"WE JUST HAVE TO GET THEM GROWING THEIR OWN FOOD": THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

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The title quote comes from one of the organisers of Plant to Plate Aotearoa

I   ABSTRACT

Community gardens remain a popular and persistent response to a range of social ills from food security to social isolation. Scholars often frame gardens as political movements, sites of radical opposition to a globalised, homogenised and hegemonic food system. From this perspective, gardeners are actively cultivating a more environmentally sustainable and socially just way of producing and distributing food and seeking alternative ways of feeding communities.   There is no consensus on this perspective, however, and the literature offers a lively debate on the extent to which gardens reinforce or subvert socio-economic structures and inequalities. My research adds to this debate by providing an analysis that shows how community gardens work as sites of identity construction where dominant cultural values are transmitted to select gardeners by those with a sense of governmental belonging.

My research is an ethnographic and auto-ethnographic examination of what garden organisers or instigators think they are doing when they do community gardens. I find that garden organisers are trying to shore up a national identity that they perceive as being at risk of being lost. This identity reflects the values of self-reliance, thriftiness, and good neighbourliness that organisers consider themselves to embody and that they believe others lack. It is possible to interpret these values as being symptomatic of processes of neoliberalisation, and the gardens as evidence of the successful depoliticisation of issues of food security and hunger. However, I find that they also reflect deep concern about, and resistance to, these processes. Garden organisers draw on nostalgia for a positively evaluated past world in response to a deficient present world. By invoking the past, gardeners mobilise to overcome what they consider to be the contemporary experience of loss of identity, and absence of community.

I joined three community gardens as a volunteer in Palmerston North, Aotearoa New Zealand, to explore the motivations of garden organisers. In each site, I found complex and transversal processes of governance and resistance. I have interpreted these using a theoretical framework assembled from the work of Ghassan Hage on governmental belonging and the politics of hope; Michel Foucault's work on governmentality and resistance; and Gilles Clément's work on the agency of plants. I spent intensive time in the gardens, growing garden produce and taking it home to

eat. The materiality of the gardens and produce revealed a set of assumptions about the availability of domestic labour and enabled me to build up a detailed picture of the limitations and potential community gardens as sites of alternate ways of doing food and community.

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I took all of the photographs, other than those for which I have given credit below

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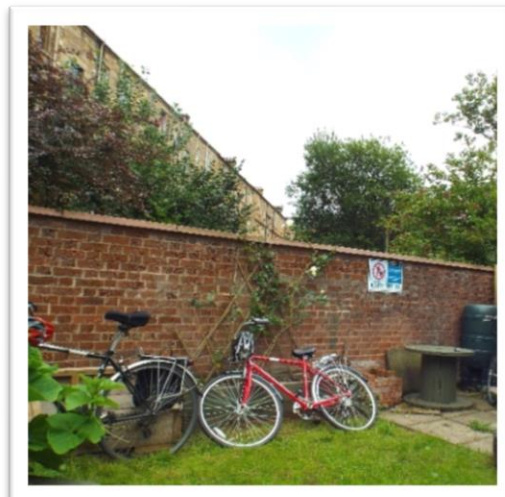
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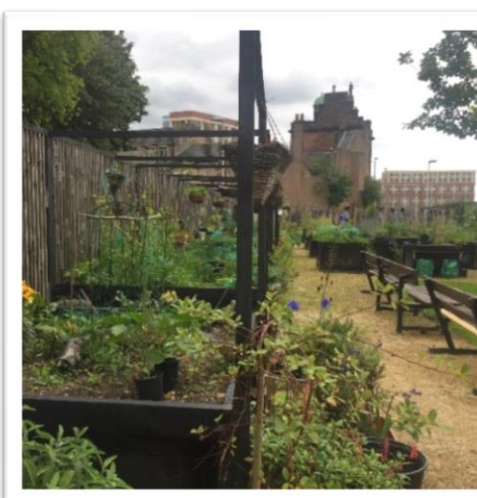
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1   INTRODUCTION

"It's just amazing that people don't know the difference between a cauliflower and broccoli, let alone how to plant it, how to care for it, how to cook it. I mean we've just lost those skills." Julia, South West garden

"Community gardens seem to be popping up everywhere!" said my aunt when I told her about my research topic. "There's a new one at the back of the local college", she said. "Community gardens never seem to last", said the chair of a local community agency when I explained my research proposal. "People just can't seem to make them work." Community gardens can both pop up and fail, and the garden near my aunt's house wasn't a new garden at all but the revival of a community garden that had failed in the past. Nevertheless, community gardens remain a popular and persistent response to a range of social ills from child poverty to a lack of recreational amenities for retirees. I began this research imagining them as sites of radical opposition to a globalised, homogenised and hegemonic food system. I saw gardeners as actively cultivating a more environmentally sustainable and socially just way of producing and distributing food, and an alternative way of feeding communities. This stirring vision did not survive my research intact. I did find radical alterity in the gardens, but it was not embodied by the gardeners.

Community gardens are enjoying a resurgence of interest in New Zealand and other developed economies as one of many strategies to address concerns about issues such as food insecurity, poverty, and poor diets; as sites for community development and social engagement; and as a way to remedy urban blight and political disengagement (Milbourne, 2018). Garden advocates have even promoted them as a way of building community resilience in the wake of natural disasters such as the Christchurch and Kaikoura earthquakes (Shimpo, Wesener, & McWilliam, 2019). With such a wide range of potential benefits, I wondered what gardeners hoped to achieve when they first turned the soil in a community garden, so the research question that I explore in this project is "what do people think they're doing when they do community gardening?". I focus on the instigators or organisers and volunteers who secure land, funding and other resources to get garden projects underway, and reach out to would-be gardeners to join them.

I found that community gardeners referred to a range of potential benefits in explaining their involvement with community garden projects. Overwhelmingly, however, they focussed on the food grown in community gardens and the personal

attributes of gardeners. Organisers sought to pass on knowledge about where our food comes from, how to grow it, and what to do with it once gardeners have coaxed it from the ground. They framed these skills as essential to a healthy, wholesome life. I found that the practice of gardening was a way for garden organisers to preserve cultural identity, which they perceived as being at risk of degradation or loss. Gardening, and particularly the cultivation of food crops, signified attitudes and practices of self-reliance, domestic competence, and connection with nature and community. These are central tenets of the cultural identity that gardeners work to preserve and reproduce. They argued that preparing and eating garden produce indicates care for the health and well-being of oneself and one's family, which speaks to the centrality of the family unit as a site of social reproduction. Community gardens inevitably produce surpluses and the sharing of these, especially by way of charitable agencies, reinforces the "lay morality" (Sanghera, 2016, p. 296) that the organisers saw as binding communities together – charitable giving, especially of fresh, wholesome food, offers an avenue for the moral, cultural and aesthetic uplift of those on the margins of society (Pudup, 2008).

I've drawn on the work of Foucault, specifically his writings on the governance of society and the self, to explore the role of garden organisers in reproducing cultural identity through gardening practice. Foucault conceptualises the dynamics of governance and the working of power in contemporary society as being fluid and web-like, as a force that circulates through society, acting on individuals as they in turn act on others (Foucault, 2003b; Vander Schee, 2009). His work on governmentality, or "the conduct of conduct" (Gordon, 1991, p. 5), examines how power plays out in the routine practice of daily life. Foucault's conception of power as diffuse and all-encompassing anticipates that individuals will take responsibility for their life's outcomes by making appropriate choices in areas such as food, eating, health and financial matters. The question of what constitutes 'appropriate' choice is determined by a range of agencies and institutions that aim to shape citizens' behaviours and subjectivities in ways that make them into healthy, self-reliant members of society (Leahy & Wright, 2016). They do this by assembling and propagating narratives about 'good' ways of eating and living. Garden organisers advance these discourses by drawing on their own experiences, skills, social position and sense of managerial authority to frame particular modes of acting, being, and thinking. Their discourses are centred on issues to do with food,

household practices, family life, self-care and charitable giving, which they seek to transmit to others through community gardens.

The other theoretical framing I apply to garden organisers is that of anthropologist Ghassan Hage who developed the concept of governmental belonging. This concept describes the controlling role in society assumed by those who believe that they have "the power to have a legitimate view concerning the positioning of others in the nation" (Hage, 1998, p. 46). Garden organisers draw on their sense of governmental belonging to take on the role of ''national worriers'' – they worry that the targets of their gardening efforts who, in my research sites, were children, migrants and prisoners, lack the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to thrive, or even survive. They frame them as objects at risk of making poor choices that may push them (further) towards the fringes of society, unable to compete for resources and employment. Garden organisers encourage gardeners to adopt subjectivities consistent with their own ideas of New Zealand's national identity. This identity can be characterised as having a robust can-do attitude of self-reliance that gardening, along with other domestic practices such as home cooking, signifies. Contemporary social problems such as rising levels of poverty, obesity, widespread mental health problems, and family breakdown suggest dislocation and disruption of social norms. They adopt community gardening as a rational response to what they perceive as a fraying social order.

Community gardens are an ideal vehicle for garden organisers' identity-preservation projects because gardening holds deep cultural meaning in New Zealand. Gardening practice reflects New Zealand's historical patterns of migration, property ownership, and the gendered organisation of domestic labour. We can trace these patterns in the way that community garden projects are established and run as they highlight distinct class divisions between organisers and the objects of their gardening enterprises. We can thus understand community gardens as places where garden organisers work to reinforce or recreate a social order as well as encouraging gardeners to embody its tenets of self-reliance.

Concern that older generations have not passed on their skills and knowledge to younger generations was a constant refrain amongst garden organisers at my research sites, who saw

gardening and other domestic crafts as a taonga[1] worth preserving. Organisers described their work in community gardens as "passing on the knowledge and passion of gardening". They saw gardening as one of a range of skills that "are not being passed on from the previous generation like cooking, vegetable gardening, preserving, pickling, sewing, knitting, clothes repair; those old skills just haven't been picked up". One of my research sites was a series of school gardens which hosted the newest generation of potential gardeners. The literature suggests that schools are popular locations for garden projects, which are often delivered along with cooking programmes, which was the case at my research site. Tying these activities together in school settings makes it likely that children will carry messages about appropriate modes of eating and living back to their homes, filling in the generational gap in skills transmission (Leahy & Pike, 2016). This approach reaches through the porous border between home and school to parents (Burrows, 2017), who may themselves lack cooking and gardening skills because they are "more than a generation removed from the experience of gardening and so the knowledge hasn't been passed on", as one of my participants explained.

The gardeners whom organisers targeted for intervention brought their existing subjectivities to the community gardens, however. I found these to be a source of resistance against objectification. Gardeners employed a range of strategies to resist garden organisers' efforts to position them as objects to be controlled, including not complying with instructions, not turning up, and stealing tools. Gardeners represented a lesser source of resistance than non-human actors in the garden, however. Garden organisers and, indeed, much of the community gardens literature, treat the natural world as a benign backdrop for the human struggles that play out in community gardens. I found that the natural world had a greater influence on the outcome of garden projects than the literature suggests. The unruliness of plants, weather, insects and other aspects of the natural world thwarted gardeners' efforts to impose order on them.

I have turned to the work of Gilles Clément, a French gardener and theorist of gardening, to explore the agency of plants and other parts of the natural world in the community gardens. Clément considers how plants transgress boundaries and are as inventive as they are amoral (Skinner, 2011). Natural-world actors have no regard for the disciplining forces of discourse or

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[1] Taonga is a Māori word that translates as "treasure, anything prized - applied to anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques" https://maoridictionary.co.nz. It's a word that reflects the spiritual value ascribed to these practices as a source of identity and meaning by garden organisers that English words such as "tradition", "heritage" or "culture" don't seem to capture.

the worrying of garden organisers, and gardeners had to struggle constantly against nature-driven disorder and the dynamic processes of entropy in their gardens. An array of other non-human actors such as leases, school terms and water reticulation also stymied gardeners' best efforts. Non-human actors were often the determining factor in whether gardens survived from one season to the next.

The unruliness of the natural world and gardeners' resistance to the disciplining efforts of community garden organisers slowly became apparent during my research which took place in three community gardens in Palmerston North. The gardens were:

a. The Eastern community garden, which was established by a church-linked community trust with the support of the city council in 2010. It was gardened primarily by migrants who had come to Palmerston North as refugees and settled in the city.

b. The South West community garden. This garden began as a joint project between the Department of Corrections and The Green Hub, which is a local environmental organisation, with the support of the city council. It was gardened primarily by offenders serving community sentences under the supervision of the Community Corrections service.

c. A series of tiny gardens developed in school grounds across the city. The gardens were set up by a charitable organisation, Plant to Plate Aotearoa, which ran gardening and cooking workshops in schools with children throughout the year.

I joined the gardens as a volunteer from 2015 until 2018, either cultivating a plot of my own or working alongside others in shared garden plots and in the school cooking programme. During my research, I observed how discourses of self-responsibilisation and risk crowded out other ways of understanding community gardens. Organisers, funders and even gardeners did not see gardens as sites of alternative food practice that challenge the corporate dominance of the food system, for example, or as a form of resistance to the ways we allocate, value and use land in urban spaces. The literature suggests other ways of viewing community gardens, such as sites where people experiment with alternative social relations that lead to empowerment for individuals. Gardens can also be understood as places that re-energize communities through practices that challenge routine understandings and conventions (Carolan, 2017; Cumbers, Shaw, Crossan, & McMaster, 2017), and as sites where people construct alternative politics by doing and knowing food differently (Mudry, Hayes-Conroy, Chen, & Kimura Aya,

2014; Sharp, 2018). While these perspectives may have resonated with the gardeners, garden organisers in my study did not see their gardens as doing such work.

Organisers mentioned the generative potential of community gardens to give gardeners, especially school children and offenders, tactile, visceral encounters with food and the natural world that they might not otherwise have. These encounters had the potential to interrupt the reproduction of social norms that emerge from modern food systems in which food is produced and processed at a distance – often a globe-straddling distance – from where people consume it in increasingly casual contexts. Food sales in New Zealand are dominated by two companies which control more than 90 per cent of the retail food market but allocate only six per cent of their shelf space to fresh produce (Waterlander et al., 2018). Pre-packaged meals, convenience and ultra-processed foods, which do not require consumers to handle or prepare fresh garden produce before eating it, dominate the balance of supermarket shelves (Lawrence & Dixon, 2015). Garden organisers made several references to the lack of familiarity that gardeners had with produce in its rawest form.

