garden', and 'it's sociable'.

^g Consists of 'it's a nice initiative', 'it's important to stimulate initiatives in my neighbourhood', 'it's important to stimulate a sustainable initiative', and 'it's important that this garden is preserved'.

Respondents from non-neighbourhood gardens and those with individual plots, on the other hand, were more motivated by the vegetables grown in the garden as well as by the activity of gardening. We illustrate this further with table 6.6, which shows that participants who stated that they were more *motivated by* the vegetables *eat* more vegetables from the garden as well. A X^2 test showed that the differences between participants who are more and those who are less interested in vegetables, compared to the amount they eat from their gardens, are significant with a probability of $P < 0.001$. These calculations therefore strengthen the idea

that some gardeners are specifically interested in the vegetables; vegetables not only form an important motivation to have started gardening, but participants also eat them more regularly (whereas respondents who are not motivated by vegetables rarely eat from their gardens).

Table 6.6. Degree of motivation for vegetables in relation to the amount of garden vegetables respondents eat.

	Share of garden vegetables respondent eats as compared to total amount of vegetables			
	A large part	About half	A small part	Total number of respondents
Not motivated by vegetables ^h	0,13	0,12	0,76	86
Little motivated by vegetables ⁱ	0,24	0,33	0,43	82
Somewhat motivated by vegetables ^j	0,33	0,31	0,36	42
Highly motivated by vegetables ^k	0,50	0,36	0,14	14

^h Defined as: respondent ticked none of the following motivations to have started gardening: 'I know what I eat', 'the vegetables taste better', 'the vegetables are healthier', 'the vegetables are cheaper', 'the vegetables are organic', 'there is a better assortment than in the supermarket' (Bioakker only), and 'I want to buy vegetables here' (Doarpstún only).

ⁱ Defined as: respondent ticked one of the motivations to have started gardening as indicated under ^h.

^j Defined as: respondent ticked two of the motivations to have started gardening as indicated under ^h.

^k Defined as: respondent ticked three of the motivations to have started gardening as indicated under ^h.

To recapitulate, studying participants' motivations reveals two groups of gardeners - those who are particularly interested in the social aspects of gardening (neighbourhood bound, communal plots) and those who are particularly interested in cultivation (non-neighbourhood bound, individual plots). A third group consists of participants who are not engaged in cultivation; these are mostly interested in supporting the existence of their garden, as table 6.5 shows.

Place-based and interest-based gardens

The previous section showed that almost all of our respondents speak to and get to know others at the gardens. Moreover, respondents involved in cultivation generally give and receive help. We therefore found only minor differences between the parameters of organisational design regarding the width and depth of social cohesion. Differences regarding the degree to which participants value the gardens' social aspects and their motivations to get involved in the gardens were larger; respondents from neighbourhood bound gardens and respondents from communal plots appreciated social aspects more and were more motivated by them. Other respondents were more motivated by the gardening aspects of community gardens. This suggests that a garden's organisational design predicts participants' interests in the social aspects of gardening. We further explore this difference between social motivations and

gardening motivations by distinguishing between place-based and interest-based gardens; although we stay close to the work of Firth et al. (2011), we argue that it is not the *location* (i.e. where the gardeners live), as these authors suggest, but rather people's *motivations* for gardening that form the distinguishing factor.

Place-based gardens

Firth et al. (2011) define place-based gardens as being territorially embedded in the local community. To them, this means having strong bonds in the community and being cultivated by residents from the local neighbourhood. While we agree that place-based gardens are territorially embedded, in our view Firth et al. place too much emphasis on the physical location of the garden. We define place-based community gardens as those in which participants attempt to develop their neighbourhood by fostering social relations. Place-based gardens are therefore those in which people engage *with the aim to* embark on a communal project, increasing the bonds in their neighbourhood; although locality is important, objectives define whether a garden is place-based.

Two of the gardens in our research - Tuin aan de Maas and Cupidohof⁶ - can be seen as place-based. They are the only gardens that are both neighbourhood bound and consist of communal plots; we have seen that respondents from such gardens value the social aspects of the gardens most and were motivated by these social aspects as well. To elaborate on this we illustrate these gardens in some more detail. Both of them were started in newly developed neighbourhoods; all residents were new to the area. During the process of buying and moving into their houses, residents got to know each other. They developed bonds and strengthened social cohesion. This enabled them to start community gardens, simultaneously further enhancing the social cohesion. Hence, similarly to the process Coleman (1998) describes for social capital, social cohesion created in one situation (simultaneously moving into a new neighbourhood) was useful for another situation (building a garden). It also suggests that in the process of creating a neighbourhood that people enjoy living in, gardening was a means rather than an end in itself. Participants were not specifically interested in the gardening activity as such. Now that the gardens are there, the gardening work is performed by a limited number of people. Moreover, participants in general eat little from their gardens; vegetables are a by-product, and as Glover (2004: 143) argues, these gardens are 'less about gardening than they are about community'. Indeed, the gardens are valued primarily for the opportunities they offer as central meeting places, fulfilling the function of a third place.

It's a fine social spot. And that is what it's for. It's like where everyone meets. People talk and so on. It's not a park. It's not a garden. It's really like a village square. (TM2)

At Halloween everyone made something to eat and we scraped out pumpkins and

⁶ For some of the respondents from Doarpstún, the garden is also place-based; these respondents live in the neighbourhood, are not interested in gardening and see the garden as a place to meet other residents.

did a tour of lights and in the evening there was a horror story and then you really see everyone from this street and also from the other side, everyone comes together. And you speak to people that you [normally] just say hi and bye to just a little longer so the next time you chat to them in the street again. That is how the contacts grow. (CH6)

That these gardens are place-based is also illustrated by the fact that it is hard to distinguish between gardeners and non-gardeners; the gardens fulfil a function for the entire neighbourhood rather than for gardeners only. Residents are not a member of the garden or in any way an 'official' participant. Respondents had difficulty identifying which neighbours 'are part of' the garden, or distinguishing between social aspects resulting from the garden and those resulting from other neighbourhood activities. People were thus linked in several ways, both by the garden and by the neighbourhood (after Gluckman (1967), Coleman (1998) calls this 'multiplex relations'). By helping to create social networks, the garden stimulates 'further socialising outside of the garden project' (Glover 2004: 150), which is made easier by people living close to one another.

I already knew all of them. (...) Because people [in this building] are very close. So there are 37 houses and well, I know them all of course. (TM3)

Also because it is a neighbourhood, it's not.... Look, for the garden that I coordinate at the children's centre I can say it takes so many hours a week. But this is different because it largely overlaps with my normal social life... (CH1)

Interest-based gardens

Firth et al. (2011: 565) define interest-based gardens as those that are led by 'individuals or groups from outside the local community'. The authors are not specific about the interests of these individuals or groups, but emphasise that such groups span across diverse communities. Again, we feel that this definition focuses too much on the location of the gardeners, and too little on people's motivations for gardening. We suggest that interest-based gardens are those in which gardeners are motivated by their interest in gardening and/or the garden's harvest.

Most gardens in our research are interest-based; people got involved in them because they wanted to practice their hobbies and/or grow or buy fresh vegetables. Social motivations played a minor role in their decision to get a garden. Interestingly, our research shows that whether participants were motivated by the social aspects of gardening does not determine whether or not social cohesion is enhanced. Even if gardeners just want to grow vegetables, something social is happening. While Macias (2008: 1098) argues that 'something essentially social is taking place when people work together, using the knowledge they have gained from experience and from each other, to grow their own food', we also found this to happen when people cultivate individual plots. We hypothesise that one of the reasons for this is that gardeners spend a lot of time in their gardens, often for a large number of years. In Windhoek, one of the allotments we studied, a quarter of respondents have had a garden



for more than twenty years. Moreover, almost half of this garden's respondents (48%) visit the garden five times a week or more, and nearly all of them (99%) at least once a week. By contrast, only 3% of respondents from the two place-based gardens visit the garden five times a week, and 30% visit it once a week or more. Hence, cultivation draws people into the garden, where they 'happen to meet others' several times a week for years on end. During that process, people create bonds with other gardeners; just as vegetables are a by-product for respondents from place-based gardens, social cohesion is a by-product for interest-based gardeners. Nevertheless, our respondents do appreciate the social aspects of gardening, as we illustrate with the following quotes.

Although the contacts are volatile, it does give a good feeling that you have contacts with your fellows, your neighbours. (TB3)

It is just nice when you come here and people greet you, best of all cheerfully you know, and that you chat, it doesn't have to take hours and sometimes it takes an hour and sometimes it doesn't, but that is... you are more present, or it is more that you are actually here, and belong. (WH9)

Location and motivation

As discussed, we argue that Firth et al's (2011) distinction between place-based and interest-based gardens depends too much on the location of the gardening community. Our data show that, in terms of our parameters of organisational design, the distinction between the two types of gardens is not simply that between neighbourhood bound and non-neighbourhood bound gardens. Gardeners' motivations are also a distinguishing factor: gardens located within an urban neighbourhood and cultivated by people from that neighbourhood may in fact be interest-based if its gardeners are attracted by the vegetables and the gardening activity itself. We illustrate this by comparing the motivations of the three neighbourhood bound gardens in our research – Cupidohof, Tuin aan de Maas and Trompenburg. Table 6.7 shows that Trompenburg gardeners are motivated by gardening and vegetables – not by social aspects - whereas respondents from the other gardens (although also interested in gardening itself) show little motivation for the vegetables whilst showing more interest in the gardens' social aspects.⁷ Therefore we define Trompenburg as interest-based and Cupidohof and Tuin aan de Maas as place-based.

This difference is further reflected in respondents' views on the gardens' roles in stimulating social cohesion in the neighbourhood. We asked respondents to indicate whether this role is important, small, non-existent or negative. None of the respondents stated that the garden's role in stimulating social cohesion is non-existent or negative. However, with a probability of $p < 0.001$, Cupidohof and Tuin aan de Maas respondents stated significantly more often

⁷ Please note that only columns can be compared; as 'hobby/gardening' consists of five statements and 'social atmosphere' consists of two, the first is bound to have a higher average score.

that this role is *important*, whereas respondents from Trompenburg stated significantly more often that it is *small*. This suggests that participants from Trompenburg are less concerned with using the garden as a place-making tool (and more with using it as a place to grow vegetables). Of course, this sample of three gardens with a limited number of respondents is not conclusive. It is possible that respondents from Trompenburg state that the garden's role in social cohesion is small because of the way it functions or because of specific features of the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, it does strengthen our view that neighbourhood bound gardens can fulfil different functions and are not place-based by implication.

Table 6.7. Average scores for motivations for being involved in a garden, for three gardens.

	Motivations		
	Vegetables	Hobby/gardening	Social atmosphere
Cupidohof	0.056 a	0.389 a	0.222 ab
Tuin aan de Maas	0.000 a	0.789 a	0.421 b
Trompenburg	0.917 b	0.750 a	0.000 a
X ² -probability	<0.001	N.s.	<0.05

N.s. = Not significant. For an explanation of the motivations, see table 6.5.

Despite our emphasis on the motivation of gardeners, we do want to point out that location is important: a non-neighbourhood bound garden cannot be place-based. We illustrate this with the following example. Witte Vlieg is a non-neighbourhood bound garden consisting of a communal plot where eight gardeners cultivate together at set times. The garden is interest-based as the vegetables and the gardening activity play an important role for participants. However, the gardeners are also highly interested in the garden's social aspects. In fact, interviews showed that the respondents have two main reasons to be involved, namely that they enjoy gardening and that they take pleasure in doing so with a group: participants scored higher on the motivation 'social atmosphere' than the participants in any of our gardens. Moreover, more often than in other gardens did Witte Vlieg respondents define fellow gardeners as friends.

They are really... you know you see them once a week, so I see them often, actually more often than many of my friends. They are actually just my gardening-friends, that's how I would call it. (WV8)

However, as this garden is located on the city fringe and maintained by people from the entire city, it cannot be place-based; while people develop relations with other gardeners, these other gardeners are not their neighbours. The social cohesion created is not reinforced and strengthened by social interactions in the neighbourhood, and does not lead to the development of place.

Conclusions and discussion

Our research showed that although community gardens have different organisational designs, in all of these gardens people talk to and get to know others, and mutual help is widespread. While there are some differences with respect to the parameters of organisational design – participants not involved in the activity of gardening know fewer other participants, and mutual help beyond the garden is more extensive in neighbourhood bound gardens with communal plots – these were only minor. Therefore we conclude that community gardens contribute to the development of social cohesion.

Our findings show that certain designs attract participants with certain motivations; neighbourhood bound gardens and gardens with communal plots attract gardeners interested in the social aspects of gardening, non-neighbourhood bound gardens and gardens with individual plots attract gardeners interested in harvest and cultivation. Hence, while it is not surprising in itself that all organisational designs lead to the development of relations between people, it is interesting that this also happens in gardens where people are not specifically attracted by that. Moreover, although these gardeners value these social aspects less than participants who joined the gardens for social reasons, they do make gardening more enjoyable. These two types of motivations – either social aspects or gardening and vegetables – distinguish between the place-based and interest-based gardens in our research. This means that it is not only the location of a garden and its gardeners that defines gardens as place- or interest-based.

Our finding that participants of place-based gardens are not interested in the gardening experience per se implies that the continuation of these gardens is uncertain. Both place-based gardens which were studied in our research are currently maintained by a limited number of people. Tuin aan de Maas was started by a group of thirty people but once it was established, this group reduced to about five. Hence, now that the garden is created, residents need to come up with other ways to keep the neighbourhood involved. The garden is currently a beautiful place where people enjoy drinking wine or organising a barbecue. People therefore still meet in the garden, although now for social activities rather than gardening work:

It's a meeting place, but you know, even when people do not work in the garden, they do have a drink, nice, or they see that it indeed looks good now. So that... it lifts up the whole neighbourhood. (TM6)

The picture at Cupidohof is similar: both gardens still manage to fulfil their function as meeting place. The question remains as to the extent to which the gardens can maintain this function over the years. Firth et al. (2011) advocate that gardens should have links with other community organisations and institutions to increase their vitality and longevity. The lack of an explicit interest in gardening and the vegetables specifically also means that the harvest only plays a minor role in the diets of place-based garden participants. This suggests that if politicians or community workers start gardens in order to stimulate healthier diets, they

should think of complementary strategies.

Interest-based gardens, on the other hand, have limited value for place-making strategies. Gardeners build connections with one another and social cohesion at the garden is strengthened, but this does not necessarily trickle through to the wider neighbourhood as these gardens fulfil the role of 'third place' for active gardeners only. Moreover, in most – but not all – interest-based gardens in our research, the gardeners live in various parts of the city, so relationships are harder to maintain beyond the physical borders of the garden. However, interest-based gardens may contribute to neighbourhood social cohesion in other ways than creating contacts. In this research we only studied two elements of social cohesion, a concept that is much broader than contacts and mutual help alone. Kearns and Forrest (2000) argue, for instance, that a strong attachment to place is believed to have an impact on social cohesion through positive effects on the adherence to common values and norms and a willingness to participate in social networks. Therefore, neighbourhoods with limited social contacts can display strong social cohesion; positive identification with the neighbourhood determines its social quality more than the presence of social contacts (Bolt and Torrance 2005). In fact, Maas et al. (2008) found that people with more green in their living environment experience less shortage of social support without actually having more social contacts; the authors suggest that this is due to the fact that green spaces increase a sense of community via place attachment and place identity. Moreover, having a larger influence on the living environment increases people's involvement in and collective responsibility for the neighbourhood and enhances liveability; residents need to feel proud of where they live (Van Ginkel and Deben 2002). Since well-maintained community gardens beautify the physical outlook of a neighbourhood and often give the appearance of residents actively doing something positive for the area, gardens may contribute to an attachment to place, identification with the neighbourhood and feelings of pride, thereby enhancing social cohesion without being a meeting place for non-gardening residents. This is something that future research could explore further.

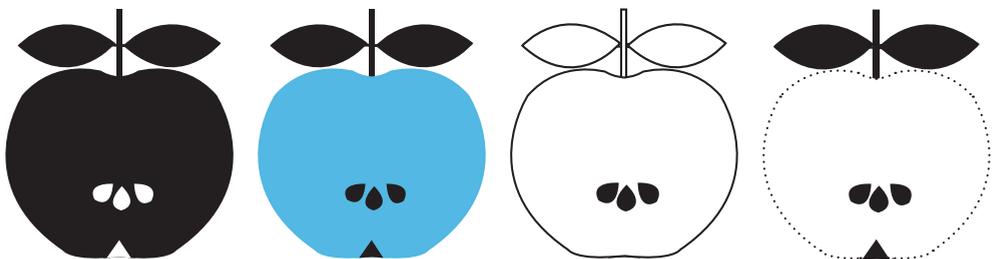
Moreover, social cohesion is valuable even if it does not extend beyond the garden. People support various specific, often singular relations that are decreasingly locally bound (Van Ginkel and Deben 2002); '[t]he coincidence between friendship, kinship and neighbourliness has [therefore] become progressively less geographic' (Blokland 2003: 109). Instead, people maintain micro-social worlds, 'action sets or social networks of friend-like relationships that help them get through life effectively' (Kearns and Forrest 2000: 1000). Networks which have originated from and are maintained at gardens can therefore also fulfil important roles in people's lives. How this relates to other networks could also be subject of future studies.





Chapter 7

One Community Garden, Two Communities: Evidence from a Case Study in the Netherlands





Abstract

The growing body of literature on community gardens shows that such gardens can and do lead to processes of social cohesion and community building. The starting point of this paper, however, is the assumption that these gardens may enclose not one but several communities, so that rapprochement and separation take place simultaneously. In order to shed light on these processes we present one specific community garden in the Netherlands. We found that this garden is indeed an important meeting place and therefore contributes to rapprochement and community building. Separation takes place at the same time, however, as the garden harbours two distinct communities. We show that these communities assign people to categories ('us' and 'them') on the basis of place of residence, thus strengthening their social identities and demonstrating that ownership over the garden is both an outcome and a tool in that struggle. Finally, we argue that the relationships between the two main communities can be defined as instrumental-rational, which explains why they do not form a larger unity. Nevertheless, these so-called transactions have the potential to contribute to a larger imagined garden-community in the future.