I began this research with the view that community gardens were part of the alternative food movement, challenging the capitalist logic of modern food systems. I came to question this view as my research progressed, and I encountered the deep anxieties expressed by garden organisers and their concern for the wellbeing of the objects of their garden projects. I observed that garden organisers' anxiety about the future, and their worries about the ability of the gardeners to traverse its challenges, was a powerful motivator that is not addressed in the literature.

As my study concludes, I have again come to understand community gardens as a part of the alternative food movement, however. I have come to see that their alterity lies not in the gardeners as activists but the gardens' potential to offer radical encounters with food and food production that have been rendered invisible and unnecessary by modern food systems. The materiality of gardens, the many ways that garden produce does not conform to the fetishistic aesthetic standards of commercially available food, and the visceral pleasures, for example, of strawberries warm from the sun offer gardeners an alternative way of "knowing" food which is where the I found the alterity of community gardens to lie. The experienced gardeners and garden organisers who saw vegetable gardens as expected parts of the suburban landscape did not seem to experience the same affect or sense of wonder and emotional engagement as those first encountering food in its rawest state – for them, vegetable gardens were an expression of continuity, normalcy and familiarity. Far from being agents of change,

community garden organisers worked hard to maintain vegetable growing as prosaic household experience.

1.1   THE ORIGIN OF MY RESEARCH QUESTION

My early conception of community gardens as examples of progressive local politics, environmental sustainability and a new food politics, emerged from my first encounters with community gardens in Glasgow, Scotland. There, I saw that gardeners challenged local authorities to value the pockets of land where gardens emerged for their social and environmental value as well as their bare exchange value. Three community gardens appeared in the Glasgow neighbourhood where I was living before beginning this project; two on vacant lots and another on land owned by the city behind a derelict tram depot, which was being developed into an arts centre by the City Council. The gardens invited participation from all-comers. This was not the case with the well-established allotment gardens in Queens Park, Pollokshields and Crossmyloof, each of which had individual plots that rarely came free and were allocated according to some mysterious code that I was never able to break.

Because the community gardens produced vegetables and herbs, I understood them to be part of a broader alternative food movement comprising slow food, farmers' markets, the allotment gardens, vegetable box delivery schemes and community-supported agriculture. Community gardens, which were sometimes established guerrilla-style[2] on traffic islands or other public or quasi-public land, seemed to be the most expressive form of gardeners' many frustrations with the modern food system. The complexities and contradictions of the British food system are beyond the scope of this project, but gardeners' actions were characteristic of what Friedmann (2005) describes as an emergent corporate environmental food regime. In such a system, activists resist monopoly power, opaque supply chains, and the exploitation of labour and the environment, by turning to more local and traditional ways of producing and distributing food; the two aspects of the regime existing in dialectical tension. The gardens, therefore, seemed to have a generative potential to change local environments and community relations.

I was quick to valorise community gardens as a response to global sustainability issues because I was deeply involved in other local food projects at the time. I had set up an organic craft

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[2] Guerrilla gardening is defined as the unauthorized cultivation of land belonging to another (Hung, 2017). The phrase is often used to describe gardens created in urban public spaces as a political gesture to highlight land that is neglected or underused. Guerrilla gardens draw attention to the unequal spatial

bakery in the East End of Glasgow in 2002 with my husband, which sold bread in its adjacent shop and at farmers' markets around the city. We were the first certified organic bakery in Glasgow, and we made concerted efforts to source ingredients from other local, organic producers. We bought rye flour from Golspie Mill in Sutherland, spelt flour from Northumberland, organic meat from Dumfries, and vegetables from Bellfield Organics or the Pillars of Hercules in Fife in an earnest attempt to promote the value of short, local supply chains and closer relations between the producers and consumers of food; connections built on transparency and trust. We designed the bakery as an open space so that customers in the shop could see the sacks of organic flour stacked in the storeroom, watch the bakers at work, and be confident that we used old-school methods to make our products.

One of our suppliers was a community group which had established a garden on a vacant site in the down-at-heel Govanhill neighbourhood. They grew vegetables and edible flowers, which they sold to local restaurants under the name Ghetto Flowers. The plot had a colourful hand-painted sign describing it as a Community Garden and calling for volunteers. It brightened up what was a treeless neighbourhood of red sandstone tenements and was a significant improvement on the pile of rubble and empty Buckfast tonic wine bottles that had littered the site previously. The garden was one of several community gardens that appeared on vacant lots across the city and seemed to represent a re-appropriation of unloved urban land for community use.[3]

The Govanhill neighbourhood where the garden was located, like many Glasgow neighbourhoods, changed over the time we lived there. There was a sharp increase in the city's ethnic minority population as refugees arriving in Britain were "dispersed" to Glasgow under a no-choice resettlement policy (Wren, 2004), and new migrants arrived following the accession of Eastern European states to the European Union in 2007. Community gardens offered opportunities for face-to-face encounters between migrants and locals, potentially shifting perceptions, challenging prejudices and making power relations more fluid (Crossan,

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distribution of environmental degradation, urban blight, economic deprivation and social marginality (Certomà & Martellozzo, 2019).

[3] These spontaneous community initiatives were eventually recognised by the Glasgow City Council and formalised as *Stalled Spaces – a community fit for a wee bit*, a program that provided funding and support to communities that aimed to address the poor urban environmental conditions that became more prevalent during Britain's economic downturn. The programme supported "the temporary use of vacant or under-utilised land to deliver a range of projects, enabling physical renewal and fostering community empowerment throughout Glasgow" (Development & Regeneration Services, 2011). There is a photograph on page 2 showing one of Glasgow City Council's Stalled Spaces signs.

Cumbers, McMaster, & Shaw, 2016, p. 29). They also offered alternative green spaces to the impenetrable local allotments, the only other areas set aside for tenement-dwellers to garden and grow food. Aspirant gardeners could only traverse the long waiting lists for allotments with patience and social capital so community gardens seemed to be viable alternative growing spaces for local residents, especially new arrivals without the connections to secure an allotment.

Organisational practices varied from community garden to community garden, reflecting the blend of ethnic mixes, local politics and the scale of the garden projects, with some developed by informal neighbourhood collectives and others controlled by charitable trusts with ambitious aims to regenerate swathes of the city. Few of the community gardens I visited in Glasgow were large enough to produce a significant amount of food but, regardless of the scale of their ambition, the gardens sought to promote a positive recognition of other cultures, especially food cultures, and to provide places for people to grow specific fresh vegetables and herbs which local food outlets rarely stocked (Cumbers et al., 2017).

When I returned to live in New Zealand, I found several community gardens in Palmerston North, the town we settled in. They were much bigger than the gardens I had seen in Scotland, and many were big enough to produce surpluses to donate to food banks and a local free food store. In other respects, they seemed to emulate the gardens I had known in Glasgow in that they attracted diverse groups of gardeners and appeared to offer a "transformative politics of encounter" (Crossan et al., 2016, p. 14). Like the Glasgow gardens, they occupied pockets of land that were unused and unloved. Palmerston North does not lack green space or places for people to garden at home – it is a low-density, low-rise town dominated by stand-alone, single-family dwellings on grassy sections, entirely unlike the dense tenement-lined blocks of Glasgow. A transient population of students, migrants and people who rent rather than own their properties, persistent pockets of poverty, and an increasing amount of in-fill urban development, means that community gardens still seem to have a place in Palmerston North as alternatives to home gardens, however.

The garden organisers I talked to in Palmerston North espoused many of the same arguments for developing community gardens that Glasgow's community gardeners made – they allow people to reconnect with the source of their food, understand what is involved in growing fresh produce, and work with others to improve their neighbourhoods. As in Glasgow, garden organisers sought the support of local authorities to build the gardens. Because Palmerston North's garden organisers expressed concerns about a perceived loss of gardening knowledge and skills, the quality of commercially-grown produce, and the lack of fresh produce available

to food bank patrons, I saw Palmerston North's community gardens as part of the same alternative food movement as Glasgow's gardens. During my research, however, I came to see that Palmerston North's gardens differ from Glasgow's gardens in several respects. The most notable is the relationship between gardening and national identity in New Zealand, which shaped the way garden organisers and funders perceived the gardens and the gardeners whom they targeted through funding applications and community outreach. As noted above, I found that garden organisers were attempting to preserve and reproduce a cultural identity that they perceived as being at risk of degradation or loss.

1.2   GARDENING AS IDENTITY

The idea that gardening reproduces New Zealand's national identity links two narratives that came up repeatedly in the gardens. The first is a discourse that describes some groups of gardeners as belonging to a "lost generation". This narrative holds that people on the margins of society such as offenders, or children and their parents, lack the skills and knowledge to correctly feed themselves or instruct their children in appropriate choices as regards food and health. They may be unable to manage their domestic affairs to make the most of their resources, as described above. Garden organisers also use this narrative for recipients of garden produce distributed through charities.

The second is a resilience narrative which garden volunteers articulated as "if everything falls apart, people will need to be able to grow their own food". This discourse reflects general anxiety about a range of social, economic, technological and environmental threats that gardeners see on the horizon. They struggled to describe these ominous forces but felt that they may lead to a diminished quality of life or degradation of opportunity that might be able to be mitigated by growing vegetables.

The conception of New Zealanders as self-reliant and able to make do with scarce resources links these two narratives. Our vernacular includes references to "Kiwi ingenuity" and "No.8 wire", an old grade of fencing wire that could be fashioned into makeshift tools, repairs and utensils. We have been described as "tough, pioneering, outdoorsy and egalitarian (if slightly rustic)" (Toohey, Cushman, & Gidlow, 2018, p. 29). This description implies that the national population is a collective of handy citizens, able to make ends meet from whatever resources are to hand. Although the "do it yourself" mentality arose from necessity born of scarcity in a settler society, it has come to denote independence and resilience in the face of hardship.

These values run deep and are as likely to be expounded in official publications as in ordinary conversation. In 1957, the Minister of Housing gave one of the most unambiguous official

descriptions of the particular New Zealand identity that garden organisers articulated. He characterised it as embracing the values of "initiative, self-reliance, thrift, and other good qualities which go to make up the moral strength of the individual, of the family, and of the nation" (Brookes, 1997, pp. 246-247). This conception of New Zealand identity has implications for the way that garden organisers, funders and supporters see community gardens and gardening in general. Self-reliance, thrift and resourcefulness are captured in the practice of conjuring food from the soil, which makes gardening symbolic of our national character.

The national identity that garden organisers seek to reproduce is not necessarily one to which the objects of their gardening efforts would subscribe. National identity is a shared understanding of the characteristics and behaviours that distinguish us from others (Barker, 2012) and is necessarily fluid. A character based on attributes such as self-reliance and thriftiness that reflect New Zealand's colonial past and geographical isolation does not acknowledge the significant social, political and economic changes of the past few decades or the identity of Māori. Indeed, it no longer seems as simple to delineate a singular national identity, if it ever was.

1.3   WHAT ARE COMMUNITY GARDENS?

The literature offers a range of definitions of "community garden", some of which are so broad that the term ceases to be a useful frame of analysis (Nettle, 2014). Gardens are described as coming "in various shapes and sizes; amongst other factors, 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" (Veen, Bock, Van den Berg, Visser, & Wiskerke, 2015, p. 2). Pudup (2008) notes that the label "community garden" is highly evocative, suggesting an idealised space in which people come together to establish relationships with others, their neighbourhood and nature. She adds that the lack of clarity as to the definition of a community garden is often desirable, as it makes it difficult to meaningfully assess their strategy or putative successes at producing communities, subjects or achieving funded outcomes.

Despite the looseness of the definitions, we can understand community gardens as gardens that are cultivated by a group of people rather than an individual or family. Generally, they are sites of collective activities that serve a range of ends (Cumbers et al., 2017), and which are "developed in response to and reflect the needs of the communities in which they are based" (Witheridge & Morris, 2016, p. 203). Nettle (2014) argues that community gardens are defined more narrowly in antipodean literature than in North American and British literature. She

suggests that common characteristics are a level of collective action, primarily voluntary participation, self-described identity as a community garden and participatory management structures (Nettle, 2014, p. 38). She also suggests that community gardens tend to focus on food production, although some emphasise the creation of spaces for leisure or ecology.

Gardens do not need to have particular forms of tenure to be considered community gardens. Land may be private or publicly owned, and access may be open to all or restricted to members. Some gardeners develop gardens guerrilla-style, others work with landholders who want to avoid their sites becoming wasteland pending eventual development (Witheridge & Morris, 2016). The gardens included in this project were developed with the approval of the landowners, each of which was a state entity[4] after community gardening organisers sought their permission.

Organisational and governance arrangements vary from garden to garden and range from "anarchistic to dictatorial" (Petrovic, Simpson, Orlove, & Dowd-Uribe, 2019, p. 37). Nettle (2014) suggests that community gardens tend to be managed and controlled by a group of unpaid individuals or volunteers – usually the gardeners themselves. Direct participation in decision-making is not a requirement for something to count as a community garden, however, and it was not the case for the gardens that I included in this research. Each of those gardens had at least one person in a supervisory or co-ordination role who was paid a stipend or wage for their garden work, or who contributed to the garden as part of their employment by an umbrella organisation. Having the resources to remunerate organisers reflects the dominant role of established community agencies in instigating the gardens in Palmerston North. Each of the gardens also attracted unpaid volunteers who offered their time and skills to the general good of the garden (and cooking programme, in the case of the school gardening and cooking programme) and sometimes participated by cultivating a plot of their own. The paid garden organisers also seemed to devote many unpaid hours to the garden so the line between volunteers, organisers and object gardeners was often blurred. I've described the various roles of garden participants in each of the ethnographic chapters. In the chapter on the South West garden, for example, I've made a distinction between volunteers and "volunteers" – those gardeners who attended the garden as part of their community sentences. The school gardens were also gardened by school pupils and their teachers whose

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[4] The Eastern community garden was established on land held by the Ministry of Justice on behalf of the Crown. The land on which the South West community garden sat was owned by Palmerston North City Council. The school gardens each sat on school grounds which are generally owned by the Crown and managed by schools' Boards of Trustees in conjunction with the Ministry of Education.

participation was mandated rather than strictly voluntary, although they were supported by people who can easily be recognised as volunteers.

Pudup (2008) favours the term "organised garden project" for gardens that involve oversight by charitable or non-governmental agencies, especially if the gardens are organised around principles of self-improvement and moral responsibility, which the gardens included in this research were. I have nevertheless described them as community gardens because the garden organisers, funders and land-owners described them in this way, because organisers developed the gardens to meet the perceived needs of community garden participants, and because they sought to enrol new members from the wider community. Like most, Pudup's characterisation also denies the agency of the gardens themselves – the collection of flora, fauna, environmental and spatial effects that make up gardens – which demonstrate a persistent tendency towards disorganisation, as discussed in the concluding part of this thesis.

Public discourse and academic literature often identify community gardens as part of the alternative food movement, which Sharp, Schindler, Lewis, and Friesen (2016, p. 133) characterise as "challenging the established corporate order of food provisioning". All of the gardens included in this research had food production as their primary focus and certainly aimed to provide an alternative to the food available through commercial food networks. However, garden organisers did not tend to describe themselves or their gardens as part of a movement to challenge a hegemonic food system. Rather, garden organisers sought to mitigate, rather than challenge, the effects of a corporate food system, and the social context in which such a system operates. Indeed, the school workshops that garden organisers ran in conjunction with the school gardening programme depended on the ready availability of a range of grocery items and commercially-grown fruit and off-season vegetables. The programme organisers designed their curriculum around their ubiquity. Nonetheless, their emphasis on self-reliance and wholesome family food practices such as cooking and sharing meals did have an element of quiet resistance to the erosion of perceived social norms. Even though garden organisers tended to frame poor food practices as personal failings, their perception that basic gardening and cooking skills might be necessary for an uncertain future implied disquiet about the fairness and sustainability of a food provisioning system that leaves some families hungry amid abundance (Ministry of Health, 2019).

Even if garden organisers did not see themselves as providing a critique of corporate food systems, their gardens nonetheless offered alternative food experiences, different ways of thinking and doing food, to gardeners. In doing this, they reflected the values of a broader alternative lifestyle movement in which vegetable gardening and home food production offer

the potential for a radical transformation of consumer culture and family life, while making cities more sustainable (Parker & Morrow, 2017; Stevens, 2017). A desire for "natural", sustainably produced food that reflects values such as organics or localism motivated many of the gardeners and organisers (van Holstein, 2017; Zitcer, 2015). Others saw the provision of fresh homegrown food as an expression of love and care. Gardening contrasts favourably with the rise of convenience food, which is assumed to demonstrate a lack of care and signify a decline in parenting and cooking skills (Jackson, 2018). The community garden organisers I interviewed for this project explicitly resisted the increasing dominance of commercial foods, commercial food producers and their wasteful practices, while lamenting the fall in home production and the thrifty use of leftovers to divert food from the waste stream. Therefore, community gardens hold their place in the assemblage of alternative food initiatives.

1.4   FOOD AND FAMILY LIFE

My personal experiences of working in the commercial food sector and as a home gardener, cook, and parent influenced the way I interpreted my research. Setting up our Glasgow business as a certified organic producer reflected a long-standing interest in organic agriculture, environmental politics and localism. These interests meant that I brought several questions and assumptions to my project. The question of what people think they're doing when they do community gardening emerged as I spoke with gardeners, got my hands dirty and came face to face with my unacknowledged biases and the gaping holes in my knowledge of gardening and the rigours of primary food production.

Of all the positions and perspectives that I brought to the research, my role as a parent and 'homemaker' – the person in my household who organises almost all the food shopping, cooking, nagging, gardening and waste disposal – had the most influence. Beyond providing opportunities to acknowledge my personal biases about food and eating, it was my experience of bringing garden produce into my home that shifted my perspective on the radical potential of community gardens. Harvesting, transporting, trimming, chopping, preserving and cooking the food gave its materiality a weight of meaning that food did not have while it was growing in the ground, glowing in an Instagram post or being shredded by a celebrity chef on the television. My experience highlighted the impossibility of attempting to construct a positivist, objective research persona. Instead, I adopted the approach of Cerwonka and Malkki (2008, p. 31) who state that "far from being a deficiency, the sustained contact and negotiation

between ethnographer and the phenomena she researches is really ethnography's creative centre."

One of the issues I had to confront was my concern about food waste. While I discovered that I had a lot of generalised anxieties about food, cooking, health and eating, as did the garden organisers I worked with, my anxiety was particularly acute when it came to food waste. Concern about waste emerged as a theme in this research, and it flows through alternative food movements. Anxiety about food waste and the moral indignation it generates drives initiatives such as dumpster diving, free food stores which redistribute commercial surpluses to communities, and school cooking and gardening programs. In both the community gardens and the school cooking programme, anxiety about food waste fed into broad, generalised anxiety about a loss of domestic competence and people's ability to manage household resources such as fresh food on limited budgets, make the most of leftovers and shop for food strategically. This concern informed garden organisers' aspirations to run cooking demonstrations, share recipes and promote "home-grown lunchboxes" (Bourke, 2011), which were a feature of each of my research sites.

The issue of food waste is addressed in a body of literature that contrasts it with rising food insecurity in developed countries. Food waste occurs in both commercial and domestic settings, and it is estimated that approximately one-third of the world's food goes to waste somewhere along the food chain. In the developed world, much of the waste occurs after we've bought or accepted the food and taken it home (Schanes & Stagl, 2019; Turner, 2018). This profligacy happens in the context of food insecurity, which is another driver of the alternative food movement and a feature of those community gardens that aim to deliver surpluses to charitable food providers. While household food waste is often characterised as a symptom of a heedless, throwaway society, several scholars have described the guilt and anxiety that householders feel about throwing food away, and the various practices they employ to prevent or delay the wasting of food (Evans, 2011; Turner, 2018). The ability to manage surpluses, minimise waste and be thrifty with the food available are some of the domestic skills that garden organisers perceive as being "lost".

1.5   THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

Community gardens have gained popularity in New Zealand in the context of profound social and political change. Many of the garden organisers and volunteers I encountered in my research sites were in their late 60s and 70s. They had retired from work and had taken up community gardening projects as part of a range of public service and other recreational

interests. These public-spirited gardeners had lived through the comprehensive programme of economic restructuring and reform that, from the mid-1980s, profoundly altered both the economy and New Zealand's social fabric (Ongley & Crothers, 2013; Rashbrooke, 2013). The reform process withdrew support for productive industries such as agriculture; removed tariffs and trade barriers; deregulated markets; and corporatised or privatised parts of the state sector. It also shifted monetary policy to favour control of inflation over employment (Kelsey, 2015; Rashbrooke, 2013).

These reforms had far-reaching consequences. New links to global markets brought more variety of goods and services, including new and novel foods, while deregulation of trading and licensing hours improved access to retail and entertainment. Whereas the garden organisers grew up in a country that was relatively isolated, stable, and culturally homogenous (Bell & Neill, 2014; Dürr, 2008), younger gardeners can expect to cultivate cosmopolitan lifestyles with patterns of consumption that mirror those in developed economies around the globe (Henare, 2017). The booming tourism market takes many New Zealanders to other parts of the world, exposing them to new ways of living, new styles of eating and new methods of cooking, as does the never-ending array of travel and food shows available to view. Inward tourism and migration also bring news cultures, foods and markets to New Zealand.

As well as connecting us to global markets and lifestyles, New Zealand's political and economic reforms have also aligned us with less welcome global trends such as rising inequality and tight housing markets. These are threatening some of our most deeply held ideas about ourselves, such as our egalitarianism. New Zealand has long been characterised as a land of opportunity where everyone has an equal chance. People acknowledge the existence of inequality and poverty, but their belief in egalitarianism is a belief that people can take advantage of opportunities for social mobility and economic advancement to improve their lot (Easton, 2014). New Zealand is an equal society in many ways – it has equal voting rights, a Bill of Rights, and a Human Rights Act that outlaws discrimination on a variety of grounds (Littlewood, 2017). In other ways, however, New Zealand has become increasingly unequal. Like most developed countries, the income gap between rich and poor has become much more significant than when garden organisers grew up. Successive governments have remade the welfare state along more austere lines (Rashbrooke, 2018), and levels of poverty, hardship and homelessness have increased, especially amongst children (Boston, 2014; Peters, 2013).

Rising economic inequality and falling rates of homeownership suggest that not everyone has equal access to opportunity in New Zealand today.

Changing patterns of homeownership provide a backdrop to the emerging community gardening movement. Homeownership is something of a cultural expectation in New Zealand, but our identity as a nation of home-owners has become strained (Eaqub, 2014; Saville-Smith & Saville-Smith, 2018). There are regional, ethnic and age differences in patterns of homeownership, with homeownership being least common among those on low incomes and the young. Homeownership rates are therefore lowest amongst Māori, Pacific people, and new migrants – who are younger overall than the general population – and families with young children (Eaqub, 2014; Saville-Smith & Saville-Smith, 2018; Statistics New Zealand, 2016a).

Patterns of homeownership and inequality are relevant because community activists often mobilise community gardens as a response to food insecurity and poverty, issues that are reflected in forms of housing tenure. In my research gardens, their potential to improve food security overwhelmed all other objectives. Vegetable gardens appealed to garden organisers as an effective response to food shortages in times of precarity. They promoted gardening and other domestic skills as a way of ameliorating the effects of poverty. Community gardens thus become sites of pedagogy that link the private domestic spaces of organisers and gardeners. Garden organisers and the objects of their gardening projects move in different social circles, so gardeners' homes tend to remain closed and mysterious to garden organisers. Community gardens offer a bridge between organisers and the domestic environments of the gardeners; public venues for passing on the skills and attitudes central to establishing a New Zealand identity to gardeners, which they are not invited to pass on in private. Gardeners, meanwhile, bring social activities normally associated with the private domestic sphere to the gardens, which can offer more security of tenure than private tenancies, and accommodate larger groupings of people connected by kinship and common experience than many private dwellings afford.

1.6   THESIS STRUCTURE

The following chapter discusses the theoretical approach I have taken in more depth. It explores the work of Foucault, especially his work on governmentality and the normalising power of discourse. It also considers Hage's work on managerial belonging and its relationship to cultural dominance. Hage's work looks at the strategies used to maintain cultural dominance, including the deployment of a discourse of multiculturalism which values cultural difference as a resource for enlivening one's own culture. Foucault and Hage's work articulate

well in the context of New Zealand's political environment, which I also describe. New Zealand was an early and enthusiastic adopter of neoliberal modes of governance that have remade the state and its relationship to its citizens and, ultimately, aims to remake citizens themselves.

I have turned to the work of gardener philosopher Gilles Clément to explore the agency of plants in the latter part of Chapter Two. This chapter describes the tenets of Clément's approach to the agency of the natural world and the ways in which human-nature relations play out in gardens. Foucault, Hage and Clément each consider processes of resistance to the disciplining effects of governmentality and gardeners, which this chapter also describes.

The third chapter reviews the literature on community gardens. I focus on work from the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia, which share a market-driven approach to social and economic governance with New Zealand and are experiencing rising economic inequality, housing shortages and food insecurity. Consequently, these countries have also experienced a rising interest in community gardens and have produced an abundance of literature on the topic.

The chapter begins with a description of New Zealand's gardening history and recent changes in patterns of homeownership and economic inequality, which gives context to this research. I consider the literature on community gardens as a form of political activism, which is how I imagined them when I began this research. I also consider the literature that locates gardens in the alternative food movement, and that considers the work that gardens do to build community. I found that gardeners in my research sites were preoccupied with the potential of gardens to improve food security for poor households, so I review the literature that considers this aspect of community gardens, as well as the related literature on the ways in which community gardens become sites of discipline and pedagogy, formal and informal. Gardeners often referred to gardening skills as being lost or forgotten which is captured in a body of literature that considers the role of nostalgia in the revival of interest in domestic skills.

Chapter four gives an explanation of my research methodology. It explains how I conducted this research and the research context. I explain how I found the community gardens that I have used as research sites and why I chose them from amongst a range of possible options. I have used an ethnographic research method which meant that I spent several seasons gardening with others in each of my research sites. I describe the advantages of this approach and the ways in which it accommodated the use of auto-ethnography to capture my emotional responses to gardens and garden produce, and to follow the produce from the gardens into my home. This chapter also describes my writing decisions – how I have tried to capture the

sensory experience of being in the garden and how I have represented actors such as plants that do not communicate in the symbolic.

To do this research, I joined three community gardens as a volunteer, and the main body of this thesis describes my experiences in each of the gardens in some detail. I have devoted a chapter to each of my research sites. The first describes my experiences in the Eastern community garden, which typified the community gardens of the literature and popular imagination. This chapter describes my personal experiences of cultivating a plot. It also describes the efforts of community garden organisers to shape the gardening and charitable giving practices of the constituent gardeners, most of whom were migrants.

The second ethnographic chapter describes the South West garden, which started as a joint project between a local environmental organisation and the Department of Corrections. It was gardened by offenders serving their sentences in the community and by a small group of volunteers affiliated to the environmental organisation. The arrangement was not a happy one and this chapter describes the ways in which prior relationships, institutional imperatives and legal instruments affected the operation of the community garden. The final ethnographic chapter looks at a school gardening and cooking programme. This chapter describes the ways in which children's food practices – and, by extension, those of their families – are problematised. It looks at the way that school cooking and gardening programmes advance healthy eating discourses to compensate for what garden organisers believe is not being taught in children's homes. This chapter also describes some of the more amorphous anxieties that motivate garden organisers – concern about the children's futures and uncertainty about the implications of rapid social change.

The final chapter reflects on the ways in which my understanding of community gardens changed over the course of my research. It looks at the impact that my attempts to cultivate vegetables in a community garden had on my understanding of gardens' potential to improve food security, which was a preoccupation of garden organisers. This chapter also considers the influence of the non-human actors in the garden, the unruliness of plants and the natural world, and the new ways in which I came to see community gardens as part of the alternative food movement.