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Introduction

Community gardens are gaining popularity in many western countries and have also sprung up in many Dutch cities, initiated by residents, artists, community developers or housing corporations. Such gardens are often relatively small plots of land on which citizens grow their own food, either communally or on private plots.

Community gardens are believed to have various social benefits; they are thought to help create feelings of community and to strengthen social cohesion in the neighbourhood. These views are also widely present in the Netherlands, the country of focus in this paper. Several newspapers write about the social benefits of community gardens, as illustrated by some of their headlines: 'Bonding through kitchen gardens in the neighbourhood' (De Vré 2010), 'Learning how to cooperate through lettuce and tomatoes' (Van den Broek 2011), and 'Artichokes in Schilderswijk. Kitchen gardens are to promote cohesion in Schilderswijk in the Hague' (Van Es 2011). Policy documents also assume a causal relation between community gardens and community building. Commissioned by one of Amsterdam's districts, Lems (2011) for example argues that community gardens invite people to use the space, encouraging interactions and thereby improving social cohesion and quality of life. Hulshof (2008), who writes on behalf of Innovatienetwerk¹, argues that allotments lead to more contacts between those involved, that way resulting in more social cohesion. Taking Rotterdam as a case study, the city network 'Cities for Active Inclusion' (2011) argues that it is beneficial to invest in community gardens as these not only create jobs but also deliver social cohesion. Supposed community building properties are also an important rationale for many of the community gardens themselves. 'The Cook, the Farmer, his Wife and their Neighbour' writes on its website that 'farming and cooking are viewed as a way to share knowledge and traditions, and a means for the cultural renewal and rebirth of the neighbourhood'.² Doetank (translated as 'do tank', playing with the phrase 'think tank') matches school children with neighbourhood residents who have a few square meters to spare in their back gardens. The children learn how to grow food in these spaces; Doetank argues that this will lead to new social bonds, built upon shared experiences.³ Urbaniahoeve (translated as Urban Homestead), an artist's initiative to create edible landscapes, states that the project locations activate public space and stimulate social cohesion and solidarity in the community.⁴

As illustrated, newspapers, policy documents and initiatives imply that there is something special about community gardens – they are thought to be specific 'social locations' that stimulate cohesion and bridge differences. Academic literature suggests that this is indeed the case, at least to a certain extent and under certain conditions. Several researchers have studied the social effects of community gardens; they found ample evidence that community

¹ A foundation that develops innovations in agriculture, food and nature, financed by the Dutch government (www.innovatienetwerk.org).

² www.kkvb-cfwn.blogspot.com

³ www.doetank.org

⁴ www.urbaniahoeve.nl

gardens can have positive, community building effects. For instance, gardens are seen to nurture a sense of community (Hanna and Oh 2000; Schmelzkopf 1995), community bonds (Madaleno 2001) and high levels of social integration (Macias 2008; Patel 1991). While the exact terminology differs in the various studies, the general reasoning is similar; community gardens bring a wide range of participants together in an activity in which they share tools, responsibilities and concerns, thereby fostering contacts - and subsequently bonds - between them (Macias 2008; Kieft and Hassink 2004; Madaleno 2001; Patel 1991). Hence, although Smit and Bailkey (2006: 7) refer to urban agriculture specifically when they argue that this can be seen as 'both an end in itself (through the harvesting of nourishing food) and a means by which to strategically achieve additional social and community ends', it is safe to say that this goes for community gardens as well.

On the other hand, however, several authors have argued that we should not take the community bonding qualities of community gardens for granted. Increased interaction, flourishing relationships and productive social networks are generally assumed rather than demonstrated (Thomas 2012) and little is known about the exact and possibly differential impacts of local food activities on local communities (Macias 2008). For instance, various studies have showed that community gardens can be sites of exclusion. Thomas (2012) describes how community gardeners saw 'the community' as a group of 'like-minded people' rather than as a collection of everyone in the neighbourhood. The garden in Glover's (2004: 154) research was seen as 'the white folks' project'. Thus, even when people have legal access to a garden, they may not feel welcome or comfortable: 'Because of the fences, locks, posted hours, and lists of rules and regulations on some of the garden gates, as well as an often close-knit interaction among some gardeners, confusion can arise in the neighbourhood as to whether the gardens are in fact private' (Schmelzkopf 1995: 376). This suggests that similarly to the accusation of CSAs mainly serving people with higher incomes (Guthman 2003) and farmers' markets creating atmospheres in which lower-class people do not feel at home (Paddock 2014), community gardens may attract only certain groups of (privileged) people.

In- and exclusion are thus useful concepts when studying community gardens. Examining processes of exclusion would temper the sometimes too naive belief in the community-building power of community gardens. Moreover, such studies could contribute to debates in the literature such as the extent to which participation is always a social good and a positive experience for participants (Hayward et al. 2004, in: Shortall 2004). Social exclusion is, however, not the point of departure of this paper. Our starting point is not so much the idea that certain groups of people experience exclusion by being denied access to the garden, but the idea that those that have access do not necessarily form one single community. Although the concept of social exclusion has proven its use in the social sciences, its drawback is that it suggests a black and white distinction between the privileged and the disadvantaged - those having and those lacking access. It emphasises boundary formation and implies that all of those included form a cohesive and undifferentiated society (Shucksmith 2012). Hence, the concept suggests that if people have access, they automatically form one strong, bonded community. The research presented in this paper, however, points out that this idea is naive. Communities are not singular wholes; they are plural, consisting of several groups or communities. In other

words, those included do not necessarily form one happy unity, as processes of separation and exclusion take place alongside processes of bonding and inclusion. We hypothesise, therefore, that 'the' garden community may enclose not one but several communities, and that processes of rapprochement and separation take place simultaneously.

In this paper we present one specific community garden in the Netherlands and zoom in on the different communities present. Our aim is not to unmask the myth of social cohesion at community gardens. Even though it sometimes seems too easily assumed, there is ample evidence that community gardens can and do lead to processes of social cohesion and community building. Instead, our aim is to shed light on how different communities make use of the same community garden and the processes at play between them. Our analysis is inspired by the work of Blokland. In her book 'Urban Bonds' (2003) she studies the existence of different groups and their ways of co-existence, focusing on a working-class neighbourhood in the Netherlands. She concludes that '[t]he neighbourhood is not, never was and can never be a community. Instead, it serves a practical and symbolic purpose as a means to *form and perpetuate many different communities*' (Blokland 2003: 207, emphasis added). We felt that Blokland's work is useful as she shows how different types of relations between neighbours lead to the existence of different communities. Moreover, as she studied a specific neighbourhood, her research demonstrates the importance of the specifics of place, which is useful as a community garden is place-bound too. In our analysis we show that people involved in the garden assign others to categories ('us' and 'them'), strengthening their own social identities and thereby their communities. We demonstrate that ownership over the garden is both an outcome and a tool in that struggle. Finally, we argue that the relations between the two main communities can be defined as transactions, which explains why they do not form a larger unity. By zooming in on these process, we enlarge our understanding of what 'community' in community gardens may entail.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. The next section gives an overview of how community gardens are observed to lead to community building. The section thereafter discusses the concepts of categories and social identities and four possible types of relationships between people. We then explain the methods used, followed by an introduction to our case study. After that, we present our findings; we introduce the three groups we recognise, explain the distinction between them, and elaborate on their differences by going into a conflict between them. We then show how two of these groups categorise the other as 'them', what the role of the garden is in this process, and what it means that the relationships between these groups can be identified as transactions. The paper ends with some conclusions.

Community building in urban gardens

The main reason why community gardens are thought to stimulate community building is that they bring people together, encouraging them to meet and, after some time, to bond. The literature on community building and the physical environment argues the importance of

meeting spaces for creating social ties and building community (Flap and Völker 2004; De Kam and Needham 2003). Meeting neighbours in public places stimulates connections between them; '[s]pontaneous 'bumping into' neighbours, brief (seemingly trivial) conversations, or just waving hello can help to encourage a sense of trust and a sense of connection between people and the places they live' (Leyden 2003: 1546).

Offering people a place to meet is thus an important trait for building community. The question is to what extent community gardens can be seen as meeting spaces. Starting more generally, green spaces can invite people to use them for leisure activities, especially when well-maintained. That way they become meeting spaces for those that do the same. Research has shown that green spaces can increase contact between people. Kuo et al. (1998), for example, found that the level of vegetation in common spaces predicts the use of that space and the formation of neighbourhood social ties. The more vegetation was associated with people's apartment and building, the more respondents socialised with neighbours, the more familiar with nearby neighbours they were and the greater their sense of community. Kim and Kaplan (2004) conclude that natural features play an important role in sense of community, as they stimulate people to walk and increase the likelihood of social interactions. Forming a specific category of green places, community gardens are also potential meeting spaces. Indeed, the literature suggests that gardens provide a physical location for residents to meet and socialise (Armstrong 2000).

Apart from being meeting places, there are more reasons why community gardens are thought to build community. First, the green element itself is important. Contact with nature and physical activity reduces mental fatigue, relieves feelings of stress and burn-outs, and has positive effects on mood, which may improve contact between people (Kieft and Hassink 2004). A second possibility is that gardens attract like-minded people (Kieft and Hassink 2004) – those that enjoy gardening or simply being outside. Rutten (2009) argues that projects that are based on common interests have most chance of improving contact between different groups of people. A third option is the idea that through gardens, people work for a common cause and on a common vision (Smit and Bailkey 2006). Overcoming the challenges of creating and sustaining a garden and consultations between neighbours helps people develop a common goal and become involved with each other (Vreke and Salverda 2009; Schmelzkopf 1995). Fourth, gardens may provide specific opportunities to strike up conversations with strangers; interactions in public space can be initiated by a third party or object, such as children, dogs or balls (Peters and de Haan 2011) - or vegetables and shovels. Finally, the fact that growing food always occurs in a specific location means that it has a physical identity and established social connections (Smit and Bailkey 2006). Gardens may increase feelings of community by improving the visual attractiveness of the neighbourhood, contributing to this identity (Vreke and Salverda 2009).



Categories, collective identities and different social relations

To recapitulate, there are several ways in which community gardens can build community. As touched upon earlier, however, we hypothesise that this does not inevitably mean that one community forms a whole; gardens may attract several different groups which use the same space largely independently from each other. While looking for the effects of the inducement of pro-environmental practices on an allotment, for instance, Farges (2015: 16) recognised three main groups. There was limited social interaction between these groups and even 'cautious expression of mutual disapproval' regarding each other's environmental choices.

Following Blokland (2003), we start our investigation with the concept of categories. Categories are sets of actors who share a boundary, distinguishing all of them from and relating all of them to at least one set of actors visibly excluded by the boundary (Tilly 1998: 62). Hence, a category lumps together actors deemed similar while simultaneously splitting sets of actors considered dissimilar, and defines the relationships between the two sets. An obvious example is women, a category excluding men. As they depend on similarities and dissimilarities, categories are relational (Tilly 1998: 62). However, because it is others that define categories, not the members themselves, members of a category need not be aware of their collective identification (Jenkins 1996).

Common characteristics can, however, create affection or affinity, generating bonds. Meaningful similarities strengthen feelings of 'us', while differences help define the alleged 'them' (Blokland 2003), or a whole range of 'thems' (Jenkins 1996). The process of people starting to feel that some are similar to them while others are dissimilar, is referred to as social identification (De Swaan 1995). Social identity (or simply identity), then, can be defined as the systematic establishment and signification between individuals, between collectivities, and between individuals and collectivities, of relationships of similarity and difference (Jenkins 1996: 4). When identity is shared with others in a group, it is a collective identity. A collective identity emphasises how people are similar to each other, or what they are believed to have in common. Again, one of these commonalities is people's difference from others because in the face of 'their' difference, 'our' similarity becomes the focus (Jenkins 1996: 80). These processes of bonding and dividing 'enable us to perceive our communities as *imagined communities*' (Blokland 2003: 63, emphasis in original). These communities are imagined because not all its members know each other, while they feel nonetheless that they belong together: 'in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson 1991: 6; Blokland 2003).

The differences and similarities between people are thus the foundation for the formation of community identities, which is not a fixed state but a process. In that process people use social relations to identify themselves and others socially. Based on Weber (1978) Blokland identifies

three types of social relations: transactions, attachments and bonds.⁵ These are defined by either rational or non-rational actions (Weber's description of social relations is closely related to that of social action). *Rational* action refers to meaningful operations that are deliberate and consistent. It can be broken down into instrumental-rational and value-rational. *Non-rational* action refers to traditional or affective relations. *Transactions* are social relations with instrumental-rational orientations and refer to roles rather than to individuals. Examples are customers at a large shop or members of a gym. *Attachments* are social relations based on value-rationality. Actions are intrinsically meaningful but do not concern specific individuals while interaction is not always necessary. Examples are members of a church or a football team. *Bonds* are non-rational relations with affective orientations. They are determined by emotions, are interactive and long-lasting, and derive from sympathy and shared interest. The individuals with whom people bond are not universally interchangeable. Examples are friends and affective family members. Both bonds and attachments are sociable, meaning that they are non-instrumental. Bonds, however, are based on affectivity, whereas attachments are based on affinity (Blokland 2003). Before going into the different relationships in our case study, and what these mean for the coexistence of different communities, we present our methods.

Methodology

This paper is based on one case study, namely Doarpstún in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. Doarpstún is one of seven gardens in a more elaborate research on community gardens, four of which were studied intensively over a period of two years. All seven gardens are thriving and attractive places that beautify the neighbourhoods in which they are situated, and where people enjoy coming, spending time and meeting others. Without wishing to disqualify these benefits, the research also showed, however, that gardens are just like the real world: people disagree, get along better with some than with others or simply enjoy working alone. Doarpstún is no exception in that sense. Once again, it is an impressive place in itself. Run by volunteers for more than a decade, local policy makers, journalists and involved citizens consider it a successful example of a community garden. It has won several prizes, and is the regional 'model project' of a national funding programme. Nevertheless, the garden exemplifies how one space is used by different groups, leading to processes of rapprochement as well as of separation. That is why Doarpstún is the focus of this paper; although not exclusive to this particular garden, it most clearly illustrates these processes.

We used three main techniques to study Doarpstún: participant observations, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Observations allowed us to gain insights into people's roles at the garden (who works when, who visits the shop, who drinks coffee with whom), to listen to informal conversations, and to get a 'feel' for the implicit relations at the garden. The first

⁵ The fourth type, interdependencies, are not meaningfully directed towards others and are therefore non-social. They are instrumental and non-rational, leading to abstract connections. Examples are service providers or abstract others in extended chains (Blokland 2003, based on Weber 1978).

author visited the garden more than twenty times from November 2010 until May 2012. She volunteered (weeding alongside volunteers or running the shop) and was present on occasions such as the winter sale, a theatre show and a village meeting. During these visits she had small conversations with the people who were present and observed both daily life and special occasions. After each visit she made field notes, describing who was present, what activities were performed, how the day was structured, the topics of conversations, the atmosphere, etc. The researcher was open about her research, but did not write during the visits in order to minimise the obstruction. Field notes were jotted down in the car before leaving the site and expanded upon later. As the researcher was on the mailing list it was possible to complement these field reports with email announcements and the bi-weekly newsletters.

The questionnaire was used to gain a general overview of people using the garden; their motivations, the frequency with which they visit, their activities at the garden and their purchasing behaviour at the garden shop. Since it was not possible to access people's mail or home addresses, the newsletter was used to attract people to the online questionnaire. The newsletter is sent to all 180 members of the garden; people become a member by volunteering or paying a small yearly fee (of €6). The questionnaire was also announced at an information evening, which was also open to non-members. This led to a total of 48 respondents.

We supplemented and enriched this quantitative data with semi-structured interviews. This gave us a better understanding of the relationships at the garden and people's views on the garden's use and purpose. The interviews centred around people's motivations to be involved, their actual involvement, the food at the garden and the presence of and relation between different groups of users. Respondents were found through the questionnaire; 24 people indicated that they were available for an interview. We then contacted 15 people randomly, leading to 11 interviews (one of which was with two respondents). Supplemented by an interview with a key informant in an earlier phase of the research, this led to a total of 12 interviews (13 respondents).

Introduction to Doarpstún

Doarpstún, which can be translated as 'village garden', is a community garden located in Snakkerburen, a former village now part of Leeuwarden. Leeuwarden is a city of just under 100.000 inhabitants in the north of the Netherlands. Doarpstún was founded by a small group of Snakkerburen residents in 2001, with the aim of developing an environmentally sustainable garden to produce various types of vegetables, and where people with different backgrounds could meet, school children could learn and cultural activities would be organised (www.dedoarpstun.nl). The gardening activities - growing organic⁶ fruit and vegetables and keeping chickens - are performed by volunteers. Most volunteers are from the city of Leeuwarden

⁶ No fertilisers, pesticides or herbicides are used. The garden is not certified and does not always use organic seeds.

rather than from the village of Snakkerburen. An on-site garden shop sells vegetables, eggs and flowers from the garden, as well as some local jams and teas, and additional vegetables from a nearby organic farmer. The shop is only open to members but in practice passers-by are not refused. The price of the vegetables comes on top of the €6 annual member fee, but prices are similar to supermarket prices for non-organic vegetables (e.g. cheaper than supermarket prices for organic vegetables). Snakkerburen residents organise cultural activities at the garden, and school classes sometimes visit for lessons on gardening. Doarpstún is set up as a foundation - management decisions are made by a board. Figure 7.1 shows Doarpstún's location and the places of residence of the respondents. The water to the immediate south of the garden marks the border between the village and the city.



Figure 7.1. Location of Doarpstún (red), and respondents' places of residence (blue: villagers; pink: volunteers; yellow: foodies) (source: questionnaire).

Results: Villagers, volunteers, foodies

Roughly three groups of people make use of Doarpstún: villagers, volunteers and foodies. These groups visit the garden for different purposes, use it in different ways and have different places of residence. It is important to note that respondents were assigned to an exclusive group (each respondent is allocated to one group only). We first assigned people living in the village to the group 'villagers'. Thereafter, respondents who do not live in the village were allocated to the group 'volunteers' when they volunteer. Finally, respondents neither living in the village nor volunteering were assigned to the group 'foodies' (see table 7.1). Hence, these groups are ideal types; in reality some villagers do volunteer and some volunteers are interested in organic food. However, there is ample evidence that these are in fact three distinct groups, as we discuss in more detail below.