THE MATERIAL PRODUCE OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

7 - BEANS, EASTERN GARDEN

8 - CORN, EASTERN GARDEN

9 - LETTUCE, SOUTH WEST GARDEN

10 - SUNFLOWERS, EASTERN GARDEN

11 - SQUASH, SOUTH WEST GARDEN

12 - BASIL, SCHOOL GARDEN

2   THEORISING COMMUNITY GARDENS

"You're taking charge of your life. You're a self-managed, self-directed person."
Technology commentator Tom Slee, on the values embedded in the technology of "micro-entrepreneurship" (Baker, 2016)

One sunny autumn afternoon, I was alone in the Eastern Community Garden, weeding my overgrown plot and listening to a podcast called *Default World* (Baker, 2016). The podcast was a BBC production that considered how the ethics, philosophy and lifestyle of Silicon Valley shape the way we live, embedding values of individualism, self-reliance and entrepreneurship into the tools that we have come to rely on in our daily lives. My field note for the day describes how incongruous it seemed to be listening to a British journalist discuss changing cultural practices with an American technology commentator while I tried to decide whether the plants in a community garden in New Zealand were tiny leeks or unwanted grasses. As the voices coming through my headphones discussed how the Silicon Valley ethos had led to the rise of a new class of self-employed service workers – workers whose employment status is contested and livelihoods precarious – my sense of incongruity gave way to a realisation that the Silicon Valley ethos and its impact shaped my community gardening experience.

The Silicon Valley ethos of individualism and self-reliance shares the central tenets of New Zealand's identity as a nation of competent, self-reliant individualists, and springs from the same well of neoliberal political rationality that permeates our culture today. The podcast explored the implications of this ethos for workers whose employment relationships are being remade through the hyper-fragmentation of tasks and circumvention of traditional labour market protections in the gig economy[5]. The podcast spoke to much of the anxiety that garden organisers expressed about the future and the ability of gardeners to respond to the ill-defined threats that they perceived. Volunteers working in the school gardens were especially likely to worry that children faced uncertain and insecure employment futures. Whether or not it was

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[5] The gig economy describes the use of digital platforms to offer, or employ, services or labour. The gig economy consists of work that is transacted via platforms but delivered locally, such as food deliveries and cleaning services; and work that is transacted and delivered remotely, such as web design and data entry. The number of workers relying on the gig economy for subsistence is still small but the fragmented, casual nature of the work is a cause of concern for policy-makers, who see its potential to undermine labour protections and disrupt the provision of benefits traditionally delivered through employment such as pensions and health insurance (Wood, Graham, Lehdonvirta, & Hjorth, 2019). For workers, encounters with the gig economy are typified by a lack of choice and control, experiences of disempowerment, low pay, poor working conditions, alienation, anxiety and insecurity (MacDonald & Giazitzoglu, 2019).

the emerging gig economy, specifically, that concerned them, they tried to give the children some understanding that they could grow food and manage on scarce resources in case "everything falls apart". Even as garden organisers and volunteers valorised the social connectedness and community building that their gardens enabled, they worked hard to shape the gardeners into people who could, if necessary, survive without either.

My aim in this chapter is to describe the conceptual tools that have helped me to understand the ways that garden organisers enact gardens as sites of social discipline by constructing particular groups of gardeners as objects to be managed. I focus on concepts of governance and managerialism which I use to explore the practices, strategies and discourses that garden organisers deploy. I also consider how gardeners and the gardens themselves resist objectification. To understand the gap between my initial conception of community gardens and my research findings, I've described the unique features of New Zealand's socio-political environment which has been shaped by neoliberal rationalities to a higher degree than the United Kingdom, where I first encountered community gardens, and the United States, which dominates the academic and popular literature on community gardens. As discussed below, the literature on community gardens from both of these countries describes processes of neoliberalisation, but these processes seem to have shaped New Zealand society more widely and deeply.

The theoretical concepts that I have used to make sense of the tensions between the premise and practice of community gardening I have drawn from the work of Michel Foucault, Ghassan Hage and Gilles Clément. Foucault's work on governmentality and discipline provides a framework for making sense of the appeal of community gardens to organisations interested in areas such as health, education, family well-being and community development. Foucault attends to the way that power plays out in the mundane interactions of everyday life, which makes it possible to explore the myriad ways that gardeners are encouraged to govern themselves, regulate their behaviour and make responsible choices to maximise their life chances without direction from a hierarchical or linear authority (Leahy & Wright, 2016; Vander Schee, 2009). What constitutes an appropriate choice of action in Foucault's framework is determined by an assemblage of agencies and institutions such as schools and healthcare providers that have an interest in disciplining or shaping the political subject (Vander Schee, 2009). Foucault's work is thus ideal for exploring power in community gardens

across different settings as they involve relationships with a range of government and non-governmental agencies, charities, churches and other institutions.

I found that Foucault's conception of power as diffuse, working through governing strategies rather than through the direct intervention of power-wielding groups or individuals, only took me part of the way towards understanding why certain people established community gardens and what they wanted to achieve with them. While each of the organisers was linked to an agency or institution and employed Foucauldian strategies of governance, I had to look beyond Foucault's work to understand how these particular people came to assume personal responsibility for establishing gardens and enrolling groups of gardeners. To discover where organisers' sense of empowerment comes from I have turned to the work of Ghassan Hage. Hage's work on governmental belonging complements Foucault's work by offering a way to understand how organisers construct themselves as the appropriate agents to establish community gardens. His work also reveals the nature of the discourses that garden organisers deploy to support their position and clarifies the prevalence of certain cultural practices in the gardens, such as the donation of surpluses to food banks.

Both Foucault and Hage train their attention on practices of governance and discipline. The gardens themselves are understood simply as sites of social interaction, a benign backdrop against which the processes of governance play out (Classens, 2015). Gardens provide the setting in which garden organisers work to convert and reform the food practices of other gardeners and their families for their own good and the greater good of society (Vander Schee, 2008), but are not constructed as active participants in this process. Throughout my research, however, I observed that the gardens shaped human interactions and human spaces in complex and dynamic ways. While gardeners organise themselves and their garden environments, the gardens organise the gardeners by directing the allocation of labour and other resources, shaping gardeners' expectations of the gardens and each other, and even materially changing human bodies as the gardeners eat what the garden produces.

To explore the agency of the gardens, I've turned to the work of Gilles Clément, a French gardener and philosopher. Clément's perspective exposes the shortcomings of approaches that treat society separately from the natural world. He argues that the conceptual distinction between nature and society is baseless. Clément's concepts of 'gardens in motion' and the 'planetary garden', which I discuss below, decentre individuals and humans as the fulcrum of social analysis and make room to consider the effects of the broader environment in which they live. His work is especially useful when considering garden organisers' struggles to realise

their objectives because Clément's framework reveals the gardens as active agents of resistance to garden organisers' efforts.

Applying these theoretical approaches together enabled me to understand how garden organisers constructed the gardeners as objects to be managed and employed discourses of health, family wholesomeness, self-responsibility and care to their efforts to create gardens for communities that they perceived as needing governing and guidance. Foucault, in particular, enabled me to see garden organisers both as exercising power and struggling against power exercised by the forces of globalised capitalism, which created anxiety and perceptions of precarity. Meanwhile, Hage's more recent work on the politics of hope offers a way of understanding the persistence of community gardening as a popular response to social distress. The different theoretical concepts also enabled me to see the gardeners as having their own subjectivities, which were the starting point for resistance against their objectification; gardeners resisted becoming what organisers wanted them to be. They revealed how the gardens also struggled against objectification, resisting gardeners' efforts to make them look a particular way or produce in a timely, orderly and aesthetically pleasing fashion.

As discussed, community gardens in New Zealand are different in many ways to community gardens in other places, such as cities in the United States. The differences reflect New Zealand's colonial history and patterns of homeownership as well as its deep and widespread embrace and imposition of neoliberal principles and modes of governance. Foucault and Hage's works articulates well in the New Zealand context. Foucault's work on neoliberalism as governmentality describes a mentality of governing that is more than just a manner of governing economies and states; it is also a way of regulating the individual through the production of neoliberal subjectivities. These subjectivities are motivated by interests, desires and aspirations instead of by coercion, which extends the reach of New Zealand's small and centralised state sector in an efficient, resource-light way (Read, 2009). Hage's work, meanwhile, gives some shape to the legacy of colonial power relations that leads some people to believe that they are legitimately entitled to hold a governmental or managerial view of aspects of daily life and the behaviour and practices of others (Hage, 1998).

Another significant influence on contemporary New Zealand society is the process of depoliticisation, which is described below in section 2.3, *Neoliberalism and depoliticisation*. Depoliticisation entails the use of mechanisms and institutions that distance politicians from policy and service delivery decisions in a range of areas including food security, urban land use, environmental management and health and social services. Distancing strategies include the

creation of non-governmental agencies, industry regulators, and the contracting of private service providers, which remove such issues from the political sphere. I consider how the depoliticisation of the concerns that drive support for community gardens facilitates the diffusion of political power through processes of governmentality. Depoliticisation thus makes room for community managers to conduct the behaviour and practices of gardeners through managerialism and governmental belonging. I also look at the way that governmentality and governmental belonging support and reflect processes of depoliticisation. Depoliticisation can be understood as the enabling shadow of neoliberal governmentality, which allows the state to roll forward its agenda even as it rolls back the institutions of the state itself (Foster, Kerr, & Byrne, 2014).

As discussed below, community gardens make sense as appropriate responses to issues such as ill-health and food insecurity because depoliticisation has created a gap between the state and its citizens. When contracted service agencies do not fill these gaps, such as by alleviating food insecurity, community groups and charities step into the breach with initiatives such as food banks and community gardens. After discussing Foucault and Hage's work, this chapter goes on to examine the relationship between neoliberal political rationality, governmentality and governmental belonging which mesh together to provide the unique context of New Zealand's community gardening scene.

2.1   MICHEL FOUCAULT, GOVERNMENTALITY AND DISCIPLINE

Foucault's writings trace the emergence of specific forms of power over time and the manner of their social evolution. In his 1977 book, *Discipline and Punish*, he describes the development of modern, diffuse forms of power in which citizens are encouraged to manage themselves and their behaviour to achieve desirable social outcomes (Layder, 1994). Modern power is an effective and efficient form of discipline that moves the locus of control from a centralised authority such as a monarch or state to individuals themselves through a system of pervasive and impersonal surveillance. Whereas a monarch or state agents might use threats of, or actual, violence and imprisonment to control people's behaviours, modern governance relies on subtle, coercive power that is exercised through the propagation of normative ways of acting, being and thinking. These are shaped by claims of expert knowledge and truth rather than through claims of divine authority and legitimacy (Foucault, 1979). The relevance of this to the cultivation of vegetables might not seem obvious, but garden organisers, funders, admirers and gardeners both exercise and are subject to this diffuse form of power. They draw on a range of narratives or discourses shaped by expert knowledge and truths about the

importance of diet, exercise, charity, community and family relations to explain their support for, and participation in, the community gardens.

2.1.1   Normalising power

Foucault conceives of power as being either repressive or normalising. Repressive power is hierarchical and institutional. For example, an employer holds power over the activities of employees; a parent holds power over a child; police officers arrest people for breaking the law. This sort of power still implies violence or coercion, whether actual or threatened. Repressive power is effective, but Foucault argues that its use is, in a sense, a sign of weakness or failure (Gijsberg, 2017). An employer who pursues disciplinary action against an employee has failed to gain the employee's obedience; a child who is forced to sit at the table until they finish their dinner is one who has failed to obey their parent's instruction to eat everything on their plate; a person breaking into a house has failed to recognise the rights of the house's owner. Repressive power forces us to do what we don't want to do or to sublimate our wishes to those with power.

Normalising power works in a far subtler way and is, Foucault suggests, the most common and most important form of power in modern society (Gijsberg, 2017). He conceives of power as fluid and web-like, acting on social beings and circulating through society. Foucault describes power as relational, working on and through individuals as they act on others (Foucault, 2003b). Normalising power makes us want to do what we have to do anyway to adhere to social norms, without the threat of punishment. We become mostly self-governing and self-regulating. The diffuse nature of normalising power means that it is everywhere and affects both the powerful and the powerless; everyone is equally subjected to normalising power. Just as children learn to eat their dinner, for example, parents learn what to serve for dinner and where and when it should be eaten.

The strength of normalising power is that it shapes our beliefs, desires and decisions while encouraging the idea that these are expressions of our "free" will and rational choice. Normalising power moulds our free will so that we willingly adhere to workplace rules, eat the meal our parent has given us, and make sure to enter our own house with a key rather than someone else's by force. If those in power have been successful in teaching us the value of work, a balanced meal and respect for private property, then they do not need to employ instruments of repression or violence, because adherence to rules and expectations is normal.

Repressive power is thus reserved for breakdowns in the normal functioning of coercive power.

2.1.2   Discipline and governmentality

Foucault's concepts of discipline and governmentality describe the fundamentals of power relations between the state and its people, or the "art of government" (Oksala, 2011, p. 478). Government refers to all the ways that the political structures and practices of state management might direct the conduct of individuals or groups, as well as to the structures and practices themselves (Foucault, 2003a).

Disciplinary power is exercised through a variety of institutions such as schools, prisons and hospitals by people in positions of authority. People have authority through claims to knowledge and truth. Knowledge, especially scientific knowledge, is a critical standard or tool of normalisation. Science reinforces beliefs about what is normal and appropriate to eat for health and well-being, for example; how much exercise to take; and the health benefits of engaging with nature. Scientific knowledge underpins the normalisation of certain family practices such as eating at a table or eating at regular times. Scientific knowledge, therefore, plays an essential role in the social structures that surround us, and those structures are continuously exerting their normalising power on us. Foucault argues that discipline is "centred on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimisation of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls" (Foucault, 1981, cited in Certomà, 2011, p. 985). Discipline is about creating bodies or subjects that are useful to the smooth functioning of social and economic systems. The term 'discipline' implies a level of coercion, but Coveney, Begley, and Gallegos (2012) describe it as a positive property that provides the necessary rationale to attain the beneficial outcomes prescribed and endorsed by expert understanding. "Discipline" is used to describe bodies of skills and knowledge that produce subjectivities, making us into certain kinds of people (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000).

Governmentality refers to how people are instructed to govern themselves through self-regulation, or "the conduct of conduct" (Gordon, 1991, p. 5), to make us into useful subjects. Governmentality describes the functioning of stealthy forms of government beyond but also including state institutions. It helps understand enterprises such as community gardens because Foucault's conception of how power operates shifts the level of analysis to the mundane details of everyday life. Governmentality enrols citizens in the betterment of society and themselves by requiring that they become active on their own behalf, conducting their

lives consistently with the knowledge and truth about how they *should* be living as set out in various discourses (Foucault, 1991; Vander Schee, 2009).

2.1.3   Discourse

The term 'discourse' captures knowledge and truth claims as well as social practices. Discourses are more than a linguistic exercise, or ways of thinking and producing meaning; they are the means by which knowledge and truth claims are mobilised in different contexts and for different purposes (Davies, 1990). In the gardens, for example, the discourses that dominate relate to health, domestic competence, self-reliance and the performance of 'community'.

For something to be governed, or imagined as governable, it must be problematised (Vander Schee, 2009). That is, people's behaviours, practices and even bodies need to be understood in relation to a problem for intervention to become appropriate. Health discourses do this problematising work, coalescing around concerns about obesity and diet-related health issues. These issues preoccupy health agencies in all those countries which have experienced a resurgence of interest in community gardens, such as New Zealand, Australia, European and North American countries (Nettle, 2010; Wills, Draper, & Gustafsson, 2013). Public health agencies promote initiatives that encourage the consumption of fresh vegetables and home cooking which are supported, or countered, by a seemingly endless series of television cooking programmes, documentaries about the health and environmental effects of dietary choices, and competing discourses in social media about the benefits of various food practices. Despite their often conflicting advice, they share a tendency to position individual choice as the determining factor in people's health and well-being.

In health discourses, individuals are responsible for exercising choice amongst a range of lifestyle options to provide the best possible outcome for themselves and society. Determining the options from which individuals choose within a field of action is the business of a broad range of agencies and institutions with interest in regulating and constructing citizens' understandings of their bodies (Leahy & Wright, 2016). Thus, while individuals appear free to exercise choice in matters of food, eating and lifestyle, the options offered to them align with the objectives of those who frame them. Health discourses require individuals to discipline themselves to become healthy and economically useful beings. Personal choice, free will and

individual responsibility are critical concepts that link governmentality to governmental belonging, depoliticisation and neoliberalism, as discussed below.

Gardens enrol individuals in the project of regulating their food practices by altering the range of foods available to them and building their capacity to grow, prepare and eat garden produce in the future. The projects are orchestrated by garden organisers who connect the imperatives of government health agencies and the bodies of gardeners. Garden organisers draw authority from their embodiment of appropriate food practices and social discipline. This is the point at which Foucault's ideas of governmentality intersect with Hage's idea of governmental belonging, as discussed below. Those individuals whose sense of governmental belonging supports their belief that they have a legitimate role in disciplining others also find validation in the workings of discursive power. We can discern both governmentality and governmental belonging in discourses around health and domestic competence.

2.2   HAGE AND GOVERNMENTAL BELONGING

Ghassan Hage's work offers a comparative anthropology of racism, nationalism and multiculturalism, particularly in Australia where he is employed. While it is possible to explore these themes in the context of community gardens, it is the managerialism that Hage identifies in Australian nationalism that has helped me to understand what shapes behaviours in community gardens, especially amongst garden organisers and funders. The following paragraphs explain the nationalist framing of managerialism before relating it to the context of community gardens.

2.2.1   Managerialism and governmental belonging

Hage (1998, p. 20) uses the term "White" to describe the dominant, governing culture of Australia. He describes Whiteness as a fantasy position of cultural dominance born out of the history of European expansion and British colonialism in Australia, a history that is broadly shared by New Zealand. One doesn't have to be of British stock to be White in Hage's construction, however. Whiteness is an aspiration or a form of cultural capital that people can acquire through the collection of various social attributes, notably an investment in the idea that the social space should reflect dominant White beliefs in how society should look and function.

Hage identifies Whiteness as an organising principle that controls and positions "ethnics" or non-white-looking people as objects to be managed and controlled in Australia's social space according to the will of the dominant White culture (Hage, 1998). White Australians can

structure the social space in this way because they are possessors of what Hage calls governmental belonging, a managerial role assumed by those who believe that they have "the power to have a legitimate view concerning the positioning of others in the nation" (Hage, 1998, p. 46). Whiteness operates as a symbolic field of accumulation in which attributes conducive to a sense of governmental belonging can be gathered and converted into Whiteness regardless of the colour of one's skin or ethnic background. To be seen to belong, or to acquire managerial capital, people have to be seen to be adhering to the rules and values laid out by the dominant culture (Due, 2008; Hage, 1998).

2.2.2   Multiculturalism

Hage (1998) argues that White Australians can tolerate and value difference while protecting their managerial authority and ability to shape Australian identity because Australia has adopted a discourse of multiculturalism. On the surface, this seems to be something of a paradox, but Hage argues that multiculturalism contains various processes of control and normalisation. These processes require non-White Australians – whether migrants or indigenous people – to behave in ways that are deemed acceptable to White Australia and makes them able to be more easily absorbed into the dominant culture. Conformity to White conceptions of living enables non-white Australians to access resources such as education, healthcare and other public services without those services having to adapt in any way that would require a corresponding change in White behaviour. Thus, while Australia's policy of multiculturalism ostensibly accommodates and encourages the practice of diverse cultural forms and facilitates interaction between them, Hage argues that in reality multicultural diversity is presented as tamed ethnicities operating within a generous and tolerant, if still dominant, White culture. Hage points to improved services provided to migrants and the redistribution of state resources in favour of non-white migrants as evidence that multiculturalism has influenced social policy in a way that has enhanced migrants' experiences of life in modern Australia without having undermined White dominance.

2.2.3   Governmental belonging in the gardens

Hage's ideas can be mapped onto the gardens by considering who establishes and runs community gardens and what discourses they employ to justify and garner support for their efforts. In the community garden space, Whiteness is evident in the managerial authority deployed by garden organisers. This managerialism is a fantastical construction that allows those in possession of sufficient symbolic authority to stake out a role in community spaces. Symbolic authority includes personal and social backgrounds, and ties to institutions such as

churches, schools, charitable organisations, local authorities, and other networks. Governmental belonging in the garden context is evident in the distinction between those who have the power to define normative ways of being, thinking and acting and those whom they construct as needing support to conform to these expectations. To hold a sense of governmental belonging is to perceive oneself as the embodiment and enactor of the national will, to the extent that it aligns with one's own will. Hage identifies this as the force that makes community managers into subjects whose will can be exercised in the national space as well as in more localised spaces such as community gardens, schools, and charities.

To give their managerial authority a focus, garden organisers imagine the communities that they seek to manage as a source of governmental problems (Hage, 1998). In contrast to the competent managers, the objects of garden enterprises often do not have strong links to community institutions (other than schoolchildren and prisoners whose links are compelled, rather than cultivated) and do not hold forms of social or cultural capital that managers recognise. Organisers describe the gardeners as "falling behind", "struggling", in need of guidance and direction to make appropriate choices in the realms of food and eating, domestic management, charitable giving or other perceived deficiencies.

Discourses of self-reliance and domestic competence feature prominently in descriptions of the various garden project's objectives. These discourses can be understood as a technique used to maintain the normativity of the dominant culture as imagined by garden organisers (Due, 2008). Their tactic is to deny that there are any systemic factors that lead to people making poor food choices or experience food insecurity; that any such experiences are the result of choices made by individuals acting on their own behalf. Examples of such systemic factors include the construction of problems such as food insecurity or poor health outcomes as the fault of those who suffer them. That is, food practices are constructed as a matter of personal choice or lack of skills rather than the inevitable, determined outcome of series of unrelated, uncoordinated social, political and economic strategies pursued by entities as diverse as urban planners, employment and welfare policymakers, supermarket operators and electricity suppliers. The dominant culture in New Zealand is shaped by hegemonic political rationality (Reynolds, 2016), which leads to problematic food practices being framed as primarily a problem of individuals' responsibility. This political rationality, neoliberalism, is discussed below.

Denying the systemic nature of poor choices in matters of food and health leads to positive reinforcement of community development efforts which attempt to respond to 'issues' such as poverty and poor diet through education and the provision of sites such as community gardens

where people can learn and practice appropriate behaviours. While inequality is now widely recognised as entrenched in developed countries such as New Zealand (Rashbrooke, 2018), gardener organisers continue to critique the practices of individuals rather than acknowledge the existence of systemic distributive problems, problematizing poor food practices as matters of choice and a failure to adhere to dominant cultural norms. Ignoring such systemic problems legitimises the role of dominant-group community managers who perform appropriate food practices and uphold dominant cultural values.

Just as Hage describes Whiteness as a fantasy position of cultural dominance derived from British colonialism, New Zealand's cultural managers draw on a rich seam of settler-colonial inheritance. Garden organisers measure gardeners against signifiers of appropriate domestic behaviours such as providing home-cooked meals served at a dining table or packed school lunches, which work as a form of identity construction. Valorising such practices reinforces garden organisers' sense of governmental belonging as they dovetail with discourses on social cohesion, family values, sound nutrition and prudent resource management and can, therefore, be presented as being in the national interest. At a time when the social effects of rising inequality and poverty challenge the dominant national myths of egalitarianism and equality of opportunity, community gardens appear to offer a way to respond to such challenges in a way that neatly fits within the ideology of our national myths.

Hage's work underpins the use of the term "cultural politics" in the title of this thesis. Cultural politics describes the way that aspects of culture such as people's attitudes, opinions, beliefs and perspectives shape society and political opinion, and give rise to social, economic and political frameworks. Hage argues that the attitudes, opinions and beliefs of the dominant culture determine the nature of these frameworks and shape the politics of belonging. Dominant culture in turn shapes the ways in which, to draw on Foucault, people conduct their conduct, and the ways in which conduct is surveilled. The term cultural politics also describes the space in which social values and meanings are created and contested, making room for resistance and the transformation of dominant discourses around concepts such as community, or those relating to food, eating, health and domestic practices.

The term "cultural politics" is often invoked in the study of social movement. Nettle (2014) for example, draws on social movement theory in her exploration of community gardens. I have found that while the community gardens I studied cannot be understood as part of an oppositional social movement, they nonetheless illustrate the way that cultural politics play out.

Hage's work on multiculturalism can also be transposed onto the gardens. Garden organisers spoke of their desire to "bring communities together" (Bourke, 2011) so that people of diverse backgrounds – different classes and ethnicities – could overcome "difficulties integrating, especially when a lack of knowledge and understanding of other cultures feeds suspicion" (Matthews, 2011, p. 1). Garden organisers encouraged the gardeners to share recipes, have community meals and make cultural connections through growing food. Hage might recognise the way in which garden organisers encouraged the practice of diverse cultural forms and facilitated interaction between them. Gardeners were still required to adhere to rules set by garden organisers, however, such as donating surpluses to selected charities. In the school cooking programmes, little allowance was made for religious or dietary restrictions and none for preference.

From a Hage-ian perspective, gardeners are there to provide evidence of garden organisers' tolerance and appreciation of diversity, valued as long as they operate within the parameters of the dominant culture. This was evident in community gardens when gardeners planted crops that garden organisers considered unacceptable, such as tobacco. It was especially evident in the school cooking programmes where volunteers prepared a range of dishes using ingredients assembled from other cultures and often imported from other countries such as spring roll wrappers, udon noodles and coconut milk. These foods, which older volunteers considered new and exotic, were remade into dishes acceptable to dominant-culture palates and cooking methods and served to the children, who came from a variety of backgrounds, with an insistence that they must accept them. Volunteers demonstrated their tolerance of others' foods by cooking with them while signalling their ability to be intolerant if the children did not accept the remade, reimagined versions of their foods. Hage describes this as "culinary cosmo-multiculturalism" (Hage, 1997, p. 119) which is a way of valuing other cultures as sources of novel commodities and experiences made available for the appreciation of the dominant, and tolerant, group.

2.3   NEOLIBERALISM AND DEPOLITICISATION

The neoliberal state is a constant backdrop to garden projects in New Zealand and abroad. Neoliberalism is more than an economic theory or political ideology; it is "a comprehensive political project that sees the market as the model for the state and the overall organisation of society" (Oksala, 2011, p. 480). Reynolds (2016) argues that neoliberal rationality is hegemonic

in New Zealand both at the level of policy and governance structures and the level of citizens' subjectivities.

Neoliberalism is given effect through neoliberalisation, which is a set of processes that roll back the social safety net and government oversight on the one hand, and roll forward new social and economic relationships through the co-option of non-government organisations and individuals on the other (Foster et al., 2014; McClintock, 2014). Neoliberalisation has led to the privatisation and marketisation of public goods and services, the contracting out of former state functions, and a shift in discourse to favour self-sufficiency and personal responsibility. Crucially, processes of neoliberalisation frame individuals as competitive creatures whose well-being depends on the pursuit of economic self-interest. Neoliberal citizens strategise for themselves amongst various social, political and economic options; they do not join with others to alter or challenge these options (Read, 2009). Community development initiatives such as community gardens are examples of the new social relationships in that they are sites of pedagogy in which gardeners are transformed into neoliberal subjects able to provide for and maintain themselves in readiness to compete with others. In promoting alternative ways of doing citizenship, they can also be seen as sites of resistance to neoliberal subjectification.

Scholars have critiqued community gardens and urban agriculture projects as underwriting processes of neoliberalisation by filling voids left by the roll-back of the social safety net (McClintock, 2014). However, Foster et al. (2014) suggest that the slimmed-down state, enabled by neoliberal governance discourse, disguises a level of state intervention that is more pervasive than ever before. This extensive intervention is rendered covert through the operation of governmentality and depoliticisation. Depoliticisation is the use of mechanisms and institutions to distance politicians from decision-making on a range of issues and in diverse policy fields, including those of food quality, food security, and community development. The use of public and private service delivery agencies, contracting relationships, and discourses of self-responsibilisation create these indirect, distanced governing relationships.