Table 7.1. Overview of the three groups using the garden.

Group	Place of residence	Role of the garden	Respondents	Questionnaires	Interviews
Villagers	Snakkerburen	A meeting place, where one becomes 'part of the closeness of the neighbourhood'.	Those who live in the village.	18	5
Volunteers	Leeuwarden	A place to spend time working, together with others, often to recover from psychological distress.	Those not living in the village, who volunteer.	11	5
Foodies	Leeuwarden	A place to buy fresh and organic produce, in a garden where one experiences social cohesion.	Those neither living in the village, nor volunteering.	15	3

Note: Four respondents did not give their place of residence or lived somewhere else; these were removed from this analysis. Two respondents live in a neighbouring village; they were added to the villagers group as the villages form an entity and are geographically close.

Villagers

The first group consists of *villagers* – these are the people living in the village of Snakkerburen. Villagers have different reasons for being involved in the garden than other respondents (see figure 7.2). They stated more often than non-villagers that they want to support a project in their neighbourhood. Non-villagers, in contrast, are more interested in supporting a sustainable project, and want to buy vegetables or volunteer at the garden. The interviews reveal why villagers want to support a neighbourhood project; to them, the garden is a village meeting place. All interviewees from Snakkerburen referred to the social function of the garden when asked why they support it and what it is that attracts them. Residents meet other villagers at Doarpstún and get to know them. In essence the garden fulfils the role of a village hall or pub; it's where people stay in touch with their neighbours. This is reflected in the following quotes:

It's an important place to stay in touch with people from the village that I do not meet at birthdays. (...) Outside of the garden I made friends, at the garden I became part of the closeness of the neighbourhood, so to speak. (DT5)

It's a beautiful place for the village. It's a good thing for social cohesion. Indirectly it's a place to get together, because there's a shop. When you need some vegetables you go there and then you'll always meet some people. (DT11)

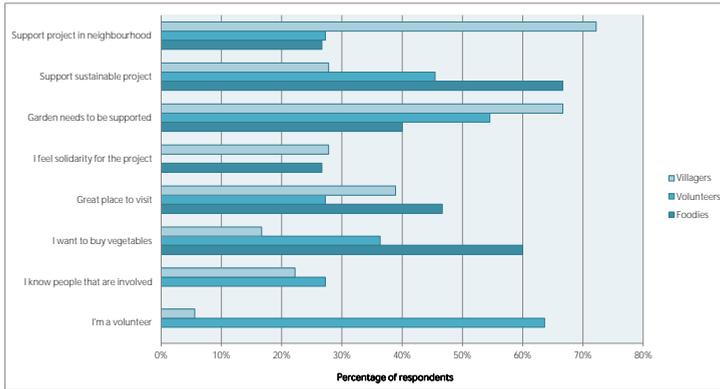


Figure 7.2. Reasons for being a member of Doarpstún. Respondents could tick up to three given options (n=44) (source: questionnaire).

The idea that the garden is a village meeting place is confirmed by the fact that all interviewees in this group argued that Doarpstún is a village garden rather than an urban garden, as illustrated by this quote:

I feel that the garden belongs to Snakkerburen and the atmosphere that we have here. Because that's what it relates to for me. It's a matter of the village and not a matter of the city. (DT10)

The questionnaire also confirms the social role Doarpstún plays for the villagers. Respondents were asked to tick the three most fitting of a list of statements. Figure 7.3 shows that respondents from the village agreed more often than other respondents with the statement that the garden fulfils an important social role for Snakkerburen. It also demonstrates that villagers get to know other people through the garden, and most respondents agreed that the garden has a nice atmosphere. Interestingly, only a few villagers indicated that the garden plays an important role for them personally. Presumably, villagers recognise the social role for the village as an entity rather than for their own personal network.

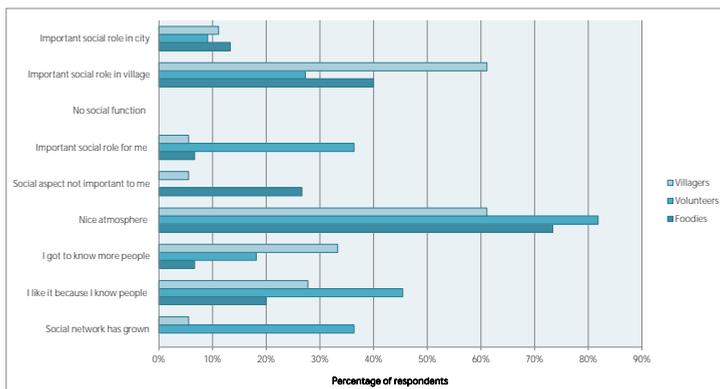


Figure 7.3. Statements on the social role of Doarpstún. Respondents could tick up to three given options (n=44) (source: questionnaire).



Volunteers

The second group of garden users consists of *volunteers*, respondents from the city of Leeuwarden who are engaged in volunteering. In practice, the physical gardening work is done by people from outside of the village. Note that we define volunteering as doing the actual gardening maintenance such as harvesting and weeding, so that villagers who take part in the garden board are not defined as volunteers.

Besides the fact that they all volunteer, the group of volunteers is rather mixed. Doarpstún's website states that one of its goals is to provide space for volunteers with various backgrounds. Roughly three types of volunteers are recognised;

1. Idealists who are interested in food, nature and sustainability;
2. People who simply enjoy gardening;
3. People who were referred to the garden by institutes such as reintegration organisations and the health department (www.groendichterbij.nl/node/879).

Although we recognise these three groups of volunteers, most of our respondents belonged to the last category. One interviewee explained, for instance, that he was diagnosed with burn-out. The garden enabled him to 'put his hands in the earth', which was what he needed at that time. Informal conversations during the participant observations give a similar picture; an adolescent who comes round for an hour now and then to 'be around people'; a student struggling with a depression; a woman in her twenties with burn-out, running the shop; another woman who is long-term unemployed. Interviewees (both villagers and volunteers) referred to the volunteers as people who are less confident, struggle to find their place in society, or are vulnerable. Three volunteers mentioned that they are attracted by the garden because there is space for all these people:

That here, in the earth, with the flowers and the fruits and the vegetables, and together with, well also with people that are maybe a bit weaker. That's very special to me. (DT3)

Just as it does for the villagers, Doarpstún fulfils a social role for the volunteers. Figure 7.3 shows that volunteers stated more than other respondents that the garden fulfils an important social role for them personally. Hence, while villagers enjoyed the social aspect the garden brings to the *village*, volunteers enjoy the social aspect it brings *them*. Figure 7.4 shows that volunteers met many other people, more in fact than villagers did. Moreover, the other volunteers they socialise with are often in the same situation, so that they understand and support each other. Observations and informal conversations illustrated this. During the coffee breaks people sit around and talk, perhaps smoking a cigarette; volunteers who pass by on an errand during these breaks often stay and join in. During work they tease each other or help one another with personal advice and practicalities, or simply sympathy ('it's just not your day today'). The volunteers can thus be seen as a community in which people accept each other and enjoy each other's company, as is expressed by these interviewees:

Everyone is here with their own story, so everyone treats each other carefully....everyone is really nice to each other. They all respect each other's boundaries. (DT7)

The gardening work, just being busy with the different jobs in the garden, but also especially, and that's the good thing here, that you do it together. (DT6)

I like the garden because everyone is accepted for who they are. (Informal conversation)

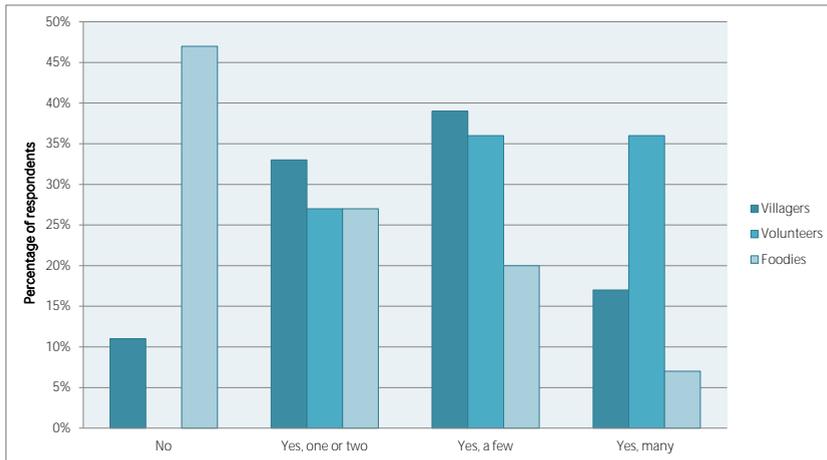


Figure 7.4. Did you get to know others through Doarpstún? (n=44) (source: questionnaire).



Foodies

The third group of garden users can be described as *foodies*, people interested in the vegetables grown at Doarpstún. Foodies, more than other respondents, are interested in buying vegetables and more often argued that they support the garden because it is a sustainable project (see figure 7.2). Figure 7.5 shows respondents' reasons for buying vegetables at Doarpstún. For the foodies it is particularly important that they are organic. Foodies also enjoy the fact that the vegetables taste good and that they are local. When asked about their reasons for becoming a member of Doarpstún, all three foodie interviewees referred to the fresh produce, as the following quote illustrates:

They harvest the salad for you, or the carrots, or the cabbage. So it can't be any fresher. It's without poison. (...) They work in a natural way and you see what it looks like originally. (DT14)

Thus, foodies are specifically interested in Doarpstún food, especially when compared to the villagers. Indeed, figure 7.6 shows that foodies eat more vegetables from the garden than villagers. The difference between foodies and volunteers is incidentally less profound, for which there are two reasons. Firstly, volunteers take home some of the harvest after having worked at the garden, also because they receive a discount when buying vegetables. Secondly, some

volunteers are rather interested in food. As we saw above, one of the groups of volunteers at Doarpstún is 'idealists interested in food, nature and sustainability'.

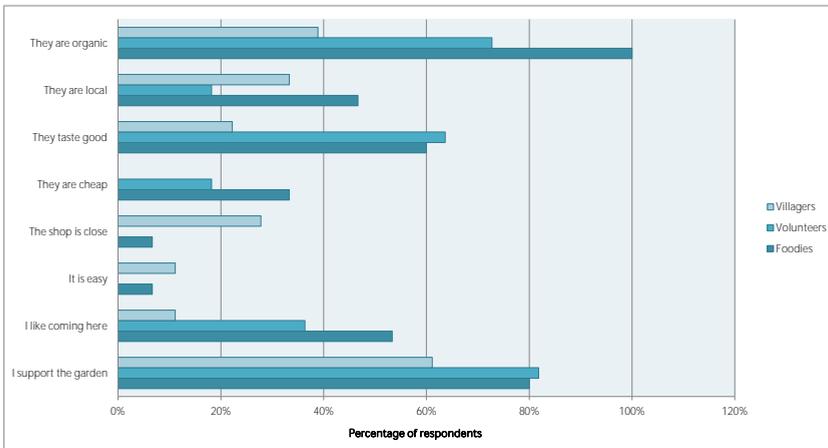


Figure 7.5. Reasons for buying vegetables at Doarpstún (n=44) (source: questionnaire).

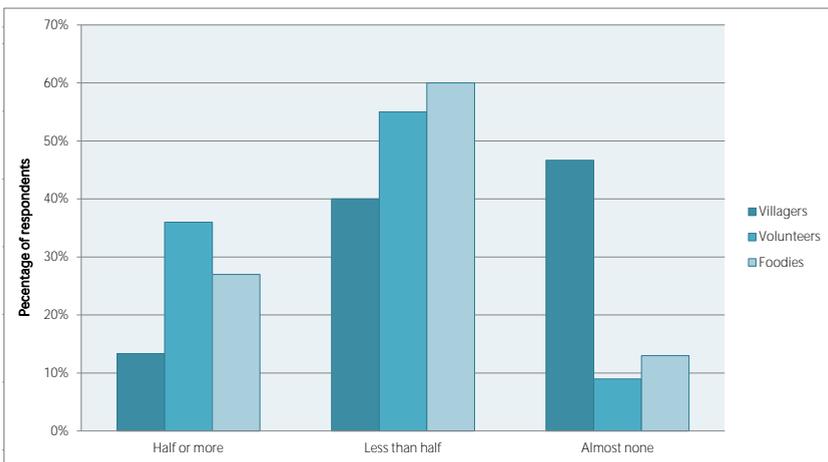


Figure 7.6. Amount of vegetables respondents eat from Doarpstún (n=44) (source: questionnaire).

Nevertheless, it is not just the vegetables that foodies are interested in. Interviewees argued that they enjoy the garden as a nice place in itself and mention the cohesion they experience. The questionnaire confirms this; foodies most often stated 'the garden is a great place to visit' as a reason to become a member (see figure 7.2) and most often ticked 'I like coming here' as a reason to buy vegetables (see figure 7.5). Hence the garden is more than merely a shop to the foodies; they are also attracted by the possibility of supporting a worthwhile project in a charming village. We illustrate this with two quotes:

The combination of sustainability and a sense of community. (...) There is a sense of community and you become part of that. (DT13)

This is a wonderful project, first of all because it's a beautiful garden. It's such a nice initiative. (...) It offers more aspects, besides preserving that garden, like voluntary work and cultural activities. (...) That garden offers so many possibilities. And I can get the freshest produce there. (DT14)

Social class

Before continuing with our analysis, we briefly discuss an important difference between the village and the city, related to social class. Although we do not have information on the social classes of our respondents, we know that Snakkerburen is a relatively well-off village. Leeuwarden uses a so-called 'social index' to compare its different neighbourhoods. In comparison to the total population of Leeuwarden, the inhabitants of Snakkerburen are highly educated, healthy, and earn high incomes. They report higher than average satisfaction with where they live and are highly involved in society (how they score on 'involvement in society' is determined by scores on the four indicators of social contacts⁷, leisure⁸, volunteering⁹ and school and work¹⁰ (www.socialeindex.nl/leeuwarden; leeuwarden.buurtmonitor.nl)). The social index is expressed by a total mark, calculated as a combination of marks on several separate indicators. The average mark for Leeuwarden is 6.3; Snakkerburen scores 7.9. (www.socialeindex.nl/leeuwarden). Hence, Doarpstún is located in an area that is inhabited by people who have a relatively high level of life satisfaction.

Volunteers and foodies come from all over the city; they do not represent specific neighbourhoods although figure 7.1 hints that foodies live closer to the city centre than most volunteers. Our research does suggest a difference in social class between volunteers and foodies, as many volunteers started coming to the garden in order to recover from longer periods of unemployment or struggle with illness or psychological problems.

Conflicts at the garden

The fact that Doarpstún is used by groups with different social backgrounds and differing interests leads to conflicts about use and ownership - especially between villagers and volunteers. We illustrate this with the following story. By the end of 2011, the garden board consisted of three people that had been on the board for a long time. It was time for new people, with fresh spirit and ideas. A new garden board of five people was formed, of which

⁷ Determined by the proportion of people that (1) regularly have contact with family and friends, (2) sometimes feel lonely, and (3) regularly have contact with neighbours.

⁸ Determined by the proportion of people that regularly (1) play sport, (2) visit cafes, restaurants or nightclubs, and (3) are involved in sociocultural activities and/or hobbies.

⁹ Determined by the proportion of people that (1) provide care for others in their environment [Dutch: mantelzorg], (2) perform voluntary work, and (3) organise activities in the neighbourhood.

¹⁰ Determined by participation in (1) school and (2) work.

four were villagers.¹¹ The main spearhead of this board was to restore the social function of the garden; Doarpstún was to become what it was in the old days, a social gathering place for the village. In the words of one of the board members: 'it is a meeting place for the village and I think that it should have that function' (DT4a). The board's inclination to restore Doarpstún as a village garden did not go down well with the volunteers. They felt unheard and unappreciated; many of them felt that the villagers wanted to have too much influence over the garden, without putting in any effort themselves:

The village comes first at all times. The villagers are given all the space to comment on anything and they can decide on what they want. While they never come here. (DT7, volunteer)

[The volunteers] feel like... what are the villagers doing here suddenly? They have... they missed all that happened before and they feel like, well, this is our garden. And now suddenly these villagers are interfering with the garden again. (DT5, villager)

This sentiment was evident during a village and volunteer meeting (January 2012) that the board organised to present itself and its plans. During this meeting there was a heated discussion. Villagers complained about the location of the new garden shop. Volunteers, however, accused the villagers of not spending any time and effort on the garden and therefore not having any legitimate decision-making power. Interestingly, many volunteers gave their opinion quietly, whispering their annoyance to each other only (source: field notes), which implies that they did not feel empowered to speak up. Interviews and informal conversations confirmed that villagers and volunteers form two separate groups, though people also stated that things are currently changing for the better. The conflict can be largely understood by looking at what happened in the past, and how villagers lost a feeling of ownership over the garden. This largely started – or was expanded - with the arrival of *reintegration clients*, who represented yet another group to use the garden. This group is no longer present as such; when the funding ceased, the reintegration project stopped as well.

In its starting days, the garden was maintained by villagers. Over the years many of them left because of internal conflicts; there were differing ideas on the development of the garden. In order to get the work done, the initiator of the garden attracted reintegration clients. This meant that unemployed people worked at the garden to gain work experience. Many of these reintegration clients were not intrinsically motivated by gardening work; rather, it was part of their trajectory towards a 'real' job. Reintegration clients brought a different atmosphere and feel to the garden and villagers stopped coming: 'Because of [the reintegration clients] the number of volunteers from the village decreased. And therefore also the sociability' (DT5). Moreover, the group contrasted starkly with the social class with which most villagers would

¹¹ At that time there were several vacancies. This was discussed at a meeting of the organisation of the yearly theatre show. As the theatre show is a cultural activity of the village, only villagers were present at this meeting. Two people stepped forward. These then approached others - villagers. Hence, by being part of existing structures of decision-making, villagers strengthened those positions. Non-villagers did not step forward, but neither were they approached.

identify, which increased the distance between villagers and garden:

We found empty beer cans everywhere in the garden. There were some guys here that were just drinking and smoking weed. That's why the villagers were so disgruntled about the reintegration clients, there were some real wild guys here. (...) It's a real distance, reintegration clients with drugs problems and criminal backgrounds, and who knows what. If you consider that at first it was just a cosy village garden.... (DT7)

The reintegration clients were therefore not much appreciated in the village. With the drastic change of atmosphere, villagers felt that the garden was no longer how they remembered it and they lost feelings of ownership: 'For a very long time the villagers had the feeling that it wasn't their garden at all' (DT10). This is not very different for the volunteers, however. Many of them were unhappy with the reintegration project and, like the villagers, they felt that things improved when it stopped:

There are volunteers that say great, such a different atmosphere suddenly and much more relaxed, they really feel much better here now. (DT7)

This quote shows that the current group of volunteers maintains another atmosphere than there was in the days of the reintegration clients. Even though some of the current volunteers started as reintegration clients, they are no longer part of an official reintegration project (as there is no funding or supervision). They stayed at or came back to the garden because they enjoy gardening and are motivated to spend time at Doarpstún. But although villagers and volunteers had similar feelings about the reintegration project, they tend to have different social backgrounds. The reintegration project may have highlighted these differences. The question is, therefore, to what extent villagers distinguish between the volunteers of today and the reintegration clients of the past. Moreover, the loss of ownership which resulted from the reintegration project strengthened villagers' wishes to restore the garden's function as a village meeting place. We further discuss the relationships between villagers and volunteers after having explained that villagers and volunteers categorise each other as 'them'.

'Us' villagers versus 'them' volunteers

As argued, for villagers, the garden is not how it used - or ought - to be. Villagers do not feel the cohesiveness that they did in earlier times, when they shared a drink after working in the garden on a Saturday afternoon. They want to see this social function of a meeting place for the village restored, which is why this is the spearhead campaign of the new garden board. One of the main arguments that justifies development in this direction is that this was the garden's original function:

To me it's really a village garden. I feel that it should become that again. Because... we know from experience that if the garden gets really big, and attracts more people from



the city, the people from the village stay away. And of course the initial idea was a garden for the village. (DT5)

When villagers recall these old days, they paint a picture of the perfect garden bringing the whole village together. However, there is scattered evidence that suggests that even in the old days, the garden was not paradise. For instance, internal conflicts made a group of gardeners start another garden elsewhere. Also, there were not enough villagers available for the gardening work, which is why other people were invited to the garden in the first place. The memory of the time before the reintegration clients is therefore probably more idealised than the reality: '[t]he reconstruction of the past in nostalgic memories is always more cohesive than the actual past' (Blokland 2003: 204).

Whether or not Doarpstún did in fact manage to bring the village together into a cohesive whole is not entirely relevant, however. What is important is that this collective memory supports the villagers in retaining a community, partly imagined, which they feel is entitled to regain ownership over Doarpstún. The memory strengthens the community not only directly but also through the process of collectively recalling it, which is a way of excluding outsiders (Blokland 2003). The collective memory thus helps the villagers to 'retain their imagined communit[y] as [an] individual, privatised communit[y]' (Blokland 2003: 202). The memory has become 'nostalgic'; it presents the past as a cohesive time and confirms a negative image of the present. Doarpstún lends itself to this function; locations often play a role in stories of the past as they help people remember (Blokland 2003). It is perhaps typical that the conflict in the village and volunteer meeting was about the location of the new garden shop; the physical appearance of the place at stake was to change without villagers having approved of it.

Doarpstún is thus part of the village's social identity. This explains why villagers want to hold on to their village garden. For villagers however, Doarpstún can only strengthen the village identity if it is reserved for people that belong to 'us'. Other groups using the same space, but with different characteristics – such as the reintegration clients – threaten the village's identity. The introduction of these reintegration clients diminished villagers' feelings of ownership over and connection with Doarpstún. As this new group had such different characteristics it almost naturally became 'them'. The volunteers that replaced the reintegration clients share at least some characteristics with that group. A notable similarity is of course working in the garden while not living in the village, but for many current volunteers, their involvement with the garden also acts as a kind of reintegration; volunteers are therefore easily categorised as 'them' as well. The categories of us and them are very real; several respondents, both villagers and volunteers, mentioned that the two groups form two 'camps'.

First and foremost, it is their place of residence that places people in one or other of these camps. Referring to place of residence as a dividing line may make this categorisation process, e.g. distinguishing between 'us' and 'them', socially acceptable. However, in reality the distinction is more subtle than place of residence. Place of residence reflects social class and, as such, is a proxy for who belongs. 'Them' does not simply refer to those who do not live in

the village. Rather, 'them' refers to the volunteers - much less to the foodies. In the interviews we asked respondents about the differences between groups; 'us' and 'them' always referred to villagers and volunteers. None of the interviewees mentioned foodies as part of the conflict. Although we do not have much data that proves it, we hypothesise that the foodies are more easily accepted by the villagers because they are relatively similar to them.¹² Foodies belong, so to speak, to the same social class, the same category. Volunteers form a different category, as is expressed by the following quote:

The current group of volunteers has a different goal I think. They really get something like a working place here. You know, well, day care sounds like they are handicapped, but more like a working function for them. Like, 'in the morning or the afternoon I go to the garden to work a few hours.' That, I think, is the largest group of volunteers at work here. And the foodies¹³ engage with the garden more like me. (DT5, villager)

As foodies are relatively similar to villagers, they are not as threatening to the village community. Foodies are also less present at the garden - they may occasionally spend some leisure time at Doarpstún but usually just visit the shop. They are mere visitors, not claiming any ownership or decision-making power. This makes them less intruding than the volunteers, who spend time working and thereby transforming the garden and its atmosphere. This doesn't mean that foodies form part of the village community. Rather, there is no need to categorise them as 'them'. As Blokland (2003: 175) found for the first newcomers in the neighbourhood she studied, they 'were excluded from the imagined community but were not regarded with hostility, because their presence did not threaten the existing social order'.

Although perhaps less profound because not part of their everyday living environment, the garden fulfils an important social role for volunteers as well. Doarpstún is where they have regained a daily rhythm, found pleasure in working outdoors and bonded with others in a similar situation. Moreover, their identity as a group largely depends on Doarpstún, as it is their common denominator. However, when villagers argue that they want to restore the garden's social function, referring to what it means for the village, they deny the social function Doarpstún has for the volunteers and *their* imagined community. Therefore, to a lesser extent, the villagers are also 'them' for the volunteers. This was most notable during the village and volunteer meeting discussed earlier. When villagers complained about the location of the shop, volunteers discussed how villagers - 'they' - hardly ever come to the garden and how volunteers do all the work. In interviews, volunteers expressed the existence of two camps, but in a more detached, almost neutral way. One of the volunteers for example argued: 'The garden sometimes sort of feels... right, it is those villagers again' (DT6). Note how 'the garden' refers to 'us' without actually using that word and without placing the interviewee within

¹² The idea that foodies share characteristics with the villagers is in line with the literature, which emphasises that people involved in Alternative Food Networks – for the foodies Doarpstún functions as an alternative food network – are often the more advantaged people in society (e.g. Guthman et al. 2006; Qazi and Selfa 2005; Guthman 2003; Weatherell et al. 2003; Guthman et al. 2002).

¹³ The respondent uses the word 'member', which is how the foodies are usually referred to. However, as both volunteers and villagers are officially members as well, we make the distinction by calling this group foodies.

that group. It also shows that the garden is seen as a separate entity, not part of the village. Another volunteer argued:

When I cycle through the village, I do greet everyone. It's not hatred and envy or anything. It's not that when I pass them I give them the finger or so, nothing like that. It's just, well you don't see those people here, you just notice... it's a little... there is still some friction so to say. (DT7)

Here again, the respondent nuances the conflict between volunteers and villagers. Perhaps volunteers experience the categories less strongly because the boundaries around their group are less visible; volunteers come and go, connected to each other by the garden only, while villagers are bound not only by their interest in the garden but also by living in the same village.

Relationships between two communities

We have shown that villagers and volunteers distinguish the other as 'they', a category that sets the other apart. This categorising supports the idea that volunteers and villagers form two separate communities, both using the garden to strengthen their social identities. Foodies, although another group using the garden, cannot be seen as a community; they do not form a whole as there are no social bonds between them. We do not want to speculate too much about the type of relationships *within* the communities of volunteers and of villagers. In her study area Blokland (2003) found neighbourly relations in all possible forms (transactions, attachments and bonds). It is also to be expected within our communities that some people will have bonds while other relationships can be characterised as attachments, or even transactions. However, looking at the relationships *between* both groups may shed more light on the existence of two communities within one garden.

Although volunteers and villagers form two groups, they do not ignore each other; interaction does take place. When they meet at the garden they chat or drink a round of coffee together. Moreover, volunteers are accepted and appreciated for the work they do: 'Because they are the people, well, if there were no volunteers, then the garden's right to exist would also be gone' (DT4a). Volunteers receive Christmas gifts, are involved in meetings and the board organises drinks to thank them for their efforts. Hence, like the neighbours that Blokland (2003) describes in her work, villagers and volunteers are no strangers to each other. However, what's important is '[t]he attitude underlying such relations (...): people knew others superficially but did not consider them *relevant* others. In their own imagined communities, these neighbours were insignificant' (Blokland 2003: 121, emphasis in original). Doarpstún shows a similar picture; the villagers 'tolerate' the volunteers, but they are not seen as relevant others. This suggests that the relationship between the two groups is not based on affectivity or affinity; it is instrumental rather than sociable and can therefore be defined as a *transaction*. Transactions arise from instrumental-rational orientations and refer to roles – 'volunteer', 'villager' – rather

than to individuals. In the ideal type, transactions are impersonal and non-social. In reality, relationships are hardly ever exclusively so; sociability often figures in transactions but is less important than in bonds and attachments. Hence, while volunteers and villagers share the same space and occasionally a coffee, in the end volunteers maintain the garden's soil and plants while villagers manage the financials and administration.

This is why villagers and volunteers do not form one community, even though the garden helps to strengthen the individual communities. In other words, there are processes of rapprochement as well as processes of separation. In Weber's view (1978, as referred to by Blokland 2003: 86), transactions offer little foundation for imagined communities, as they are about achieving objectives. Blokland (2003) argues, however, that transactions have the potential to contribute to imagined communities under the condition of public familiarity. Familiarity is promoted when the same site of interaction is shared. This familiarity may not only strengthen processes of separation – by providing the knowledge that is needed to make social distinctions – but may also promote bonding by creating potential relationships which can be activated in times of crisis. In other words, the fact that both groups work towards making Doarpstún a great place to be, from serving beer at the harvest festival to restoring the gates after a storm, may in fact mean that bonds are increased between the two groups. Moreover, as Blokland notices, the ideal types are not equivalent to reality. Transactions at Doarpstún seem far from the ideal type; there is personal interaction, there are shared coffee breaks and there is shared affinity for the garden itself. Moreover, not only is there a lot of talk about restoring the relationship between Doarpstún and the village, but there are efforts too; villagers are for instance invited to garden festivities – and show up. Finally, some personal relationships between villagers and volunteers are far from transactions and may indeed be categorised as bonds.

Conclusion

We started this paper with the assumption that although community gardens are often romantically sketched as places where all involved form a family of food and friendship, garden communities may in reality enclose not one but several communities, so that rapprochement and separation take place simultaneously. By examining Doarpstún, we tried to shed more light on these processes, looking at the categories of 'us' and 'them', social identities and different types of relationships between communities.

Our research has shown that Doarpstún is in fact an important meeting place for not one, but two distinct communities. Volunteers who maintain the garden have become a community at Doarpstún, where they get together, spend time working side by side and have learned to accept each other's peculiarities. Indeed, many volunteers stated that the garden plays an important social role for them *personally* and that their social network has grown because of it. Doarpstún also plays a social role for village residents, albeit a more general one; most villagers state that the garden plays an important social role *in the village*. Doarpstún is where

they come together, drink a coffee, and speak to those they live close to but do not visit in their homes. The garden board organises activities for different types of villagers – Easter egg hunts for the young, concerts and theatre for the culturally engaged, shared dinners for the old. Such visitors develop a sense of ownership for the place. Doarpstún thus indeed performs the task of bringing people together and building communities. In fact, the village community is one of the attractions for the foodies, individuals who are not part of the village community (and do not form a community of their own) but enjoy buying food in the ambiance of the garden.

Doarpstún thus harbours two different communities that use the garden for different purposes. These two communities do not form a larger whole and in that sense the garden is similar to the neighbourhood as described by Blokland (2003), in that it forms and maintains different communities. Hence, besides the processes of rapprochement as described above, we also recognise processes of separation. Both communities categorise the other by place of residence: those that live in the village, and those that do not. In a sense this distinguishing factor is, however, a proxy for social class. For the villagers at least, 'them' are not only those who do not live in the village, but also those who come from another social background, because since most volunteers come from a different social class, their presence threatens the identity-giving function the garden has for villagers. Moreover, volunteers spend time working at and thereby transforming the garden; by doing that they develop and demonstrate feelings of ownership over the garden. Villagers on the other hand experience a loss of ownership, which is why they wish to restore Doarpstún to being a village garden. They justify this aim by referring to the past, when other groups were not yet part of the garden structure.

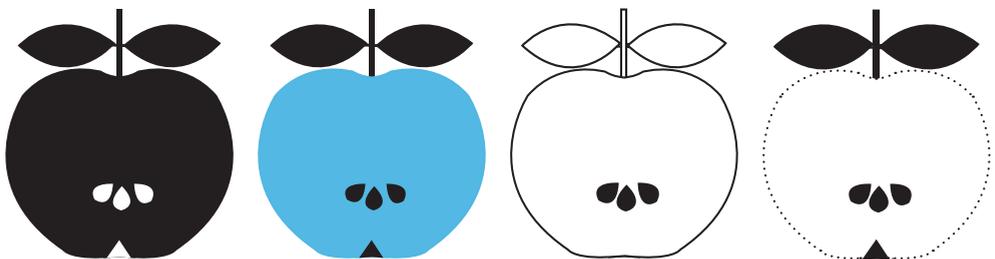
The social bond between the two groups can be defined as a transaction; it is instrumental-rational rather than sociable and is focused on roles rather than individuals. However, as the transactions at Doarpstún are far from the ideal type, there is ample opportunity for the creation of familiarity, so that these transactions have the potential to contribute to a larger imagined garden-community. In fact, both in words and in deeds, the two groups already reach out to each other. This is not so say that one community is inevitably preferable over two communities, or that bonds are superior to transactions. However, an integration of the two communities might not only stop the current reproduction of existing stratifications (while urban volunteers with various backgrounds maintain the garden, the management is in the hands of well-educated, well-earning, middle-class villagers) but might also stretch the boundaries of the group for which the board tries to restore the garden's social function.





Chapter 8

Discussion and Conclusions



The aim of this thesis was twofold; firstly, I aimed to increase understanding of the degree to which community gardens stimulate social relationships between those involved, as well as the value participants give to these relationships. Secondly, I aimed to gain insight into the importance attached by community gardeners to food growing per se, and the extent to which community gardens can be seen as alternatives to the industrial food system.

This chapter is organised as follows. I begin by answering the sub-questions which were posed in chapter 1. This leads to the final conclusion, presented as the answer to the main research question. Following this, I reflect on my contribution to the theory of practice as well as to the literature on Alternative Food Networks. I end with methodological reflections and suggestions for further research.

Sub-questions

Why do people get involved in community gardens? What are their motivations?

Participants have various reasons for getting involved in community gardens. I recognise two rough categories of gardeners; those who are motivated primarily by an interest in gardening and the resulting vegetables, and those who are motivated above all by the social effects associated with community gardening. Gardens that are characterised by the first motivation can be seen as interest-based, whereas gardens that are characterised by the second can be seen as place-based.

However, it is important to realise that most people involved in community gardens are driven by a combination of motivations. Some respondents had an interest in the activity of gardening, but were particularly looking to do this in a group. Others were motivated to start a neighbourhood project, but were simultaneously driven by the hobby aspect of the garden. In reality, place-based and interest-based gardens are ideal types; the labels are not mutually exclusive. Moreover, gardens may function as both at the same time when they accommodate more than one community - they may be interest-based to some groups, while simultaneously being place-based for others, depending on how these groups use the garden.

Participants who are not involved in the actual gardening activity – people who simply buy the produce - are generally motivated by the vegetables on the one hand, and the wish to support the existence of the initiative on the other. The gardens offer them a place to acquire fresh and local products, but they also feel solidarity for the project - either because of its community-building qualities or because they have a particular interest in local and organic produce.

Respondents in this study are hardly politically motivated and show only limited signs of a 'higher morality'. Some participants are involved in community gardens because these produce

local and organic produce, and the gardens are in fact congruent with these participants' lifestyles. However, participants themselves are reluctant to frame their involvement as political or in terms of participation in a new or alternative food movement.

How, to what extent, and under which conditions does community gardening promote the development of social relations between participants?

In all seven of the gardens which were studied, social relations were seen to come about – regardless of whether or not gardens are neighbourhood bound, whether gardens consist of private or communal plots, or whether or not participants are involved in gardening. The gardens stimulate social contact, informal conversations and mutual help. By bringing about relationships of one form or another, gardens contribute to the enhancement of social cohesion between its members. While it may come as no surprise that gardens promote social relations amongst participants who become involved in the community garden with those effects in mind, it is interesting to see that gardeners who were not motivated by these social effects also create social bonds with others. This is due to the fact that people meet each other in the garden repeatedly; some gardeners spend a large amount of time in their gardens for several years on end. Moreover, a shared interest in gardening – and the possibilities this offers in terms of conversation and advice – also stimulates the development of relationships.