Depoliticisation aims to persuade people that the government no longer has a role and cannot reasonably be held responsible for individual choices and their outcomes by shifting the political space into the sphere of the personal and individual through promotion of the idea of freedom of personal choice (Flinders & Buller, 2006; Foster et al., 2014; Reynolds, 2016). Depoliticisation shifts responsibility for addressing intractable management problems to the level of communities, families and individuals by inserting choice and agency around issues such as food, health, community development and social well-being (Foster et al., 2014). Depoliticising these issues doesn't make them any less political, but the sure functioning of

governmentality and governmental belonging means that depoliticisation hides the persistence of both politics and the state.

Neoliberalisation depends on processes of depoliticisation, or the shifting of responsibility from the state to the individual through the use of these distancing mechanisms to create the impression of a diminished, withdrawn state. Reynolds (2016) argues that depoliticisation is a dynamic of neoliberal societies rather than a stand-alone phenomenon – the constant shadow of neoliberal political rationality. Depoliticisation is possible because of the disciplining effect of governmentality or a shift in the way that we think about government and governance through absorption of discourses promoting self-reliance and responsibilisation. Governmentality allows for a continual evaluation of what should and should not fall within the domain of the state, what should be considered private, and what public (Reynolds, 2016). Depoliticisation and neoliberal governance are possible because a sense of governmental belonging co-opts those who hold it to manage others in the public space, to ensure that everyone is integrated into the efficient functioning of the state.

The idea that garden organisers might be unaware of their roles as remote instruments of the state, furthering a political rationality and managerial authority which they are only dimly aware that they hold, is indicative of the way that neoliberal governmentality is embedded in the totalising ways that we think about health, food and eating. That is not to say that garden organisers always espouse ideologically coherent narratives. In fact, they hold broad and often contradictory views on why gardens are necessary, what they seek to achieve, and how they expect their projects to unfold. Gardeners sometimes indicated that they believed there were wider, structural systems at play in shaping family food practices, while at other times they advanced the normative narrative that individual behaviour such as poor parenting and inappropriate spending patterns were the cause of nutritionally poor diets and a lack of domestic competence. Berentson-Shaw (2018), reviewing research on attitudes to poverty, found that it is common for people to hold complex and contradictory beliefs on such issues, even those issues on which they hold firm views.

2.4   RESISTANCE AND THE PRODUCTION OF HOPE

My early conception of community gardens as part of a broader alternative food movement meant that I interpreted them as defying industrial agri-food relations by performing alternative modes of food production and distribution (Sharp, Friesen, & Lewis, 2015). I saw them as critiquing modern food production systems and the weaknesses of market-based distribution models that leave some sections of society with insufficient food, or the wrong

types of food. This performance of resistance and critique seemed to be 'big' and confrontational in that community gardens take up urban space and enrol local authorities, community organisations and neighbours in their enactment.

By the end of my field research, I came to understand the community gardens in which I did my fieldwork as the logical outcome of processes of neo-liberalisation and depoliticisation, and where narratives surrounding various food, health and domestic practices were manifest and justified. Garden organisers deployed their ideologies of belonging to nudge gardeners towards appropriate domestic practices, especially those concerning food, eating and charitable giving. Their conception of what constitutes healthy food and appropriate food practices are so closely aligned with dominant discourses on these issues that they seem to represent "common sense". Nevertheless, garden organisers occasionally drew on a range of critical narratives such as those from the organic food movement when discussing the quality of food available to consumers; or narratives from the food justice movement when discussing food prices and the dominance of New Zealand's supermarket duopoly. Thus, the congruence of governmentality, governmental belonging, neoliberalism and processes of depoliticisation, and the contrasting use of critical narratives made the garden projects examples both of "actually existing neoliberalism[6] *and* a simultaneous radical counter-movement arising in dialectical tension" (McClintock, 2014, p. 148). It seemed a lot for the vegetable patches to carry.

The gardeners engaged in 'small' acts of resistance, too, such as harvesting crops from the communal beds before they were ready, stealing the garden tools, and planting tobacco despite the explicit disapproval of the organisers. I've described these as small acts of resistance because they were opportunistic, personal and persistent. The plants, insects, fungi and other 'pests' in the garden could also be seen to opportunistically and persistently resist the way they were cultivated and managed. Collectively, these small acts of resistance revealed the limits of governance and the many ways in which gardens and gardeners were

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[6] The phrase "actually existing neoliberalism" describes the gap between the ideals of neoliberalism advanced by classical neoliberal theorists and people's lived experiences of it. Attempts to transform society along the lines that theorists envisaged by dismantling the welfare state, privatising and deregulating public industries, and entrpreneurialising individuals – making each of us into human capital who can enhance our value in the market place – have not produced the pure model envisaged in theory. It is notable that the effect of the transformation is experienced differently by those at different ends of the class spectrum. Those at the top who hold economic and cultural capital find it liberating as it expands their life options, while those at the bottom find it restricting, intrusive and castigatory (Brown, 2019b; Wacquant, 2012).

ungovernable. Foucault, Hage and Clément all offer frameworks for understanding community gardens as sites of resistance as well as sites of management and discipline.

Foucault's theoretical approach helps us to understand garden organisers as oppositional activists, even as he argues that everyone is equally subjected to normalising power because Foucault analyses power relations by considering forms of resistance against different forms of power. Resistance in Foucault's framework takes a different form from disobedience or liberation. He argues that we resist normative power through the activity of critique or subversive performance of norms.   Subversive resistance is possible because we are not determined by norms because the norms don't cause us to be. Rather, what causes us to be is the repeated performance of the norms (Butler, 2014). The norms are normative because people do them all the time. Gardeners resist by not repeating the norms exactly but by repeating them differently, with a twist of subversion. Agency and the prospect of resistance are located within the possibility of a variation on the repetition of the norms (James, 2011).

Community gardens can thus be seen both as sites of social discipline and sites of resistance to market disciplines. Garden organisers scrutinise and evaluate the food practices of gardeners to ensure that they include enough home-cooked food, fresh produce, the right type of produce or the correct modes of preparation and consumption. In creating the gardens, organisers also create alternative food spaces in which people are encouraged to work together to provide for the greater welfare of the community through charitable donation. While charitable donations, as an expression of traditional morality, can be understood as that part of the neoliberal project that takes care of the social justice problem (Brown, 2019a), community gardens also create spaces where people can experiment with alternative forms of citizenship and potentially remake their communities along more communitarian lines. By creating these spaces, garden organisers appear to be resisting the effects of competitive labour markets and the commercial food provisioning regimes that led gardeners to adopt poor food practices, such as a reliance on time-saving convenience foods and a breakdown in family mealtimes. These forces are strong however – favoured food practices of home-grown vegetables and home-cooked meals are increasingly untenable for those at the precarious edge of the competitive labour market who may not be able to muster the resources available to garden organisers.

Community gardens fit into a series of oppositional struggles that Foucault describes as "transversal" in that they are not limited to one country or a particular political or economic form of government (Foucault, 2003a, p. 129). Community gardens represent a struggle against the effects of processes of social and economic marginalisation rather than a struggle

against the processes themselves. In the gardens, this manifests as a struggle against outcomes such as ill-health and insecure access to food rather than against neoliberalisation, depoliticisation and the precarity that they have engendered. Foucault depicts such oppositional movements as struggles against the government of individualisation, a form of economic and ideological state violence, which revolve around the question of 'who are we?', as a collective (Foucault, 2003a, p. 130). While community garden organisers work to cultivate appropriate choice-making and reflexivity in individual gardeners, they simultaneously seek to equip those same gardeners with the capacity to resist the larger forces that threaten to overwhelm the healthy food project in which they are engaged.

Just as Foucault offers a way to see gardens both as reproducing and resisting the dominant discourse, Hage represents ideas of national identity as a mechanism for the production and distribution of hope – a positive hope that induces an active engagement with reality and allows people to invest in their social reality (Hage, 2003). Hage describes social hope as the perception within society that a better future can be realised by overcoming the determining powers of inequality experienced in the present. He notes that this capacity for hope offers space in the empirical reality for ideological intervention – a roll-your-sleeves-up-and-get-on-with-it intervention that emphasises the causal power of national character. The national character thus becomes a shared resource on which all can draw.

Hage notes that while capitalism generally works towards the inter-generational reproduction of class location, the hope embodied in the idea of a resilient and resourceful national character allows for a belief in the power of upward social mobility or, at the very least, protection against a slide downward; it captures the spirit of egalitarianism of old. Community groups establish gardens to distribute social opportunities and social hope, and to perform community and the flattening of social structures. However, Hage warns that the risk of downward slide becomes ever more likely as neoliberal states retreat from their commitment to the general welfare of the marginal and poor and from the regulation of transactions from employment rights to consumer protection. Globalised capitalism, according to Hage, has led to a decline in the nation's ability to produce hope, and hence a fearful and anxious citizenry. Hope is not evenly distributed, and Hage (2003) argues that to give hope, one has to have it.

2.5   GILLES CLÉMENT'S GARDENS OF RESISTANCE

I have used the work of Michel Foucault and Ghassan Hage to explore the relations between human gardeners and social institutions that play out in community gardens, including the ways in which gardeners resist. There are also other, non-human actors in the gardens, which

have a profound influence on the outcome of community gardening projects. These have scant regard for human power dynamics. In *The Politics of Nature,* Latour defines an actor as "anything that acts" or modifies the state of another (Latour, 2004, p. 256). This definition encompasses plants and garden ecosystems amongst the troupe of actors in the gardens. To understand their agency, I've turned to the work of French gardener and theorist, Gilles Clément. I've chosen Clément because of his practice as a gardener and because his theoretical framework acknowledges the influence that human activity has had, and continues to have, on what we perceive as the natural world.

Clément describes the earth as a planetary garden, conceiving of it as a finite space, an enclosure bound by the biosphere which is incapable of eternal renewal and is hence subject to depletion (Clément, 2012). Clément argues that the planet's diversity is today shaped or affected by human activity and is therefore in danger. This rather abstract concept is relevant to community gardens because, by conceiving of the planet as a garden, Clément dispenses with the idea that some plants are native and others introduced, some appropriate and others not; gardeners must respond to what they encounter and what emerges without judgement. He observes that the incessant movement around the planet of winds, maritime currents and animal or human migration mix and redistribute species. Human activity greatly increases the rate of movement and change, both in terms of the natural world, and in terms of human policies and practices that actively move people and goods from place to place through migration, colonisation and trade.

In community gardens, gardeners act as intermediaries for encounters among species and cultures that are not necessarily, *a priori*, destined to meet. Gardeners have to choose between letting gardens, as well as relationships, communities and priorities, develop freely and interfering to direct their progress. The gardeners' task is to interpret interactions and decide where and how much to interfere in order to maintain or improve biodiversity or other desirable outcomes (Panțu, 2009).

Classens (2015) argues that nature is often treated as a benign backdrop against which ostensibly more significant social processes play out. Clément, however, assumes that gardens and gardeners are interdependent, that they work together. In an essay titled *Éloges des vagabondes (In praise of vagabonds)*, Clément invites gardeners to consider the form and function of plants that emerge in the garden before categorising them as unwanted or as weeds. The question is not whether the plant fits the orderly plan devised by the gardener to meet her human needs or the perceived needs of other gardeners, but whether the plant has qualities that can be appreciated and accommodated – does it provide food for insects, add

colour or scent to the garden, or have medicinal qualities? Clément asks gardeners to value the destabilising effect that unexpected arrivals in the garden have as they might lead to a looser, more relaxed garden aesthetic (Despard, 2008; Skinner, 2011), and this approach can equally be applied to the arrival of unexpected humans or human practices as it can to plants.

Clément's approach is to respond creatively to the constant and subtle changes in a garden; to experiment with new relations between garden and gardener. Gardening becomes a way of discerning the garden's potential and letting go of ideas about how it should or could look or what it should produce. Gardening can thus be seen as a different form of cultivation, one that moves beyond the habitual removal of unwanted species to the observation of plants and a more imaginative, open attitude with regard to their potential. Acknowledging the agency of plants and other elements in the gardens means that new, less controlled and deterministic garden practices can be cultivated. Accepting the agency and partnership of nature in creating the garden inevitably means that a wider variety of outcomes and experiences are accepted as interesting and valuable (Despard, 2008). Clément's approach to working cooperatively with other actors is possible because he is open with regard to the end result. He approaches gardening from an experimental perspective in which any of the creative forces in the garden can alter its effect or affect. The role of the gardener is to observe and appreciate what is happening on a smaller scale where success is not defined by productiveness alone, but where the effect of the garden is to produce a sense of wonder and respect.

Donna Haraway, in her work on the ethics of natural science, suggests that nature might be imagined as genuinely social and actively relational (cited in Despard, 2008, p. 91). Haraway asserts that the non-human parties to the relationship will never settle down to be the same thing forever and nature cannot, therefore, be predicted or controlled through knowing it. The fundamental unpredictability of gardens and their inability to acquiesce to human manipulations and timeframes means that gardens and nature can be a source of creativity and experimentation. Gardens stir things up by trespassing across boundaries, fruiting at inconvenient times, and encouraging relationships between brassicas and caterpillars of which human gardeners do not approve. The non-human members of community gardens do not know their place or heed the instructions of gardeners, and they disregard human design, just as human gardeners do not always adhere to the course envisaged by garden organisers. Human gardeners plant the wrong crops, pick plants too early, share crops in the wrong ways and don't care for garden tools, for example.

Clément and Haraway's approaches to human-nature relations stand in contrast to the determined efforts of garden organisers to manage plants and gardeners in the garden.

Clément and Haraway suggest engaging with nature in a way that is lighter, more responsive and attentive to change and flux, and accepting of potential, diversity and the unexpected. Acknowledging the agency of non-human actors enables us to understand the parameters within which garden organisers exercise their managerial authority and the limits of governmentality to integrate gardeners.