Community gardens thus stimulate the creation of social ties between its participants. But to what extent do they result in stronger, more cohesive neighbourhoods? This is a relevant question, especially in the light of the participatory society. Whereas the degree to which a neighbourhood functions as a community has been strongly influenced by modern communication, transport and scale enlargement (Van Ginkel and Deben 2002), for many people the neighbourhood is still the basis of their sense of home (De Kam and Needham 2003; Van Ginkel and Deben 2002). This thesis showed that place-based community gardens especially have the potential to become important meeting places. Such gardens offer the opportunity to work together towards a common goal, and once established, can develop into neighbourhood spaces to be used for various other shared activities. This way the gardens also attract neighbours who are not into gardening, and gardeners also meet each other during non-gardening activities. As a result, the distinction between fellow gardener and neighbour becomes blurred. In this respect, the simple fact that people live close to the garden and each other is essential; neighbours meet people whom they have met in the garden on the street, in the car park or in the playground. The fact that they have already met each other and have a topic of common interest enables them to have short informal conversations. Such conversations are important in connecting to others (Aarts and Van Woerkum 2008). An important note is, however, that these place-based gardens can only come into existence because a certain degree of cohesion is already present; social relations in the neighbourhood make it possible to start up a garden communally. Subsequently, the garden enhances and strengthens the relationships between its participants. This suggests that the impulse to start a gardening activity might be rather difficult to achieve in neighbourhoods with high

incidences of segregation, isolation or simply a lack of social cohesion.

Most interest-based gardens lack opportunities to develop relationships that originated in the garden beyond the garden's borders, simply because such gardens are often maintained by people who do not live close to the garden or each other. Another reason is that gardeners in interest-based gardens are generally less motivated by social motivations per se. There is therefore less emphasis on the relational aspects of gardening; gardens are not actively used as community meeting places. For both reasons the effects of interest-based gardens on cohesion beyond the boundaries of the garden are smaller.

Another important question in the light of the participatory society is about *who* is involved in these community gardens; to what extent are these gardens truly 'participatory'? There are a few things to be said in this respect. Firstly, *place-based gardens* are by definition cultivated by people living near to the garden and will therefore most often attract people with relatively similar socio-economic backgrounds. In the interviews, respondents indicated that garden participants were indeed fairly equal with respect to socio-cultural characteristics. On the other hand, the participants of such gardens actively organise activities at the garden, trying to involve different groups of people as well. These gardens therefore try to be inclusive - although reality shows that it is hard to attract residents with different socio-economic backgrounds. Hence, although community gardens do not intentionally exclude people, they often attract a crowd of like-minded people for two reasons; firstly because there is a relative lack of variation in the neighbourhood, and secondly because gardens may create an atmosphere in which certain people do not feel at home (see for example Paddock 2012). Secondly, *interest-based gardens* attract people who enjoy gardening, which is not specific to a certain socio-economic background; especially now that gardening is relatively popular, gardens attract people with varying levels of education, the rich and the poor, the old and increasingly also the young. Theoretically, therefore, interest-based gardens can be inclusive. Indeed, participants at the one traditional allotment in this research represent all walks of life and expressed appreciation of this variety. However, this does not hold true for all interest-based gardens in this research. Most of them mainly attract more highly educated people with Dutch backgrounds and similar political orientations. Presumably, membership of a harvest-it-yourself garden or cultivating five square meters in the inner city attracts a specific group of people. Thirdly, even if gardens do attract people with different socio-economic backgrounds, this is not to say that these people necessarily form one community, as I showed in chapter 7; participants at community gardens may not so much live with, but rather alongside each other and gardens may thus support not one but several communities.

Finally, this thesis showed that the social effects of community gardening are less present for those people who are not engaged in the activity of gardening. These people are not only less interested in or motivated by social relations at the garden, they also simply spend too little time at the gardens to meet and speak to others on a regular basis.

How do participants value these social effects?

For participants of place-based gardens, the social effects of gardening are an essential element of the gardening experience. Place-based gardens are integrated into the neighbourhood, they are meeting places that bring people together, not only to garden, but also to engage in other activities that are more or less related to gardening and food - wine drinking, harvest festivals or theatre, for example. Although gardening itself is important to some of these residents, such gardens can be described as a means – to increase social cohesion in the neighbourhood - rather than an end.

As explained above, interest-based gardens play a very limited role in the neighbourhood. They are rarely cultivated by people living in their direct surroundings, and those people who are involved in cultivation tend not to be looking specifically for social contacts either. However, the fact that these gardens do not create neighbourhood social ties does not mean that the relationships that are created are unimportant. Van Ginkel and Deben (2002) explain that today most people have various specific, singular relationships that are not locality-based, rather than intensive multiple relationships within a small group of people in a geographically restricted area. Garden contacts can be seen as one of these types of singular relations, and should be valued in that light; these non-local weak ties have their own merits, for example with regard to job opportunities and social integration (Kearns and Forrest 2000; Granovetter 1973). Moreover, most respondents indicated that the relationships they have with people in their garden are valuable, simply because they make the gardening experience more enjoyable. However, for most participants in interest-based gardens, the social effects are less essential than they are to participants in place-based gardens; meeting and knowing others at the garden is welcomed and appreciated, but it is perceived as an extra and not 'what it is about'.

I therefore agree with Turner (2011: 514), who studied community gardens in Australia and wrote that: '[T]he communal aspect of the gardens was not found to be the key motivational element for any of the participants (...). For all but one interviewee, it was an added benefit, but it did not encourage participation'. Moreover, although people do help each other at the garden, help beyond the garden's boundaries is less present. Therefore, I argue that these social contacts are 'replaceable' – they are not about specific people. Gardening is more pleasant when one can greet other gardeners, talk about the weather and exchange seeds, but within certain limits it is perhaps less important who these others are exactly. In that sense, these relationships can in general be seen as *attachments* rather than *bonds* (see Blokland 2003); they are intrinsically meaningful but do not concern specific individuals.

Nevertheless, it is important to mention that I came across several exceptions; some friendships do develop, especially if people are involved in the same garden for a large number of years or work together on a communal plot – this is also the case in interest-based gardens.

To what extent do the diets of community garden participants originate from the gardens in which they are involved? What is the importance of food in community gardens?

The extent to which community gardeners eat from their gardens differs widely. In general, the diets of participants at interest-based gardens contain more garden-grown vegetables than the diets of place-based garden participants. Most people who garden at interest-based gardens eat a substantial amount of food from their gardens; at least half of the vegetables they consume come from their garden, while some gardeners take pride in eating from their gardens all year round. For others, however, the harvest forms a less substantial – but still regular – part of their diet; their gardens are smaller or they are more interested in the activity of gardening itself than the harvest. Most participants from place-based gardens only eat from their gardens occasionally or do not consume vegetables from the garden at all. This difference is explained by the fact that for most participants from interest-based gardens, food is an end in itself whereas for gardeners from place-based gardens, food is a vehicle for bringing people together around a common purpose. Participants who buy food at community gardens sit between these two extremes; most of them eat from the gardens regularly, but not as substantially as the average interest-based gardener; while their participation is often motivated by the vegetables, they report not always acting upon these motivations in practice.

Despite my finding that having access to garden-grown food is of little importance to many place-based gardeners, food itself plays an essential role in all gardens – including in place-based gardens. The activities residents organise to engage people with the garden often centre on food, not only as such activities often involve eating (barbecuing, frying potato chips with children, or pot-luck dinners) but also because the harvest can be shared, sold and celebrated in the form of harvest festivals and open days. Hence, rather than access to food, it is the sharing and exchanging of and learning about food that is important in place-based community gardens. Hence, as Hendrickson and Hefferman (2002: 364) argue, food production can be used as an ‘inherent part of a socially meaningful process, the building of community’. Although they were referring to ‘food communities’ (such as networks where farmers and consumers meet), their argument goes for community gardens as well; relationships are established around food but are about more than the food itself. This is not only true for place-based gardens, where the production of food is often subordinate to the social dimensions of the garden, but also goes for interest-based gardens, where the relationships which are built form an important aspect of the gardening experience.

What is the importance of growing or getting access to *alternative* food for participants of community gardens?

The importance of alternative food differs greatly between community garden participants. As argued, in place-based gardens, growing and eating food is a way of engaging with others. Food is thus a vehicle first and foremost for something else. Clearly, access to alternative food

or being part of a food movement can hardly be seen as a main reason for starting or being involved in these gardens. However, looking more closely at these gardens reveals some aspects that relate to a certain reflexivity around food. Firstly, even though vegetables play a minor role in these gardens, people chose to start a garden rather than something else, and thoughts about healthy and local food did play a role for some participants. Secondly, place-based community gardens generally use organic production methods for environmental and health reasons. Thirdly, these gardens have the potential to teach children (and adults) about food; not only do residents see food growing in their neighbourhood, but gardens also provide food for neighbourhood meals. This suggests that although these gardens do not mean much in terms of quantities, they may have a relevance in terms of awareness. I did not investigate this in this thesis, but both Farges (2015) and Cox et al. (2008) argue that interaction and observations of what others do can be significant in raising awareness and diffusing practices. Turner (2011: 518) however, found that being involved in community gardens did not translate into a broader commitment to local food and/or sustainable living practices. Community gardeners did not, for instance, buy more organic produce in the supermarket. Whether or not place-based community gardens influence other food provisioning practices is thus open for debate. The above does make clear, however, that while the place-based community gardens in this research cannot really be regarded as a *reaction* to the industrialised food system, let alone an attempt to create an alternative food system, certain aspects of these gardens are in line with the alternative rhetoric.

Interest-based gardens are all about growing food and some gardeners eat from their gardens all year round. In that sense, the gardens provide gardeners with non-conventional food. But this in itself does not make these gardens 'alternative'. Firstly, some respondents were completely unfamiliar with some of the jargon around alternative food, such as food miles, and saw no problems with using chemicals on their gardens. However, it is important to mention that these people come across new food growing practices increasingly often; for a few years now, for example, Windhoek allotment (the most 'traditional' garden in this research) has a 'natural gardening' working group as well as a permaculture demonstration garden. Secondly, chapter 3 showed that those gardeners who are interested in issues such as local and organic food do not see their involvement as political and do not consider themselves to be part of a food movement. Although they were aware of specific problems with the conventional food system and found it important to eat organic food, they did not describe this in terms of activism or alternativeness. Rather, being involved in the garden fitted in with their lifestyle, just as people save energy and separate their waste. Hence, while these gardeners can be considered reflexive in their consumption choices, this does not mean that they are committed to the ideologies of social movements around food (DuPuis 2000) and we should not assume that reflexivity is political.

Participants who buy rather than grow produce at a community garden were closest to considering themselves as part of a food movement. This thesis also showed, however, that many of these participants have difficulty visiting the gardens on a regular basis so as to include the produce in their diets. Hence, while their motivations showed signs of reflexivity, these motivations are tangled up with the more mundane daily life motivations. Without having

responsibility for the maintenance of the garden and its associated structural visits, procuring vegetables at a community garden proves to be a time-consuming activity that often loses the battle when compared with other food acquisition places in terms of convenience. Hence, although the label 'alternative' would have fitted these 'shoppers' best when looking at motivations, in practice most of these participants do not manage to act with commitment and regularity upon their concerns by visiting these gardens regularly; their alternativeness is therefore only theoretical, at least in part. This group is of course heterogeneous in itself – other participants in this group do visit the gardens more regularly. However, as said, most respondents were reluctant to frame their involvement as alternative or political.

Hence, the fact that community gardening is about food, and the fact that this food is not related to the conventional food system, does not mean that these gardens necessarily represent a conscious alternative to the industrial food system. Similarly, while the importance of social relations in community gardening certainly differs from conventional food systems, and while most of the gardens studied are characterised by a lack of market relations, this is not necessarily a conscious strategy to 'resist incorporation' into the conventional food system (Watts et al. 2005: 27). However, some aspects of community gardening – the emergence of organic production methods, an association with certain lifestyles, perhaps increasing awareness – fit the alternative rhetoric.

Conclusions

Now that the sub-questions have been answered, it is time to draw final conclusions. I base these conclusions on the main research question, formulated in chapter 1:

What is the significance of community gardening in terms of its intention to promote social cohesion as well as its representation as an alternative food system?

This thesis showed that the different organisational set-ups of community gardens – e.g. individual plots or communal plots – reflect gardeners' different motivations for being involved in these gardens. The gardens in this thesis can be defined either as place-based or as interest-based. Social effects were demonstrated to occur in both types of gardens. In all of the gardens studied, participants meet and get to know others and value these contacts. Derived from this finding, I conclude that community gardens strengthen or enhance this element of social cohesion. Differences between the various organisational designs were limited. However, the research also showed that social relations at place-based gardens have larger effects beyond the garden itself. This is because people involved in place-based gardens live closer to each other and therefore have more chances of meeting each other outside of the garden, and because these gardens are actively used as neighbourhood meeting places. On the other hand, contacts in interest-based gardens are valuable, but replaceable. In that sense this research confirms the findings of DeLind (1999), who states that vegetables alone are not enough to build community; an explicit interest in building cohesion is needed to

create more than a pleasant gardening environment.

Reflecting on the participatory society specifically, the community gardens studied in this thesis fit the rhetoric of its proponents in a few ways. Firstly, the case study gardens are all grassroots initiatives, started by citizens rather than public or governmental institutions, and are all examples of groups of people uniting to reach certain goals, such as taking communal responsibility for the living environment or practising a hobby as a community. Hence, these gardens are examples of people taking responsibility for their own lives and living environments. Secondly, some of these gardens explicitly aim to create a place where people can meet, get to know each other and form bonds. These place-based gardens contribute to forming lively neighbourhoods where people know and help each other – beautifying the neighbourhood along the way. Interest-based gardens do not fulfil such a neighbourhood function, but do stimulate bonding between people who would not otherwise have met, and enable the sharing of passion and enthusiasm, thus also broadening people's networks. Thirdly, in all gardens people help each other, sometimes also beyond the realms of the garden. Thus, it can be said that all of the gardens studied in this research decrease isolation and broaden people's social networks. Facilitating community gardens can therefore be seen as a beneficial strategy for policy makers who aim to increase social relations between urban residents, especially since 'intervention[s] in the physical environment, in the form of the creation of an attractive physical environment and public meeting places, is one of the few means by which a government can bring people in the neighbourhood closer together' (Flap and Völker 2004: 64).

However, other findings of this thesis warn against too firm a belief in the ways in which gardens contribute to meeting the goals of the participatory society. First of all, most gardens are visited by people with relatively similar backgrounds and therefore hardly contribute to relationships between people from different societal strata. In that sense they are more about participatory *networks* than a participatory *society*. Besides, even if they do attract people with different socio-economic backgrounds, these different groups do not automatically mix and form bonds. Secondly, although mutual help is present, for most gardeners this does not reach the level which the proponents of the participatory society aim for (for instance, reducing the need for professional care), simply because garden relations do often not evolve into strong friendships but are relatively replaceable. Thirdly and as argued above, interest-based gardens do not function as meeting places in the way place-based gardens do; as gardeners do often not live in the direct neighbourhood, contacts are harder to follow up and non-gardeners are involved only to a limited degree. Finally, place-based gardens are more likely to be successfully founded when there already is a certain degree of social cohesion; their social benefits are therefore not available to all neighbourhoods. All this means that we should not overestimate the importance of social bonds at the gardens in people's daily lives; community gardens are no panacea for issues such as isolation or unequal access to social networks.

The research also showed that community gardens can hardly be seen as a conscious alternative to the industrial food system. As explained, the produce harvested at the gardens

plays a minor role for some gardeners. Other participants eat more of the produce from community gardens, and for some of them the choice to consume such locally-grown food relates to a lifestyle in which environmental considerations play a role. Some participants thus do have reflexive thoughts about their food choices. However, they do not link these to their own political goals and we cannot therefore assume that this reflexivity is political. In fact, I found no relation between the degree to which participants consume locally-grown food and their motivation to change the food system. If anything, this relation was inverse; the respondents who consumed the most garden-grown vegetables often showed no interest in contributing to an alternative food system and were not motivated by a 'higher morality'. Rather, they took pleasure in eating fresh vegetables that they grew themselves. Hence, if the label 'alternative' presupposes that motivations to be involved are politically motivated, these gardens are not part of the alternative food movement.

The case from New York which was presented in chapter 4 was able to reclassify associations with growing food. It positioned the narrative around urban farming in urban discourses and practices revolving around local food, green cities and social entrepreneurship. In the Dutch community gardens in this study, the meaning attached to growing food is either that which is associated with traditional food growing practices, or is seen as a vehicle to create and strengthen social relations in the neighbourhood. Community garden participants did not perceive growing urban food as a new way of re-establishing connections between food production and consumption and neither did the gardens become integrated into a 'foodies' culture'. Halwell (2002) questions whether urban agriculture is really new and alternative or whether it is just the mind-set of the people that is new. However, it seems that it is primarily the framework surrounding these initiatives that is new; people involved in community gardens do not necessarily feel connected to the movements with which they are associated.

Reflection on the theory of practice

In this thesis I used and aimed to contribute to the theory of practice. Even though the last years show a renewed interest in practice theory, I am not aware of other research that combines practice theory and community gardening.

I operationalised the theory of practice in two main ways. First, I used participant observations to study what people do in reality – rather than only relying on what they say they do. This method was useful specifically because it turns research into an embodied activity, as is gardening itself. Turner (2011) argues, for example, that we know and produce the world through our bodies, which is especially apparent in relation to food; food performs multiple roles in shaping and sustaining our bodies. The everyday experience of community gardeners therefore happens largely through the body (Turner 2011). Being engaged in participant observations made it possible to experience this embodiment myself, enabling me to truly 'live the practice', and therefore to understand it from the inside.

Secondly, I asked people in interviews about their food provisioning practices by dividing this practice into all its separate elements; planning the meal, acquiring ingredients, cooking, eating, storing, and discarding waste. Deconstructing the practice this way was helpful in gaining an understanding of how people manage everyday life, and how food acquisition finds a place within their everyday rhythms. The deconstruction of food provisioning practices – of which growing food is a specific element - sheds light on how and to what extent people experience the practice of community gardening as a food acquisition practice, and to what extent they relate it to other elements of food provisioning such as cooking and eating. Focusing on the separate elements of food provisioning practices helped me realise that acquiring food from community gardens is a different practice to different people. What appears to be a single activity – getting food from a community garden – is thus part of two distinct practices; growing food or shopping for food. In fact, the degree to which people engage in the activity of eating from community gardens depends largely on whether they are involved in growing or in shopping. Moreover, by showing that these practices are tied up with other practices – running errands, spending leisure time, but also shopping for other groceries - the theory exemplifies the difficulties of changing behaviour, for example in the direction of eating more locally produced food. Practices are not isolated activities; changing behaviour in one practice often requires adjustments in the performance of other practices as well, and consequently requires alterations in daily routines. The engagement in a particular practice thus relates to the engagement in another practice. This implies that the meanings of these practices relate as well; whether or not to shop at the garden depends not only on the importance one attaches to eating local food, but also on the importance of, for example, picking up a child on time from the nursery. By clarifying such dependencies for the specific case of eating from community gardens, this thesis contributed to an increased understanding of how the engagement in and the meaning of specific practices relate.

While practice theory is useful in terms of its focus on routines, it also leaves room for motivations; practice theory observes the role of emotion, embodiment and desire (Warde 2005). As Reckwitz (2002: 256) expresses it, people are not just 'judgemental dopes who conform to norms'. Neither do they perform practices without thinking or reflecting on goals or motivations. Rather, they use their knowledge and act upon motivations. This means that motivations are important for fully understanding a practice. Indeed, in chapter 4 we argued that if cases of urban food growing are tied up with different meanings (partly defined by motivations), they cannot be classified as a single practice. This thesis also showed, however, that motivations delineate how the practice 'works out in practice'. By this, I mean to say that the way in which a practice such as community gardening is given shape attracts people with certain motivations, who, by reproducing that practice, increase the attractiveness of the practice for others with similar motivations. Applying this to an example, if gardeners are highly motivated by growing vegetables, they will focus on this element of the community gardening practice by spending a lot of time tending to the vegetables and praising others for their beautiful produce. That way they attract other practitioners who are motivated by growing vegetables and value this aspect of community gardening, while putting off gardeners who would, for example, welcome more focus on social activities. As a result, practitioners reinforce the community garden's focus. As different gardens were started

as a result of different motivations, gardens develop in different directions. Hence, while community gardening appears to be one practice, it should in fact be interpreted as several distinct practices; in the case of this thesis, the practice of food growing and the practice of social gathering. By influencing how gardens operate, or how the practice of community gardening works out in practice, motivations thus define whether a garden is place-based or interest-based, as argued in chapter 6. Gardens can also be both at the same time, if they accommodate different groups of people. The point is that not so much the physical or organisational characteristics of the garden define whether it is interest-based or place-based, but the way in which people use the garden – which practice they perform - which is dictated by their motivations. As a result, motivations impact on the benefits and outcomes of the garden. Hence, this thesis highlights that motivations are indeed important in practice theory and should not be overlooked when studying practices.

Contribution to Alternative Food Networks literature

Motivations are not only essential for the theory of practice; apprehending motivations of community gardeners is also an important contribution to the literature on Alternative Food Networks. Identifying the motivations of community gardeners is especially important as it is unclear to what extent these are really fundamentally different from those associated with the conventional food system; since producing food in cities is seen as an activity which is different from the mainstream, motivations are too easily assumed to be reflexive (Tregear 2011). Insight into these motivations thus helps us understand to what extent urban food production is truly alternative. This thesis has shown that involvement in community gardens does not necessarily represent a 'deeper morality'. To some participants it is an everyday act of resistance, which they themselves do not describe as political. Others engage in gardens for social reasons, or, although giving great importance to the produce, have no conscious aim to provide an alternative to the food system. Hence, by studying motivations this thesis confirmed Tregear's critique that AFNs are not necessarily political. Or, put differently, the research showed that not all initiatives of growing food in an urban context can be defined as alternative.

That said, when looking at what happens at the gardens, it becomes clear that they largely operate outside of the rules of the market economy – they are independent from the conventional food system. In practice, these gardens are therefore 'real', or 'actual' alternatives to the conventional system. Indeed, in many of the gardens which were studied, market relations are absent. In chapter 3 I introduced the concept 'sliding scale of producership' to highlight the fact that in most community gardens, participants are involved at least to some degree in production. The fact that most participants eat from their gardens as well implies that producer and consumer are often combined in the same person. Hence, when people are engaged in the practice of gardening, the categories of producer and consumer lose their meaning and become irrelevant; gardening is a hobby and not an economic activity. Some participants, however, are involved in acquisition-by-shopping; they lack the embodied

experience of gardening. They therefore relate to the gardens as to market initiatives. Nevertheless, the meaning that these gardens have for them goes beyond an instrumental economic logic only. Thus, even if they treat and value the gardens to some extent as market places, these gardens are not merely an equivalent to the supermarket. This means that just as garden participants can be seen as inhabiting different places along the sliding scale of producership, gardens can be seen as inhabiting different places along a sliding scale of marketness. Hence, participation in the garden – whether that entails responsibility for the vegetables, involvement in harvesting only, or buying vegetables at the garden shop – enables people to perceive the garden as more than a market initiative in which one is involved in monetary transactions.

Watts et al. (2005) state that AFNs are stronger alternatives to the conventional food system when they function outside of the market; they argue that such AFNs rely on the networks around food, which to them are inscribed with 'higher moralities'. This thesis challenges that view, as it shows that even if market relations are absent – so that the commodification of food is being challenged – community gardens do not necessarily represent a higher morality; people may engage in food production for more mundane reasons than political activism. The gardens studied in this thesis are thus no *alternative* alternatives. However, considering that they operate outside of or in different ways than the conventional food system, and, moreover, that they lead to people consuming locally produced urban food, they do qualify as 'actually existing alternatives' (after Jehlička and Smith 2011) (this is not true for all gardens; in some of them, the produce of the garden plays a minimal role and in others chemicals are widely used). Since Tregear (2011: 425) argues that researchers often overlook initiatives that lack the 'virtuous goals' associated with AFNs, leaving the 'justice in conventional systems unscrutinised', actually existing alternatives like the gardens in this research make for an interesting contribution to the AFN literature.

However, the question is to what extent the label 'AFN' is still useful; the discussion above implies that the use of the word 'alternative' is problematic; it is unclear what it means exactly (Renting et al. 2012; Tregear 2011) and as a result it is also unclear when an initiative should in fact be considered alternative. The distinction between allotments and AFNs, which I made in chapter 5 in order to investigate to what extent these really are different, proved not to be useful. Allotments are not necessarily different from other types of AFNs. However, neither are they necessarily the same. The gardens presented in this thesis are diverse and carry characteristics of both the alternative and the conventional. There are several sliding scales, as I argued above. Hence, the world of food seems too complex to be represented by a dichotomy between alternative and conventional food systems; as I have shown, the distinction between what is alternative and what is conventional is not black and white. Moreover, conventional food systems are not static either; fair-trade is becoming the standard for products like bananas, coffee and chocolate and extremely cheap meat is losing terrain as an acceptable food choice. In other words, while we may not know what alternative actually means, we do not really know what conventional entails either.

To conclude, this thesis shows that not all initiatives involving growing food in the city can

be seen as *alternative* food networks, and that understanding whether or not initiatives resist incorporation into the food system is not enough to define them as such. However, this thesis also suggests that determining whether or not a 'deeper morality' is present is not a satisfactory way of defining food networks as alternative either, as this neglects the fact that motivations do not always overlap with practical reality. This suggests, similarly to what I argued for the use of practice theory, that determining whether a food network can be regarded as alternative requires studying both motivations and practical reality. This combination might prevent us from making presumptions about moralities, or confusing ideas about how it could work with how it actually works: in this thesis, the theory of practice helped to uncover the fact that engagement in community gardening means different things to different people and has different places within the rhythm of daily life as well. In addition, in order to avoid further confusion over how the label 'alternative' should be understood, it is perhaps useful to consider replacing the term AFN with that of civic food networks, as Renting et al. (2012) advocate.

Methodological reflection

In this section I will reflect briefly upon the methods that I selected for this research, and how these worked out in practice. This is not only because there are always things that one would have done differently in retrospect, but also because some methods proved particularly useful.

The cases that I selected gave me valuable insights, and my contact with the gardeners was always pleasant. In that sense I am content with the case selection. With hindsight, however, the selection was not the most practical. The two cases from the first selection that I did not manage to keep involved had similar characteristics, such as being cultivated by people living in the neighbourhood in which it is located. As a result, gardens with these traits were missing from the selection, while these characteristics were indispensable for the research, as I realised later. By including more cases at a later stage I overcame this omission, but the consequence was that there was not enough time to use participant observations in these additional gardens. Moreover, even after adding more cases, the share of immigrants within the selection remained very low, despite the fact that immigrants are an important target group for many newly developed gardens.

The combination of participant observations and interviews was very useful. Referring to Lofland (1971), Fontana and Frey (2005) argue that these two methods go hand in hand, as much of the data gathered in participant observation comes from informal interviewing. While I did indeed have many brief, informal conversations and observations were useful as they enabled me to see what community gardening is like in practice, I also particularly valued being a familiar face; this made it easier to find interview respondents and probably increased the response rate of questionnaires. A difficulty with participant observations, however, was that in some cases I almost became part of the group. As I spent a lot of time at the gardens it was inevitable that I started to understand the routines and behave accordingly – in fact, this is the goal of participant observations. Becoming part of the group therefore

certainly has its advantages (according to Baarda et al. 2005 the role of the researcher is only successful when people involved no longer take the researcher into account). However, the researcher also risks losing 'his or her distance and objectivity' (Fontana and Frey 2005: 708). I tackled this problem by constantly taking mental notes, critically observing what happened and continually comparing between gardens. Moreover, when life at the gardens started to become 'normal', I realised that the saturation point had been reached and decided to end this type of field work.

Suggestions for further research

As with most studies, this PhD did not only find answers but also showed how much there is still to uncover. In this paragraph I therefore give some suggestions for further research. First of all, I suggest looking beyond the direct participants of community gardens. In this research I only studied the effects of gardens on those directly involved – gardeners and shoppers. However, gardens are likely to have impacts on others too. As I discussed in chapter 6, some gardens are used as neighbourhood meeting places, attracting not only gardeners but also other local residents. Besides, gardens may beautify an area, which may lead to stronger neighbourhood identification, also for people not involved in the gardens themselves. Gardens may therefore also have meaning, for instance, for office workers taking a stroll on their lunch break or school children from a nearby school. Conversely, residents may feel that a garden makes the neighbourhood look messy, or they may not feel connected to the garden at all. Hence, community gardens do not only have an impact on gardeners but also on other residents, and this impact may be both positive and negative; knowing more about this impact is essential for fully understanding a garden's effects. Such research could focus on social effects, but also on the extent to which the presence of food growing in the neighbourhood raises residents' awareness and knowledge of (healthy) food. Similarly, it would be useful to study the dietary effects for non-gardeners who receive excess harvest from friends, family and neighbours.

Secondly, I suggest comparing gardens with other public places where people come together, such as sports fields, or other places where people communally practice their hobbies, such as choirs. Such a comparison is important in order to fully appreciate the benefits of community gardens, and to put the results of this thesis in context. In other words, it would be useful to know how gardens 'score' on the creation of social contacts as compared to the local football club, for example. This knowledge is especially valuable for planners, as they want to fulfil specific functions effectively and efficiently with their designs of public space; is it more effective to create a community garden than a football pitch, and if so, under what conditions and in relation to which goals? In the case of such a comparison, it is important not only to look at the existence of social contacts, but to also take the intensity and diversity of social contacts into account; who is involved and who is not, and what are the effects of that involvement? Related to this, it would be interesting to look more deeply into the specific role food plays in enhancing social relations. In these conclusions I have already

speculated on the binding role of food by arguing that food allows for the organisation of various communal activities, such as cooking and eating together, sharing recipes or food festivals, and Oldenburg's (2001) examples of third places also often serve food. As food is what distinguishes community gardens from other public places, it would be interesting to elaborate on this. Similarly, it would be interesting to investigate the potential role of an entrepreneur; there are several examples of urban food-growing initiatives that have been initiated and are run by an entrepreneur who makes a living from the garden; to what extent does this impact upon the social effects of community gardens, and how does it influence the comparison with other uses of public space?

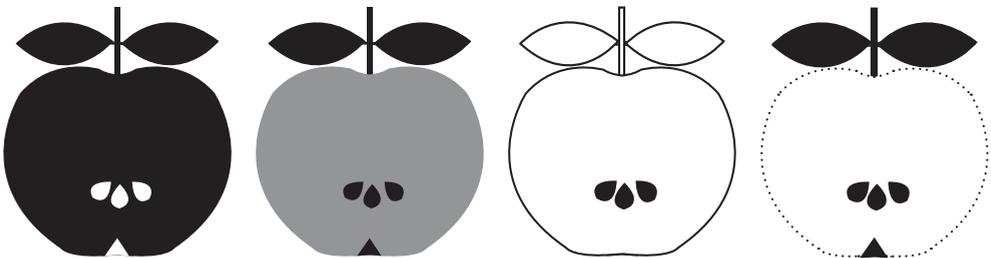
In this thesis I investigated the extent to which gardeners' diets originate from their gardens. I did not, however, study the extent to which (or the ways in which) people's involvement in gardening impacts upon their food patterns. This is a third suggestion for further research. Although research could focus on the extent to which community gardening leads to more vegetable-rich diets, a more interesting question, especially with respect to this thesis, would be whether gardeners' diets become more 'alternative'. Hale et al. (2011: 1855) argue, for example, that participation in community gardens is a way to alternatively experience the process of producing and accessing food, potentially affecting the ways in which communities think about food, the environment and health. Relevant questions are whether being engaged in a community garden results in different buying behaviour in the supermarket, and whether it leads to an increased interest in local or organic food - or perhaps the opposite. A second step would be to investigate the mechanisms behind such potential changes, as well as to what extent and why dietary changes differ between different types of gardens.

Finally, I suggest further elaboration on allotments in relation to their potential role as actually existing alternatives. Such an elaboration could consist of comparing allotments in different countries. During the course of this PhD research I conducted a short study on allotments in Oslo, Norway. In one of the two Norwegian allotments examined, the harvest played a much smaller role than in the other, which was similar to the Dutch allotments studied in this research. The difference between these two Norwegian gardens seemed to be related to gardeners' socio-economic positions; the well-educated and well-earning participants at the case garden in a gentrified neighbourhood were less interested in growing food for consumption than participants from the case garden in a less well-off suburb. It would be interesting to relate such differences in socio-economic backgrounds to (changing) diets and motivations representing alternativeness, which would give more insights into what constitutes an actually existing alternative. Another suggestion is to focus on allotment gardeners who started gardening more recently. The profile of the typical allotment gardener is changing, and issues such as organic cultivation are becoming more mainstream, so it would be interesting to examine the degree to which these new gardeners eat from their gardens, how that relates to their motivations, how this may impact other gardeners and how this ultimately changes the allotment gardening experience.





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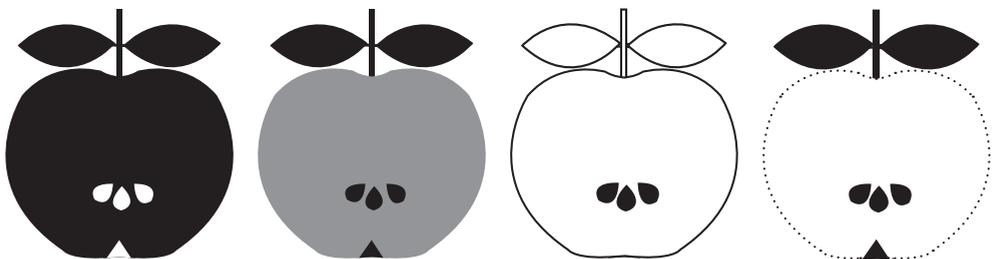
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Summary



Introduction

The aims of this thesis are twofold; firstly, it aims to increase the understanding of the extent to which community gardens enhance social cohesion for those involved; secondly, it aims to gain insight into the importance community gardeners attach to food growing per se, and the extent to which participants perceive community gardens as an alternative to the industrial food system.

I define community gardens as a plot of land in an urban area, cultivated either communally or individually by a group of people from the direct neighbourhood or the wider city, or in which urbanites are involved in other ways than gardening, and to which there is a collective element. Over the last years, community gardens have sprung up in several Dutch cities. Although there are various reasons for an increasing interest in community gardens, there are two that I focus on in this thesis in particular. The first is the assumption made that community gardens stimulate social cohesion in inner-city neighbourhoods, to be seen in the light of the 'participatory society'. The second is community gardens' contribution to the availability of locally produced food, in the context of an increased interest in Alternative Food Networks (AFNs).

The Dutch government aims to transform the Dutch welfare state into a participatory society in which citizens take more responsibility for their social and physical environment. This way the government not only hopes to limit public spending, but also wishes to increase social bonding and the self-organisational capacity of society. Community gardens fit the rhetoric around the participatory society, as they are examples of organised residents taking responsibility for their living environment. Moreover, the literature suggests that gardens are physical interventions that may decrease isolation by acting as meeting places. However, both the extent to which community gardens enhance social cohesion and under what conditions they may do so are unclear, especially as gardens come in various designs, shapes and sizes.

The popularity of community gardens also seems to be related to an overall increasing societal interest in food, and can be discussed in relation to Alternative Food Networks. AFNs are food systems that are different in some way from the mainstream, and are seen as a reaction to consumer concerns about the conventional food system. They are often considered to be dictated by political motivations and injected with a 'deeper morality'. The category 'AFN' is however a heterogeneous category, as is the conventional food system; neither can be easily defined. The degree to which community gardens can be seen as AFNs is therefore unclear. While they do improve the availability of local food and operate outside of the market economy, we do not know how much and how often people eat from their gardens, nor do we know to what extent they are involved in the gardens in order to provide an alternative to the industrial food system. Hence, there is a lack of knowledge about the sense in which community gardens are *alternative* alternatives.

Research questions

The overall research question of this thesis is:

What is the significance of community gardening in terms of its intention to promote social cohesion as well as its representation as an alternative food system?

This broad question is instructed by the following sub-questions:

1. Why do people get involved in community gardens? What are their motivations?
2. How, to what extent, and under which conditions does community gardening promote the development of social relations between participants?
3. How do participants value these social effects?
4. To what extent do the diets of community garden participants originate from the gardens in which they are involved? What is the importance of food in community gardens?
5. What is the importance of growing or getting access to *alternative* food for participants of community gardens?