As well as offering a way of looking at the complexity of the elements that constitute gardens and communities, and at how this can be used to understand the way garden projects unfold, Clément also develops the idea of gardens as "third landscapes". He developed this idea after seeing aerial photographs of variations in land use in the Limoges region of central France (Gandy, 2013). Clément observed that the uncultivated reservoirs of biodiversity looked like islands in vast mono-cultural oceans of industrialised agriculture or plantation forestry. For Clément, third landscapes are spaces that had a previous industrial, agricultural or functional use; or spaces that have been scarcely modified by human activity through chance or inaccessibility. Community gardens are a form of third space in urban areas, making use of areas that have become unkempt as a result of disuse, often while waiting for redevelopment and return to utilitarian use as housing, classrooms, or roads. Community gardens can provide more aesthetic and biotic variety than the neglected spaces that were there before, as well as making space for more diverse communities of people than are found in more formal pockets of urban landscaping and architectural hardscapes.

Community gardens can also be understood as third spaces in the sense that, as sources of food, they are islands of imperfection and unreliability in a sea of durable, predictable and available foodstuffs, often ready-to-eat, which are distributed through a highly developed corporate food system. They require gardeners to engage with the materiality of their food in a way that corporate food services do not. For many inexperienced gardeners, community gardens offer an opportunity to have novel experiences with food that widen the scope of possible emotional responses to food, eating and their environment (Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy, 2013). While the end result of these encounters cannot be prescribed, offering novel, visceral food experiences to new gardeners greatly increases the range of possible outcomes. I return to Clément's work in the final section of this dissertation, where I look at the way that the agency of the gardens unsettles the comfortable and linear connections between

gardening, food and eating on the one hand, and garden organisers' perceptions of the social order and their managerial position on the other.

2.6   CONCLUSION

The theoretical framework assembled above provides a way of reconciling the complex forces at work in community gardens and in the wider community in which they are located. These include the congruent forces of neoliberalisation of the state and citizen subjectivities; depoliticisation of food issues such as access and quality; and the assumption of managerial responsibility by concerned citizens with a strong sense of governmental belonging who draw on clear discourses about food and eating. The forces of resistance include critiques of capitalist food systems, the performance of alternative modes of producing and sharing food, the activism of the natural world and the small acts of resistance practised daily by gardeners, who were revealed to be unruly.

New Zealand's history of self-sufficiency and self-reliance in matters of food, the pervasiveness of home vegetable gardens and the late arrival of seven-day convenience shopping makes growing one's own food seem like a reasonable solution to problems such as access to food, or particular types of food, or concerns about food quality. Garden organisers argue that growing food worked for people in the past when they had no choice, and it can work for people who need to make "better" food choices today.

Discourses of self-reliance align with techniques of neoliberal governance. Neoliberalism requires and enacts new subjectivities in which we are each held responsible for our achievement of positive outcomes and the performance of appropriate practices, especially in matters of health, food and eating. The persistence of poor food practices, which garden organisers believe have been reproduced across generations, invites the intervention of disciplining institutions such as schools and health agencies who make claims to scientific knowledge and truths about good food practices. They do not act on the deficient citizens directly but through the mobilisation of discourses that problematize the concerning behaviours. These discourses are taken up by garden organisers whose ideologies and self-appointed position as managers of the social space calls them to action.

Garden organisers are invested in the idea that society should look and function in ways that reflect their own dominant beliefs and practices. Hage (1998) describes this as a fantasy position of cultural dominance borne out of the history of British colonialism but, fantastical or not, garden organisers busily establish gardens as sites of pedagogy and enrol groups of

gardeners that they see as having poor self-regulation and a lack of knowledge and are therefore a source of governmental problems.

The objects of the garden organisers' efforts resist being disciplined in various ways, such as by stealing garden tools and selling produce that is meant to be donated to charity. Garden organisers also encounter resistance from the gardens whose acquiescence cannot, it turns out, be counted on. The gardens resist by disregarding human design with creeping weeds, demanding to be watered at inconvenient times, and harbouring moulds and other pathogens. Nature forces gardeners to consider the possibility of engaging with others in a way that is more attentive to change and flux and accepting of potential, diversity and the unexpected. Garden organisers, therefore, also engage in resistance. Even as they attempt to shape their object gardeners into neoliberal subjectivities, they simultaneously enact alternatives to a diminished state by creating spaces of social connection where people can work to overcome the determining powers of inequality.

The processes of governance and resistance that play out in community gardens are complex and transversal. They can be discerned in sites as abstract as the apps that govern the lives of gig economy workers and in sites as grounded and material as flower beds. The theoretical framework assembled in this chapter help to understand the way that these processes operate in my research sites. The elements of the framework can be traced in the literature on community gardens, where scholars explore themes of governance and governmentality along with practices of resistance and the production of hope in community gardens. The next chapter examines the different analytical perspectives that academics have taken on community gardens.

13 - COMMUNITY GARDEN, LONDON, U.K.
(CREDIT: D & D BRAKE, CC)

14 - COMMUNITY GARDEN, OAKLAND, U.S
(CREDIT: DAVID COHEN, CC)

15 - COMMUNITY GARDEN, LONDON, U.K. (CREDIT: LONDON ROAD, CC)

16 - COMMUNITY GARDEN, BROOKLYN, U.S. (CREDIT: THE ALL-NITE IMAGES, CC)

3 THE LITERATURE ON COMMUNITY GARDENS

*"It's for the community to define what the purpose of the garden is. Growing healthy food is
a primary one, naturally enough. It's also about social connectedness, bringing people
together for a shared purpose. When you bring the people together, they then have a
conversation and start looking at what skill shares they have within their own
neighbourhood; they identify their own strengths and resources and develop their own
solutions."*

Planning Officer, Palmerston North City Council

Community gardens seem to have produced almost as much literature as they have cabbages.
The abundance of literature reflects the diversity of schemes that people describe as
"community gardens", and the wide range of settings in which they can be found (Firth, Maye,
& Pearson, 2011). It also reflects the breadth of claims made about the work that community
gardens do, which range from the provision of biodiversity and ecosystem services to
encouraging affective and meaningful relationships between city dwellers and the natural
world via the production of food and community relations (James, Banay, Hart, & Laden, 2015;
Lin, Philpott, & Jha, 2015).

I have organised this chapter around three central themes: community and its meanings; food
and its meanings; and garden materialities. I give these themes some prior context by offering
a brief history of gardening in New Zealand, which establishes its cultural importance and
explore the source of the characterisation of community gardens as "alternative" sources of
community and food. The literature on the links between community gardening and identity
construction is rather scarce, but there is a body of literature that argues that gardening and
domestic food practices are intrinsic to New Zealand's national identity. My research adds to
this work by looking at the ways in which garden organisers use gardening to cultivate good
"kiwi" citizens.

3.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF GARDENING IN NEW ZEALAND

The contribution of domestic gardening and home food production to New Zealand's identity
is hard to overstate. Home gardens have been accepted and expected features of New
Zealand's domestic environments since the earliest days of colonial settlement. Indeed,
private domestic gardens are a product of colonialism. Māori cultivated gardens to provide
sustenance, and gardens were communal, functional and sites of spiritual practice (Hond,
Ratima, & Edwards, 2019; Viriaere & Miller, 2018), much as some of the community gardens
included in this project aspire to be. There is scant evidence of private gardens created for

food production, ornament or leisure by Māori before European settlement (Viriaere & Miller, 2018). Several scholars have noted the growing Māori interest in re-establishing mahinga kai (traditional food gathering places and practices), such as marae[7] gardens, which parallels the growing interest in community gardens and reflects similar concerns about health, access to fresh produce, and the transmission of domestic skills (Hond et al., 2019; McKerchar, Bowers, Heta, Signal, & Matoe, 2014; Te Waka Kai Ora, 2010; Viriaere & Miller, 2018).

Colonists took up gardening to provide themselves with familiar foods from their countries of origin and to preserve their cultural identity. Later immigrants did the same with many finding that gardening was necessary for sheer survival when retail food options were limited (Lepionka-Strong, 2013; Longhurst, 2006). Market gardens, orchards and farms provided fresh food from the earliest days of settlement but, in the days before refrigerators and seven-days-a-week shopping, domestic vegetable gardening remained the most reliable source of fresh produce for the table. Many householders cultivated large vegetable gardens and kept chickens until the early part of the 20th century, while those with larger sections may also have kept a cow (Lorson, 2016). Keeping livestock in the garden became less common as New Zealand underwent rapid urbanisation in the 1950s and 1960s as a result of migration, both internal and from abroad, and a post-war baby boom. Domestic vegetable cultivation remained something of a necessity for much of New Zealand's population until quite recently, however, as the pace of development meant that suburbs grew in advance of facilities and services such as shops and public transport (Perkins & Thorns, 1999). Many urban areas still lack access to reliable supplies of fresh produce, which makes the continuation of New Zealand's gardening tradition appear salient (Wiki, Kingham, & Campbell, 2019).

The place of gardens in New Zealanders' lives changed following the significant economic and social policy reforms that New Zealand experienced during the 1980s and 1990s. Whereas gardening and sport once dominated weekend activity, the reform of retail and licensing laws shifted the focus of leisure activity from private home environments to public and commercial spaces in town centres (Toohey et al., 2018). As more women entered the workforce, the

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[7] Marae are communal complexes used for everyday Māori life. Traditional marae link *iwi* (tribal communities) to their spiritual ancestors through their design, name and location. New urban marae were established following the rapid urbanisation of Māori in the 1950s and 60s, which provided for the Māori collective living away from traditional *hapū* (sub-tribes) and iwi lands in cities. Urban marae such as Ōrākei have established gardens to provide food but also as a way of maintaining collective identity, tradition and spiritual connection to Papatūānuku (earth mother) – "Māori gardens provide spaces to connect and re-connect with the very essence of what it means to be Māori" (King, Hodgetts, Rua, & Whetu, 2015, p. 17; Warren, Forster, & Tawhai, 2017).

number of hours available for gardening and other forms of domestic food production declined (Szabo, 2011). Households bridged the time gap by purchasing more ready-made or halfway-there meals from increasingly pervasive supermarkets.

Apart from providing food for the table, early domestic gardens also contributed to the general economic well-being of households in early New Zealand, giving workers a degree of material independence (Fairburn, 2013). One of the arguments advanced in favour of a shorter working day[8] in 19th century New Zealand was that it freed up working men to tend to their gardens. Gardens supplemented household wages and supported other forms of self-provisioning such as bottling and preserving or keeping fowl to meet the household's basic needs (Pollock, 2013). Fairburn (2013) suggests that gardens operated as a surrogate welfare state by providing a source of food when paid work was scarce. He characterises wage earners who held land as hybrid peasant/workers, neither fully integrated into the labour market nor independent producers.

The idea that workers may not be fully integrated into the labour market holds contemporary resonance. The re-emergence of short-term, non-standard and insecure employment in the developing gig economy, means that vegetable gardens might potentially fulfil the same welfare function in current times of precarious employment and a curtailed welfare state, despite significant changes in labour and housing markets.

3.2   HOMES AND GARDENS

One of the reasons why domestic gardening has been so central to New Zealand's national identity is that New Zealand, relative to other developed countries, has had unusually high rates of homeownership, and thus secure tenure (Fairburn, 2008). Longhurst (2006, p. 583) argues that "nearly all New Zealanders (not just the middle class and the wealthy) have traditionally had space available—the quarter-acre section—to cultivate a garden," which is why gardens hold such social, cultural and political significance. Domestic gardens are typical of the low-density, single-family dwellings that dominate New Zealand's urban environments. While urban sections have been shrinking and an urban quarter-acre section is now a rare find,

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[8] New Zealand's annual Labour Day holiday, first celebrated in 1890, commemorates the struggle for an eight-hour working day. New Zealand workers were among the first in the world to win this right (Atkinson, 2018). The eight-hour day refers to the total number of hours of paid employment to be done in a day with the balance to be divided between recreation and rest – domestic labour is not regulated in this way and, while household activities are recognised as important forms of social reproduction that support and sustain capitalist economic production, they are not recognised as having economic value (Cameron & Gibson-Graham, 2003).

most dwellings still have space for gardens and other outdoor living environments (Perkins & Thorns, 1999). Gardening, both for production and leisure, therefore, continues to be a part of many New Zealanders' way of life.

It is telling that the description of New Zealand's character cited in the Introduction (page 12) was given by the Minister of Housing. The quote comes from a booklet titled *Home Ownership: How to Achieve It* which asserts that

> *New Zealanders are firm believers in the worth and value of homeownership. It provides a secure basis for the welfare and happiness of the family. It develops initiative, self-reliance, thrift, and other good qualities which go to make up the moral strength of the individual, of the family, and of the nation (The Minister of Housing, 1957, cited in Brookes, 1997, p. 247).*

Homeownership is a defining feature of New Zealand identity, and people's increasing inability to climb the "housing ladder", once seen as a sure path to economic stability, is a source of policy anxiety (Squires & White, 2019, p. 170). New Zealand still has a high proportion, in a global context, of people living in homes they own but this proportion is shrinking, and declining rates of homeownership have shaped political discourse over the past decade. New Zealand's 2013 census revealed that the proportion of all people living in owner-occupied dwellings fell from 75.2 per cent to 63.7 per cent between 1986 and 2013, a decline of 15.3 per cent. Meanwhile, the proportion of the population living in dwellings they did not own increased from around one-quarter to over one-third (24.8 per cent to 36.3 per cent), a 46.4 per cent increase. The proportion of children living in rented houses increased to 43.1 per cent, a rise of 65 per cent. There are distinct ethnic differences in homeownership as well, with the rates for Māori and Pacific people falling faster than for the total population (Statistics New Zealand, 2016a).

Household wealth correlates strongly with homeownership, with ethnicity and with age (Statistics New Zealand, 2016b), which means that homeowners are increasingly older, more likely to be Pākehā, and have fewer children living with them than the total population. Homeowners are also likely to be wealthier because these shifting dwelling patterns reflect growing housing-mediated inequality. Existing property-owners benefit from rising property values while others are unable to get on the housing ladder as housing-related expenses such as rents outstrip salary and wage increases (Wetzstein, 2019). Falling rates of homeownership form the backdrop to the recent rise of community gardens, which are often promoted as a solution to food insecurity ascribed to problems of access to land for private gardens, lack of permission to cultivate land in rented accommodation, and a lack of provision for allotments

or similar growing spaces in urban development plans (Witheridge & Morris, 2016). Hondagneu-Sotelo (2017) argues that in such cases, community gardens are an extension of the domestic sphere where a range of social reproductive activities normally associated with private domestic spaces unfold.