Methodology

An important theoretical lens in this research is the theory of practice. Practices are defined as concrete human activity and include things, bodily doings and sayings. By performing practices people not only draw upon but also feed into structure. Routinisation – of practices, but also of daily life – therefore plays a central role in practice theory. Practice theory allows for an emphasis on practical reality as well as a study of motivations. This focus on how people manage everyday life, and how gardening fits within that, makes it particularly useful for this thesis.

I define social cohesion as the way in which people in a society feel and are connected to each other (De Kam and Needham 2003) and operationalised it by focusing on ‘social contacts, social networks, and social capital’, one of the elements into which social cohesion is often broken up. This element was operationalised as 1) contacts (the width of social cohesion) and 2) mutual help (the depth of social cohesion).

This research has a case study design; I studied four Dutch community gardens over a two-year period of time, and later supplemented these with an additional three cases. As practices consist of both doings and sayings, analysis must be concerned with both practical activity and its representation. I used participant observations to study practical activities, and interviews, questionnaires and document study to examine the representation of these activities.

Findings

Chapters 3 to 7 form the main part of this thesis. They are papers/book chapters that have been submitted to or are published by scientific journals or books. All of them are based on the field work.

In chapter 3 we compare two of the case studies and determine to what extent they can be seen as 'alternative'. We argue that although reflexive motivations are present, most participants are unwilling to frame their involvement as political, and mundane motivations play an important role in people's involvement as well. By using the concept of 'food provisioning practices' we show that participants of community gardens are often required to be actively involved in the production of their food. This means that participants are both producers and consumers: the gardens show a 'sliding scale of producership'. This chapter also shows that political statements are not a perfect predictor of actual involvement in community gardening. This finding was one of the main reasons for starting to use the theory of practice, which is the main topic of the next chapter.

In chapter 4 we compare one of my case studies with an urban food growing initiative in New York City. By comparing the internal dynamics of these two cases and their relations with other social practices, we investigate whether different urban food growing initiatives can be seen as variations of one single practice. We also study the question of whether the practice can be seen as emerging. In particular, we take the elements of meaning, competences and material (Shove et al. 2012) into account. We found both similarities and differences between the two cases, with the main difference relating to the meanings practitioners attach to the practice. We conclude, therefore, that it is not fully convincing to see these cases as examples of the same social practice. We also argue that urban food growing may be considered an emerging practice, because it combines various practices, both new and established, under one single heading.

In chapter 5 we use the theory of practice to explore how urban food growing is interwoven with everyday life. We compare four community gardens - two allotments and two cases which we define as AFNs. We found that participants of the allotments are involved in the practice of gardening, while members of the AFNs are involved in the practice of shopping. The gardening practice requires structural engagement, turning it into a routine. The produce is a result of that routine and is easily integrated into daily meals. As AFNs are associated with the practice of shopping, they remain in competition with more convenient food acquisition venues. Eating from these gardens is therefore less easily integrated in daily life; every visit to the garden requires a conscious decision. Hence, whether members are primarily involved in shopping or in growing has an impact on the degree to which they eat urban-grown food. This shows that motivations are embedded in the context and routine of everyday life, and 'only go so far'.

Chapter 6 concerns the organisational differences between the seven case studies in this

thesis and the extent to which these influence the enhancement of social cohesion. We study people's motivations for being involved in the gardens and compare these with the three main organisational differences. This comparison reveals that the gardens can be divided into place-based and interest-based gardens. Place-based gardens are those in which people participate for social reasons – aiming to create social bonds in the neighbourhood. Interest-based gardens are those in which people participate because they enjoy growing vegetables. Nevertheless, all of these gardens contribute to the development of social cohesion. Moreover, while participants who are motivated by the social aspects of gardening show a higher level of appreciation for them, these social aspects also bring added value for those participants who are motivated primarily by growing vegetables.

In chapter 7 we present a garden that exemplifies that gardens may encompass not only one, but indeed several communities, and that rapprochement and separation take place simultaneously. While this garden is an important meeting place, thereby contributing to social cohesion, it harbours two distinct communities. These communities assign others to categories ('us' and 'them') on the basis of place of residence, thereby strengthening their own social identities. Ownership over the garden is both an outcome and a tool in that struggle. We define the relationship between these two communities as instrumental-rational – referring to roles rather than individuals - which explains why they do not form a larger unity. Nevertheless, the two communities show the potential to develop into a larger imagined garden-community.

Conclusions

This thesis shows that the different organisational set-ups of community gardens reflect gardeners' different motivations for being involved in these gardens. The gardens studied in this thesis can be defined as either place-based or interest-based; gardens in the first category are focused on the social benefits of gardening, whereas gardens in the second category are focused on gardening and vegetables. Nevertheless, social effects occur in both types of gardens; in all of the gardens studied, participants meet and get to know others and value these contacts. Based on this finding, I conclude that community gardens do indeed enhance social cohesion.

Place-based community gardens specifically have the potential to become important meeting places; they offer the opportunity to work communally towards a common goal, and once established, can develop into neighbourhood spaces to be used for various other shared activities. Most interest-based gardens lack opportunities to develop the social contacts that originated at the garden beyond the borders of the garden. These gardens are often maintained by people who do not live close to the garden or to each other, and those who garden are generally less motivated by social motivations per se. Important to note is that community gardens do not necessarily foster a more inclusive society; they often attract people with relatively similar socio-economic backgrounds and may support not one, but

several communities.

Most participants from place-based gardens eat from their gardens only occasionally; others never do so. This type of community garden can therefore hardly be seen as a reaction to the industrialised food system, let alone an attempt to create an alternative food system. Nevertheless, certain aspects of these gardens are in line with the alternative rhetoric. By contrast, most gardeners at interest-based gardens eat a substantial amount of food from their gardens, and to some of them the choice to consume this locally-grown food relates to a lifestyle in which environmental considerations play a role. However, this reflexivity is not expressed in political terms and participants do not see themselves as part of a food movement. Participants who buy rather than grow produce showed the greatest tendency to explain their involvement in political terms, but many of them have difficulty including the produce in their diets on a regular basis. I therefore conclude that community gardens cannot be seen as conscious, 'alternative' alternatives to the industrial food system. Nonetheless, the role of food in these gardens is essential, as it is what brings participants together – either because they enjoy gardening or because the activities which are organised there centre around food.

Theoretical contributions

In this thesis I used and aimed to contribute to the theory of practice. Using participant observations to study what people do in reality was particularly useful. It turned research into an embodied activity, enabling me to truly 'live the practice', and therefore to understand it from the inside.

Deconstructing the practice of food provisioning into activities such as buying, growing and cooking was helpful in gaining an understanding of how people manage everyday life, and how food acquisition fits into their everyday rhythms. It sheds light on how and to what extent people experience the practice of community gardening as a food acquisition practice, and to what degree they relate it to other elements of food provisioning such as cooking and eating. The focus on the separate elements of food provisioning practices helped me realise that acquiring food from community gardens represents a different practice to different people; some are engaged in the practice of growing food, others in the practice of shopping for food.

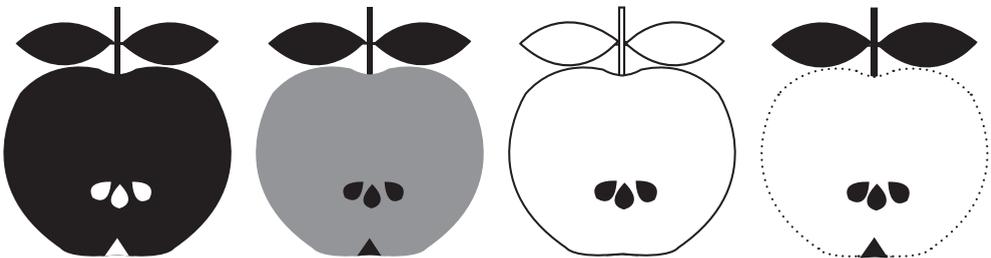
This thesis showed that motivations delineate how the practice 'works out in practice'; the way in which a practice such as community gardening is given shape attracts people with certain motivations, who, by reproducing that practice, increase the attractiveness of the practice for others with similar motivations. This implies that while community gardening appears to be one practice, it should in fact be interpreted as several distinct practices, such as the practice of food growing or the practice of social gathering. Motivations therefore influence a garden's benefits and outcomes. This thesis thus highlights that motivations should not be overlooked

when studying practices.

Apprehending the motivations of community gardeners is also an important contribution to the literature around AFNs, since it helps us to understand the extent to which urban food production is truly alternative. By studying motivations, this thesis reveals that AFNs do not necessarily represent a deeper morality, or that not all food growing initiatives in the city can be defined as alternative. However, participants of community gardens are often both producers and consumers (there is a 'sliding scale of producership'); the gardens are thus largely independent from the conventional food system. Moreover, for participants who buy produce, the meaning of the gardens often goes beyond an economic logic (there is a 'sliding scale of marketness'). Hence, while the gardens studied in this thesis are no *alternative* alternatives, most of them can be qualified as 'actually existing alternatives' (after Jehlička and Smith 2011).

This thesis showed that even those gardens in which the commodification of food is being challenged do not necessarily represent a deeper morality, which is contrary to what is argued by Watts et al. (2005). This implies that understanding whether or not initiatives resist incorporation into the food system is insufficient to be able to determine whether or not they can be defined as alternative food networks. However, determining whether or not deeper moral reflection is present is not a satisfactory way of defining food networks as alternative either, as this neglects the fact that motivations do not always overlap with practical reality. This suggests that establishing whether a food network can be regarded as alternative requires studying both motivations and practical reality. The thesis also raises the question to what extent the label AFN is still useful. Since it is unclear what 'alternative' means exactly, it is also unclear whether a given initiative can be considered alternative. Moreover, the world of food seems too complex to be represented by a dichotomy between alternative and conventional food systems; the gardens presented in this thesis are diverse and carry characteristics of both systems. I therefore suggest considering replacing the term AFN with that of civic food networks, as Renting et al. (2012) advocate.

Samenvatting



Introductie

Met dit proefschrift heb ik een tweeledig doel. Ten eerste wil ik bijdragen aan kennis over de mate waarin buurttuinen een rol spelen bij het ontstaan of versterken van sociale cohesie. Ten tweede wil ik inzicht verkrijgen in het belang dat buurttuinders hechten aan het verbouwen van voedsel, en de mate waarin zij de buurttuin zien als alternatief voor het conventionele voedselsysteem.

Ik definieer een buurttuin als een perceel in een stedelijke omgeving, gezamenlijk of individueel onderhouden door een groep mensen die in de wijk of de stad wonen waarin de buurttuin gelegen is, of waarbij stedelingen betrokken zijn op een andere manier dan het feitelijke tuinieren, met daarin in elk geval een collectief element. Een collectief element is bijvoorbeeld een gedeeld (financieel) eigenaarschap van de tuin. De afgelopen jaren zijn in een groot aantal Nederlandse steden buurttuinen ontstaan. Hoewel daar verschillende verklaringen voor zijn, richt ik me in dit proefschrift op twee daarvan. De eerste is de belofte dat tuinen sociale cohesie in stedelijke wijken kunnen stimuleren, een idee dat aansluit bij de participatiemaatschappij. De tweede is de bijdrage die buurttuinen leveren aan de beschikbaarheid van lokaal geproduceerd voedsel, passend bij de toegenomen belangstelling voor *'Alternative Food Networks'* (Alternatieve Voedsel Netwerken, AFNs).

De Nederlandse overheid werkt aan de transitie van een verzorgingsstaat naar een participatiemaatschappij, waarin burgers geacht worden meer verantwoordelijkheid te nemen voor hun sociale en fysieke omgeving. Op deze manier hoopt ze niet alleen de overheidsuitgaven te beperken, maar wil ze ook de sociale binding en het zelf-organiserend vermogen van de samenleving vergroten. Buurttuinen passen in de discours rond de participatiemaatschappij omdat het gaat om bewoners die gezamenlijk verantwoordelijkheid voor hun leefomgeving nemen. Bovendien suggereert de literatuur dat tuinen kunnen fungeren als ontmoetingsplaatsen en op die manier sociale vervreemding en/of eenzaamheid kunnen verminderen. Echter, het is onduidelijk in hoeverre en onder welke voorwaarden buurttuinen sociale cohesie daadwerkelijk vergroten, vooral omdat de diversiteit onder buurttuinen, bijvoorbeeld met betrekking tot organisatievorm en grootte, groot is.

De populariteit van buurttuinen lijkt ook gerelateerd te zijn aan een groeiende maatschappelijke interesse voor voedsel. Ik bespreek dit in relatie tot het begrip 'AFN'. AFNs zijn netwerken rondom voedsel die op de één of andere manier anders zijn dan het conventionele geïndustrialiseerde voedselsysteem. AFNs worden gezien als reactie op dat systeem, dat wordt geassocieerd met verschillende problemen (zoals haar grote schaal, de lange ketens of het verdwijnen van lokale rassen). Ze worden vaak beschouwd als ingegeven door politieke motieven en gebaseerd op een 'hogere moraal'. 'AFN' is echter een heterogene categorie, overigens net als het conventionele voedselsysteem; beide zijn niet eenduidig te definiëren. Het is daardoor onduidelijk in hoeverre we buurttuinen als AFNs kunnen aanmerken. Want hoewel tuinen de beschikbaarheid van lokaal voedsel vergroten en ze buiten de gangbare markteconomie opereren, weten we niet in hoeverre deelnemers daadwerkelijk uit de tuin eten, en in

hoeverre zij dit doen om een alternatief te bieden voor het industriële voedselsysteem; het is dus onduidelijk in hoeverre buurttuinen *alternatieve* alternatieven zijn.

Onderzoeksvragen

De algemene onderzoeksvraag van dit proefschrift is:

Wat is de betekenis van de buurttuin in het bevorderen van sociale cohesie en in hoeverre zijn buurttuinen een representatie van een alternatief voedselsysteem?

Deze hoofdvraag wordt beantwoord met behulp van de volgende sub-vragen:

1. Waarom zijn mensen bij buurttuinen betrokken? Wat zijn hun motivaties?
2. Hoe, in welke mate, en onder welke voorwaarden bevorderen buurttuinen sociale relaties tussen deelnemers?
3. Hoe waarderen deelnemers deze sociale effecten?
4. In hoeverre zijn de groenten die deelnemers eten afkomstig van de buurttuin? Wat is het belang van voedsel in buurttuinen?
5. Wat is het belang van het verbouwen van of het hebben van toegang tot alternatief voedsel voor deelnemers van buurttuinen?

Methodologie

Voor dit onderzoek maak ik gebruik van de *'theory of practice'*, ook wel *'practice theory'* (theorie van praktijken). *'Practices'* (praktijken) worden gedefinieerd als concrete menselijke activiteiten, bestaande uit objecten en dat wat mensen doen en zeggen. Een practice is bijvoorbeeld auto rijden of groente verbouwen. Wanneer mensen in een practice participeren refereren ze niet alleen aan de sociale structuur, maar reproduceren ze die ook. Daarmee hebben routines – zowel de routine van de practice als die van het dagelijks leven – een centrale rol in practice theory. Binnen de theory of practice kan zowel op de praktische realiteit als op motivaties worden gefocust. De theorie is waardevol voor dit onderzoek door haar nadruk op hoe mensen hun dagelijks leven inrichten, en daarmee hoe tuinieren in dat dagelijks leven past.

Ik definieer sociale cohesie als de manier waarop mensen in een samenleving zich met elkaar verbonden voelen en verbonden zijn (De Kam en Needham 2003) en operationaliseer het door te focussen op 'sociale contacten, sociale netwerken of sociaal kapitaal', één van de elementen waaruit sociale cohesie vaak is opgebouwd. Ik heb dit element op haar beurt geoperationaliseerd als 1) contacten (de breedte van sociale cohesie) en 2) wederzijdse hulp (de diepte van sociale cohesie).

Ik heb gebruik gemaakt van case studies; gedurende een periode van twee jaar heb ik vier Nederlandse buurttuinen bestudeerd, later aangevuld met drie andere buurttuinen. Omdat practices bestaan uit dat wat mensen zeggen en doen, kunnen ze het beste worden onderzocht door enerzijds de activiteiten en anderzijds de betekenis van die activiteiten te bestuderen. Ik heb gebruik gemaakt van participerende observaties om de activiteiten te onderzoeken. Ik heb interviews, enquêtes en een documentstudie (e-mails, nieuwsbrieven) gebruikt voor het bestuderen van de betekenis van die activiteiten.

Resultaten

In hoofdstukken 3 tot en met 7 presenteer ik de resultaten van dit onderzoek. Deze hoofdstukken zijn gebaseerd op mijn veldwerk en als artikelen ingediend bij of reeds gepubliceerd door wetenschappelijke tijdschriften, of ingediend als hoofdstuk in een boek.

In hoofdstuk 3 vergelijken we twee case studies en onderzoeken in hoeverre deze kunnen worden beschouwd als ‘alternatief’. We laten zien dat motivaties relateren aan het maken van bewuste voedselkeuzes, maar dat de meeste deelnemers hun betrokkenheid niet als politiek willen aanmerken. Bovendien zijn alledaagse motivaties, zoals plezier in tuinieren, ook een belangrijke reden om deel te nemen. Door gebruik te maken van het concept ‘de practice van voedselvoorziening’ tonen we aan dat buurttuinders vaak actief betrokken zijn bij de productie van hun voedsel. Deelnemers zijn dan producent en consument tegelijk; er is een ‘glijdende schaal van producentenschap’. Uit dit hoofdstuk blijkt ook dat een al dan niet politiek gemotiveerde deelname niet voorspelt in hoeverre mensen daadwerkelijk bij een buurttuin betrokken zijn. Deze conclusie gaf aanleiding om de theory of practice te gebruiken, onderwerp van het volgende hoofdstuk.

In hoofdstuk 4 vergelijken we één van mijn case studies met een initiatief in New York. Door de interne dynamiek van de cases en hun relatie met andere practices te vergelijken, onderzoeken we of deze initiatieven variaties zijn van één specifieke practice – of dat het om verschillende practices gaat. Daarnaast bekijken we in hoeverre die practice nieuw is. We hebben specifiek gekeken naar de elementen *betekenis, competenties en materiaal* zoals beschreven door Shove et al. (2012). We vonden zowel overeenkomsten als verschillen tussen de twee voorbeelden, met als grootste verschil de betekenis die deelnemers aan de practice toekennen. Aan de hand daarvan concluderen we dat we de twee voorbeelden niet als één practice kunnen zien. Daarnaast constateren we dat het verbouwen van voedsel in een stedelijke context een nog opkomende practice is, omdat het verschillende nieuwe en reeds bestaande practices combineert.

In hoofdstuk 5 gebruiken we de theory of practice om te onderzoeken hoe het verbouwen van voedsel in de stad verweven is met het dagelijks leven. We vergelijken vier buurttuinen - twee volkstuinen en twee tuinen die we als AFNs definiëren. We laten zien dat de volkstuinders participeren in de practice ‘tuinieren’, terwijl leden van de AFNs participeren in de practice

'boodschappen doen'. Tuinieren vraagt een structurele betrokkenheid, en wordt daarmee een routine. De oogst is een resultaat van die routine, waardoor die relatief gemakkelijk wordt geïntegreerd in de dagelijkse maaltijd. Omdat AFNs worden geassocieerd met boodschappen doen, concurreren ze met andere locaties om voedsel te kopen. Voedsel uit deze tuinen wordt daardoor minder gemakkelijk geïntegreerd in het dagelijks leven; ieder bezoek aan de tuin vraagt opnieuw een bewuste keuze. Dit betekent dat de mate waarin mensen stedelijk verbouwd voedsel eten wordt beïnvloed door de vraag of ze tuinieren of boodschappen doen op de tuin. Het laat zien dat de invloed van motivaties beperkt is; ze zijn ingebed in de context en de routine van het dagelijks leven.

Hoofdstuk 6 gaat over de organisatorische verschillen tussen de zeven case studies in dit proefschrift en de mate waarin deze van invloed zijn op het versterken van sociale cohesie. We onderzoeken motivaties om betrokken te zijn bij de tuinen en vergelijken deze met de drie belangrijkste organisatorische verschillen. Deze analyse laat zien dat de cases kunnen worden verdeeld in plaats-gerelateerde tuinen enerzijds en interesse-gerelateerde tuinen anderzijds. Mensen hebben sociale redenen om bij plaats-gerelateerde tuinen betrokken te zijn; de tuin is voor hen een manier om sociale relaties in de wijk te bevorderen. Mensen zijn bij interesse-gerelateerde tuinen betrokken omdat ze het vooral leuk vinden groenten te verbouwen. Desalniettemin dragen alle tuinen bij aan de ontwikkeling van sociale cohesie. Bovendien hebben de sociale aspecten wel degelijk ook een meerwaarde voor deelnemers die daar in eerste instantie minder door gemotiveerd waren.

In hoofdstuk 7 laten we aan de hand van één case zien dat tuinen niet één maar meerdere gemeenschappen kunnen bevatten en dat verbondenheid en distantie gelijktijdig kunnen plaatsvinden. Hoewel deze tuin een belangrijke ontmoetingsplaats is, en daarmee bijdraagt aan sociale cohesie, herbergt ze twee verschillende groepen. Zij plaatsen elkaar in categorieën ('wij' en 'zij') op basis van woonplaats, en versterken op die manier hun eigen sociale identiteit. Eigenaarschap van de tuin is zowel een uitkomst van als een instrument in die strijd. We definiëren de betrekkingen tussen de twee belangrijkste groepen als *instrumentaal-rationeel* – men ziet anderen niet als individu, maar als de rol die ze vervullen. Dit betekent ook dat de twee groepen geen grotere eenheid vormen, hoewel ze zich wel tot één tuingemeenschap zouden kunnen ontwikkelen.

Conclusies

Motivaties van deelnemers hebben invloed op de manier waarop buurttuinen worden vormgegeven. De buurttuinen die in dit proefschrift zijn onderzocht kunnen worden gedefinieerd als ofwel plaats-gerelateerd ofwel interesse-gerelateerd. Tuinen in de eerste categorie zijn gericht op de sociale voordelen van tuinieren, terwijl tuinen in de tweede categorie gericht zijn op het tuinieren en de groenten zelf. Sociale effecten treden echter in beide soorten tuinen op. In alle tuinen ontmoeten deelnemers elkaar, leren ze elkaar kennen en hechten ze waarde aan deze contacten. Daarom concludeer ik dat buurttuinen sociale

cohesie bevorderen.

Voorals plaats-gerelateerde buurttuinen kunnen belangrijke ontmoetingsplaatsen worden. Buurtbewoners werken met elkaar aan een gemeenschappelijk doel. Als de tuin eenmaal is opgezet kan deze zich ontwikkelen tot een ontmoetingsplaats voor de buurt waar diverse andere gezamenlijke activiteiten worden georganiseerd. Anderzijds, contacten die op interesse-gebaseerde tuinen ontstaan ontwikkelen zich vaak juist niet buiten de grenzen van de tuin. Dergelijke tuinen worden meestal niet onderhouden door mensen die dicht bij de tuin of elkaar wonen. Bovendien zijn tuinders van deze tuinen over het algemeen minder gemotiveerd voor het leggen van sociale contacten. Overigens bevorderen buurttuinen niet altijd een 'inclusieve samenleving'; ze trekken vaak mensen aan met vergelijkbare sociaaleconomische achtergronden, en als ze toch verschillende groepen mensen weten te trekken, integreren die niet altijd tot een groter geheel.

Deelnemers van plaats-gerelateerde tuinen eten vaak niet of nauwelijks van de tuin. Deze tuinen kunnen dan ook niet worden beschouwd als een reactie op het conventionele voedselsysteem, laat staan als een poging om een alternatief systeem te creëren. Toch past een aantal aspecten van deze tuinen wel bij een alternatieve discours. Daarentegen komt een aanzienlijk deel van de groenten die deelnemers van interesse-gebaseerde tuinen eten vaak wel van de tuin, en voor een aantal van hen past het verbouwen van voedsel bij een levensstijl waarin aandacht is voor het milieu. Deelnemers praten echter niet over deze reflexiviteit in politieke termen. Betrokkenen die groenten kopen in plaats van het zelf te verbouwen zien zichzelf nog het meest als onderdeel van een voedselbeweging, maar veel van hen vinden het moeilijk de oogst onderdeel te maken van hun voedselpatroon. Buurttuinen kunnen dus nauwelijks worden gezien als een bewust en 'alternatief' alternatief voor het industriële voedselsysteem. Desalniettemin speelt voedsel een essentiële rol in alle tuinen omdat ze mensen samenbrengt – óf in een gedeelde interesse in tuinieren, óf omdat voedsel een belangrijk onderdeel is van de activiteiten die worden georganiseerd.

Bijdrage aan de theorie

In dit proefschrift heb ik gebruikt gemaakt van de theory of practice, en daar een bijdrage aan willen leveren. Het was vooral waardevol om met behulp van participerende observaties te onderzoeken wat mensen daadwerkelijk doen. Hierdoor werd het onderzoek een fysieke activiteit, wat het mogelijk maakte om de practice te beleven en deze van binnenuit te begrijpen.

Het deconstrueren van de practice 'voedselvoorziening' in activiteiten als boodschappen doen, groenten verbouwen en koken hielp me begrijpen hoe mensen hun dagelijks leven vorm geven, en hoe voedselvoorziening daar een plek in vindt. Het verduidelijkte hoe en in welke mate mensen het deelnemen aan een buurttuin ervaren als vorm van voedselvoorziening, en in hoeverre ze de buurttuin relateren aan andere onderdelen van voedselvoorziening,

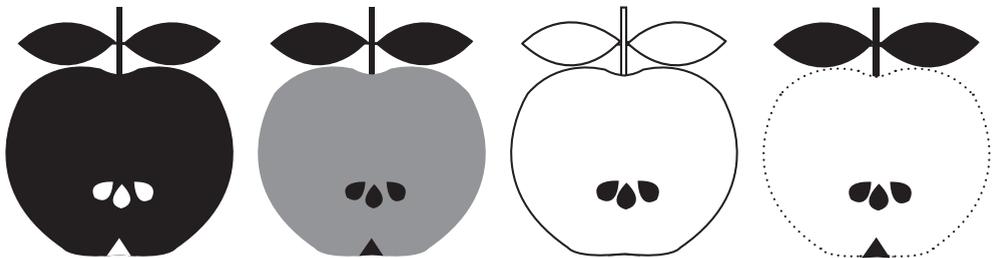
zoals koken en eten. Door deze focus op de afzonderlijke elementen van de practice besefte ik dat het verwerven van voedsel uit buurttuinen een verschillende practice is voor verschillende mensen; sommigen participeren in de practice 'tuinieren', anderen in de practice 'boodschappen doen'.

Dit proefschrift laat zien dat motivaties bepalen hoe de practice 'werkt' in de praktijk; de manier waarop een practice zoals tuinieren in een buurttuin wordt vormgegeven trekt mensen met bepaalde motivaties, die, door het reproduceren van die practice, de aantrekkelijkheid van de practice vergroten voor anderen met vergelijkbare motivaties. Dit impliceert dat hoewel participeren in een buurttuin één practice lijkt, het in feite gaat om meerdere verschillende practices; zoals de practice 'tuinieren' of de practice 'gezellig samenzijn'. Dit betekent dat motivaties van invloed zijn op de baten en resultaten van buurttuinen. Dit proefschrift benadrukt daarmee het belang van motivaties bij het bestuderen van practices.

Inzicht in motivaties levert ook een belangrijke bijdrage aan de literatuur rond AFNs, omdat het helpt begrijpen in hoeverre stedelijke voedselproductie werkelijk alternatief is. Door het bestuderen van motivaties maakt dit proefschrift duidelijk dat AFNs niet noodzakelijkerwijs een 'hogere moraal' vertegenwoordigen, of, dat niet alle initiatieven rondom het verbouwen van voedsel in de stad kunnen worden gedefinieerd als alternatief. Echter, deelnemers aan buurttuinen zijn vaak zowel producent als consument (er is een 'glijdende schaal van producentschap'). Bovendien gaat voor de deelnemers die producten kopen de betekenis van de tuinen vaak verder dan een economische logica (er is een 'glijdende schaal van marktgerichtheid'). Dit betekent dat de tuinen in dit proefschrift grotendeels onafhankelijk zijn van, of in elk geval tot op bepaalde hoogte anders functioneren dan, het conventionele voedselsysteem. De meeste van hen kunnen daarom wel worden gekwalificeerd als 'daadwerkelijke alternatieven' (naar Jehlička en Smith 2011); ook al zijn het geen 'alternatieve' alternatieven.

Dit proefschrift laat zien dat zelfs tuinen waarin voedsel niet of nauwelijks wordt gecommmercialiseerd, niet noodzakelijkerwijs een hogere moraal vertegenwoordigen. De bevindingen van Watts et al. (2005) worden daarom niet onderbouwd. Het impliceert dat we tuinen niet als AFN kunnen definiëren alleen op basis van het al dan niet onderdeel zijn van het conventionele voedselsysteem. Maar bepalen of een hogere moraal aanwezig is, is ook geen bevredigende manier om voedselnetwerken als alternatief aan te duiden, omdat we dan over het hoofd zien dat motivaties niet altijd overeenkomen met de werkelijkheid. Dit suggereert dat we zowel motieven als de praktische realiteit moeten bestuderen om aan te kunnen geven of een voedselnetwerk alternatief is. Dit proefschrift roept overigens ook de vraag op in hoeverre het label 'AFN' nog nuttig is. Omdat het onduidelijk is wat 'alternatief' precies betekent, is het ook onduidelijk wanneer een initiatief als alternatief beschouwd kan worden. Bovendien lijkt de wereld rondom voedsel te complex om te worden verbeeld als een tweedeling tussen een alternatief en een conventioneel systeem; de in dit proefschrift gepresenteerde tuinen zijn divers en hebben kenmerken van beide systemen. Het is daarom wellicht nuttig om de term 'AFN' te vervangen door '*civic food networks*' (voedselnetwerken van burgers), zoals door Renting et al. (2012) bepleit.

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I can't believe that I am writing my acknowledgements; time really flies. Of course it's great to finish a PhD project, but I am almost a bit sad at the same time: I enjoyed this process thoroughly. That is also due to the great people I met, my colleagues and the support of friends and family. In this chapter I would like to thank you all.

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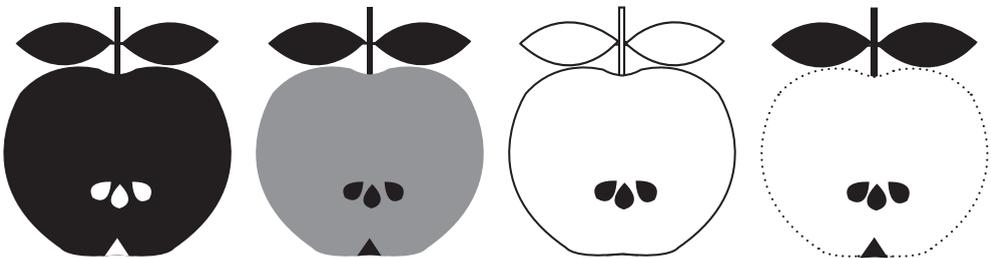
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About the author



Esther Veen was born on the 3rd of May, 1981. She grew up in Wirdum, a small rural village in the north-east of the province of Groningen, the Netherlands. She completed her A-levels at Praedinius Gymnasium in the city of Groningen, after which she spent one year travelling and working in Australia.

Esther started at Wageningen University in 2000, where she followed the BSc programme in International Development Studies, specialising in Communication, Technology and Policy. She continued with the subsequent MSc programme, but switched to specialising in Sociology of Development, with a minor in Gender Studies. During this MSc course, Esther took several opportunities to study abroad; she did an internship in India, her major thesis in Suriname, her minor thesis in Wales, and received an Erasmus scholarship for a European Rural Sociology programme in Wales and Italy. She completed both her BSc and her MSc *cum laude*. During her studies, she took a year off to work full-time as a board member of the Wageningen Student Union WSO.

After graduation in 2007, Esther worked in Amsterdam for Aidenvironment, a not-for-profit consultancy firm working on commodity chains. In June 2009 she started working for Applied Plant Research (PPO), one of Wageningen UR's research institutes. She works in the Urban-Rural Relations team, where she carries out research projects in the field of urban agriculture and multifunctional agriculture. She also enjoys supervising (groups of) students, and is involved in research projects for the Science Shop of Wageningen UR. Between 2011 and 2014, she took part in the Employees Council. A year after starting her work for PPO, Esther was given the opportunity to combine her project work with a PhD project supervised by the Rural Sociology Group, a challenge she much enjoyed. Esther keeps a blog (in Dutch) of her research activities, experiences and output: onderzoekerstadslandbouw.wordpress.com.

In her spare time, Esther enjoys meeting friends for a coffee or beer, listening to music and traveling, and is a member of a literature club. She lives with her boyfriend and one-year-old son in Utrecht. She recently became the owner of a house with a back yard and is planning to plant some strawberries and tomatoes this spring!

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Selected publications

Refereed papers

- Jansma, Jan Eelco, Esther Veen, Petra van der Kop and Onno van Eijk (2014). Dutch City Network Feeds the Innovation of Urban Agriculture. *Urban Agriculture magazine* 28: 38-41.
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Esther Veen

Wageningen School
of Social Sciences

Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS) Completed Training and Supervision Plan

<i>Name of the learning activity</i>	<i>Department/Institute</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>ECTS*</i>
A) Project related competences			
<i>Contemporary Agrifood Studies</i>	<i>Purefood</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Phenomenology of Practice and the Tradition of the Utrecht School</i>	<i>Utrecht University</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>4</i>
B) General research related competences			
<i>Introduction Course</i>	<i>WASS</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Writing Research Proposal</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Research Methodology: From Topic to Proposal</i>	<i>WASS</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Scientific Writing and Presentation Skills</i>	<i>Purefood</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Scientific Publishing</i>	<i>Wageningen Graduate Schools</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>0.3</i>
<i>Presentations at international scientific conferences</i>			
<i>Co-producers in urban agriculture: resistance and social justice</i>	<i>XXIV ESRS ESRS (European Society for Rural Sociology) Congress, Chania, Greece</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>Alternative food networks: coproduction in urban agriculture</i>	<i>3rd International AESOP Sustainable Food Planning Conference, Cardiff, Wales</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>The village garden that was becoming an urban garden: Different representations of one garden</i>	<i>International Conference on Multifunctional Agriculture and Urban-Rural Relations, Wageningen, The Netherlands</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>The village garden that was becoming an urban garden: Different representations of one garden</i>	<i>RGS-IBG (Royal Geographical Society- Institute of British Geographers) Annual International Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>Urban food growing: Opening the black box of food provisioning practices</i>	<i>XIII World Congress of Rural Sociology, Lisboa, Portugal</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>0.5</i>

<i>Urban agriculture and community gardens: Improving the quality of urban living</i>	<i>EURA (Eureopen Urban Research Association) conference, Enschede, The Netherlands</i>	2013	0.5
<i>Urban agriculture and community building: Inclusion, exclusion, and communities at the garden</i>	<i>The XXVth ESRS (European Society for Rural Sociology) Congress, Florence, Italy</i>	2013	0.5
<i>Vulnerability of urban agriculture projects: A case study of gardens in The Netherlands and Switzerland</i>	<i>6th International AESOP Sustainable Food Planning Conference, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands</i>	2014	0.5

C) Career related competences/personal development

<i>Young Talent Programme</i>	<i>WUR</i>	2013	4
<i>Procesbegeleiding bij ACT (Academic Consultancy Training)</i>	<i>WUR</i>	2012	1
<i>Mobilising your Scientific Network</i>	<i>Wageningen Graduate Schools</i>	2013	1
<i>Coach for ACT (Academic Consultancy Training) group</i>	<i>Wageningen University</i>	2012-2014	2
<i>Supervising 2 MSc students with writing their theses</i>	<i>Delft University; Wageningen University</i>	2013	1
<i>Total</i>			36.3

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

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Chapter 5: Jan van Arragon

Chapter 6: Gerrit Westerveld

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