3.3   GARDENING AS URBAN ACTIVISM

One of the most common analyses of community gardens in the literature is that they represent a form of community activism in which gardeners work with others to shape urban development and advance equity and social justice (Alkon & Guthman, 2017). Conceiving of community gardens as sites of community activism gives them an oppositional or political edge. In part, this reflects the political pedigree of the modern community garden movement which came to prominence in the United States at a time of economic crisis and urban decline.

North American narratives dominate the literature and influence the way that the history of community gardens in other countries is framed (Nettle, 2014). Some cities' experiences with community gardens are particularly well-documented, however, and shape the discourse around the potentialities of community gardening. I find that New York is perhaps the best example of this. Its contemporary community garden movement had its roots in the late 1960s when the city faced bankruptcy. Swathes of land were left derelict and some neighbourhoods experienced social unrest and growing poverty (Sokolovsky, 2010). Grassroots organizing transformed many of the vacant lots into gardens as catalysts for community development, revitalising neighbourhoods empowering community activists (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). Activism thus became intertwined with community gardens (Lawson, 2000).

More recently, New York's community gardens have become sites of resistance to pressure from the city and developers, which seek to address housing shortages and capture rising land values. Gardens on sites that were once abandoned lots in undesirable streets have become prized real estate, in part because of the work that community gardens have done to transform their neighbourhoods (Aptekar, 2015; Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). Attempts to close or rezone gardens for development have sparked protest and legal challenges that frame the battle as a contest between community needs and the use-value of the land on the one hand, and the rights of property owners to maximise its value through development on the other (Wekerle & Classens, 2015). This battle has led to the portrayal of New York's community gardens as spaces of anti-gentrification activism and the struggle for the right to the city in academic literature and popular discourse (Aptekar, 2015; Eizenberg, 2012). While many of the gardens have been preserved – the city has around one thousand community gardens, some

80% of which produce food, and nearly 300 school gardens (Bailey, 2018; Stone, 2009) –
community garden preservation and permanency remains a contentious issue between
gardeners, developers and New York City government agencies (Sokolovsky, 2010; Thorpe,
2018).

I have included this brief summary of New York's community gardens because they provide a
common backdrop or template against which to assess other garden projects. New York's
gardens offer examples of so many of the issues discussed in the global gardening literature,
both in cities grappling with post-industrial dereliction such as Glasgow and in cities facing
rapid urban development and loss of public spaces such as Sydney or Auckland (Mascia-Lees,
Sharpe, & Cohen, 1989; Sharp et al., 2016; van Holstein, 2017). Issues related to food access,
public health, environmental degradation, education, youth development and community-
scale economics overlap with issues of property ownership and political power in community
gardens (Reynolds & Cohen, 2016). New York's community gardens are, therefore, a crucible
of responses to the matters of modern urban life.

Not all community gardens have emerged from such fraught contexts, however, and it is
important to acknowledge the distinct histories of North American, European and antipodean
cities. Nettle (2014) argues that the disjuncture between the practices of gardeners and
dominant accounts of social activism, which recognise individual acts of resistance and
transgression, complicates the attribution of an activist identity in antipodean gardens. To
accommodate the gentler activism she encountered in Sydney's gardens, Nettle offers a
definition of activism that locates community gardening in a social movement: "activism can
usefully be understood as participation in collective practices that are employed consciously
and strategically in order to make political claims, effect social change, create solidarity and
build movements" (p.51). Even when measured against this definition, the literature on New
Zealand's community gardens suggests that gardeners tend to be more active than activist
with their preference for promoting gardens as sites of recreation, places to pursue personal
health and well-being, experiment with alternative modes of distribution, and encourage social
engagement amongst neighbours (King et al., 2015; Nettle, 2014; Sharp et al., 2015; Stevens,
2017; Watson, 2006).

3.4   GARDENS AS ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FOOD

When I began this research, I imagined that community gardens were part of an alternative
food movement that encompassed farmers markets, community-supported agriculture,
organic and artisan producers, all of which I used to source food for myself on a regular basis.

The "alternative food movement" is a loose collective label that describes initiatives operating outside the corporate-industrial food regime. The label "alternative" covers both sites of food production and distribution and modes of production and distribution. Key characteristics of alternative food initiatives are short, local supply chains, direct relationships between producers, retailers and consumers, transparent growing and husbandry practices, and an emphasis on provenance, production skills, quality, seasonality and 'naturalness' (Dixon & Richards, 2016; Guthman, 2014). The alternative food movement is a broad church, and I found two main areas of concern around food. The first related to the attributes of the food itself – its mode of production and quality – while the second related to the emotional and spiritual experiences of those who consume it.

Scholars describe alternative food networks (AFNS), and alternative food initiatives (AFIs), as responding to the perceived failures of corporate-industrial modes of food production and distribution, which are associated with problems such as food-related health issues and environmental impacts (Goodman, DuPuis, & Goodman, 2012; Schindler, 2014). The alternatives do not, at present, offer a serious challenge to the corporate food system in New Zealand but the literature suggests that they have brought concerns about issues such as food miles, labour exploitation, animal welfare and pesticide use to public consciousness (Guthman, 2003; Richards, Lawrence, & Burch, 2011; Sadler, Arku, & Gilliland, 2015). Public interest has, in turn, attracted conventional food networks which have adopted the presentation, if not necessarily the practice, of AFN's in promoting the authenticity and quality, in various socially-constructed and material dimensions, of the food they sell (Goodman et al., 2012).

AFNs and AFIs also aim to overcome the effects of a rural-urban divide, which means urban consumers have relatively little engagement with the way their food is produced, processed or exchanged (Dixon & Richards, 2016; Sharp et al., 2016). Localised food networks offer consumers more direct relationships with food producers, which are an antidote to the complex web of producers, processors, marketers and retailers that characterise conventional food systems (Janssen, 2015). Community gardens, in which people grow their own food, provide the most local of food experiences by eliminating supply chains entirely.

Critiques of local food activism have drawn attention to the exclusionary and often elitist nature of efforts to re-localise food provisioning (Finn, 2017; Goodman, DuPuis, & Goodman, 2012; Guthman, 2008a). They point to assumptions of universality which holds that the values and tastes held by dominant groups are, or should be, shared by all (Guthman, 2008b); a blindness to the economic inequality that permits affluent consumers to freely pay higher prices for handcrafted, organic and fair-trade products without making trade-offs elsewhere in

their budgets (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011); and the valorisation of eating practices that require high levels of cooking skills or kitchen facilities, and the ability to prepare fresh produce in 'healthy' ways. Graham's (2017) research respondents felt that more economically well-off New Zealanders did not understand the reality of food insecurity or see the significant barriers to growing food for those without the land, skills and time horizons that they themselves enjoyed.

Community gardens offer tactile encounters with food that mainstream producers cannot, and several scholars argue that gardening also offers gardeners a spiritual and emotional connection to the foods they produce. Community gardens give growers a chance to "put their hands in the soil" and "get their hands dirty", providing intimate encounters with food that few urban consumers experience (Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy, 2013). Bendt, Barthel, and Colding (2013, p. 18) describe this as environmental learning – a way of addressing the "ongoing generational amnesia among city peoples about their relationships to, and dependence upon, diverse ecosystems". Researchers have found that gardeners see direct contact with nature as being healing and empowering, and several have described gardeners' beliefs that spending time in green spaces and having contact with the soil promotes health and well-being alongside the production of nutritious food (Guthman, 2008; Nettle, 2014; Watson, 2006). Gardening thus provides an alternative, more tactile mode of engaging with food and its cultivation than purchasing it and is one of the aspects of community gardens that makes them an 'alternative' source of food to mainstream supplies.

3.5 MAKING COMMUNITIES

The potential of social engagement in community gardens to build communities, enhance community resilience and encourage community development is a significant theme in the literature. Several scholars argue that the proximity of gardeners from varied social groups and the shared practice of gardening challenges prejudices and loosens power relations through the physical act of tending the garden, with gardening offering opportunities to overcome social fragmentation by developing new forms of social solidarity (Crossan et al., 2016; Thorpe, 2018). Batten (2008) argues that it is through participation that the key constituents of community are created, enacted and transformed, although she notes the complexity of the relationship between participation and community. She suggests that

participation leads to a threshold of emotional commitment amongst individuals linked by a common experience of gardening, leading to the development of "community".

The claim that community gardens can create a more progressive and collective polity by bringing people together is a powerful narrative, and the literature suggests that it is often employed when garden organisers target groups perceived to be lacking in social capital or avenues for civic participation. These include migrants and refugees who need social connections and links to their host communities, older people isolated in urban areas, prisoners and school children, all of whom attracted the attention of garden organisers in my research sites. Several authors explore the ways in which community gardens develop social capital in these groups. Hartwig and Mason's (2016) work on the effects of community gardens on migrant and refugee communities, for example, finds that gardening gives migrants a positive experience that doesn't require language skills or other adaptation to local life. They note that women, particularly, commented on the emotional benefits of gardening. Women were more likely to experience social isolation as they tended to be at home with children and less likely to be in paid employment outside the home. Community gardens offered a way to reduce this isolation by building social bonds with other gardeners and community workers and providing a safe place for children to play with others.

The idea that gardens generate shared community identity and enhance social cohesion is not universally supported in the literature. Veen et al. (2015) argue that conceptions of citizenship and collective social action imply that relations between gardeners are horizontal and that social strata are flattened. They point out, however, that the label "community garden" covers such a diverse range of schemes that we cannot assume that all gardens develop cohesion or draw out the emotional commitment that Batten (2008) sees as implied in the 'community' of community gardens. The variance in the organisational design of gardens – whether plots are assigned to individuals or are gardened collectively; location, access and funding arrangements; the extent to which participants are able to contribute to the management of the garden – allows for a wide range of social hierarchies to persist. Aptekar (2015), for example, finds that conflicts among gardeners about the purpose or aesthetics of the gardens and norms of conduct reproduce larger struggles over culture and resources. Neighbourhood and city context, along with power inequalities, shape the encounters and relations among diverse groups of gardeners with conflicting visions. Far from building tolerance and community among diverse participants, the ethnographic studies undertaken by Aptekar, Hondagneu-Sotelo (2017) and Reynolds (2015) found that garden relationships reproduced the cultural tensions, including class-based disparities, of broader social systems, despite the

diversity of practitioners in gardens and increasing public interest in both community gardens and social justice.

There is a second strand of literature that considers the community-building aspects of community gardens. This work explores the ways in which gardens offer spaces to experiment with alternative forms of social organisation and mobilise new cultural and social practices to build community resilience (Kenis & Mathijs, 2014; McClintock, 2014; McGregor & Crowther, 2018; Reis, 2016). This approach is typical of initiatives such as Transition Towns[9] which conceive of community gardens as a way of mitigating the risk of food security in the event of social upheaval, a breakdown in the food supply system or natural disaster. Stevens (2017) found that Transition Town gardeners saw their work as an attempt to shift socioecological and community relationships, including food production and distribution systems, towards a post-capitalist, post-consumerist world. I did not find these discourses in my research sites which focussed on the gardens' potential to mitigate actually existing food insecurity.

3.6   GARDENS AND FOOD SECURITY

Food security is a dominant theme in the body of literature that considers the contested place of community gardens and other community-driven food initiatives in the roll-out of neoliberal economic reforms in New Zealand and other developed countries. The recent resurgence of community gardens has occurred against a background of widespread economic distress, rising food prices and inequality that has been linked to these reforms (Tam, 2015). The literature that links food security and community gardens follow two main themes. One considers the way that food insecurity has emerged from the remaking of New Zealand's economy along

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[9] Transition Towns belong to a global Transition movement which creates networks of community-based initiatives to build resilience in the face of climate change and the declining availability of fossil fuels. Resilience can broadly be defined as the ability to absorb change through adaptive learning processes and reflects the principles of permaculture. Permaculture is the principle of modelling agricultural practices on the self-organization and regulation of natural systems. The sort of practical community-based learning initiatives adopted by the transition movement include local currencies and economies, social enterprise, food production, transport and waste projects (Hopkins, 2008). Transition initiatives near my research area include community gardens whose organisers offer permaculture, hen-keeping, bee-keeping, composting and other courses to people interested in developing their own and their communities' resilience. The Transition movement gives meaning to practical learning through an analysis of environmental issues and by cohering around a shared collective identity, which secures a sense of historical, geographical and social belonging in precarious times (McGregor & Crowther, 2018).

neoliberal lines, and the other considers the discursive framing of food insecurity as the fault of those who suffer it, and the ways in which gardening can shape good neoliberal subjects.

Food security can be defined as the availability of sufficient, safe and nutritious food, the physical, social and economic access to appropriate food for active and healthy lives (Otero, Pechlaner, Liberman, & Gürcan, 2015). People experience food *in*security when they have limited or uncertain access to adequate and appropriate food. In countries where there is an abundance of available food, such as New Zealand, food insecurity can occur because of financial constraints and a lack of economic resources. This is often described as food poverty (Lovell, Husk, Bethel, & Garside, 2014; Sadler et al., 2015).

Food insecurity can occur because people live in a food desert, a term which refers to urban neighbourhoods without shops selling fresh, healthy, and affordable food, or who lack transport to shops elsewhere (Alkon et al., 2013; Shannon, 2016). People may also experience food insecurity because they do not have the option of growing food at home as a result of urban density or the restrictive conditions of residential tenancies (Witheridge & Morris, 2016), and this is one the key arguments employed in support of community gardens (McClintock, 2014; Miller, 2013). Food insecurity is more than a problem of hunger or of people being unable to afford, buy or grow food; it is an inability to reliably consume a nutritionally balanced diet of appropriate foods (Dixon & Richards, 2016; Lin et al., 2015). The literature suggests that community gardens can be interpreted as a visible representation of campaigns for food security in urban areas (Wekerle & Classens, 2015) and, for migrants, as a way of claiming the right to choose appropriate foods (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2017).

Public discourse on the best response to food insecurity tends to emphasise individual responsibility and choice, which constructs food insecurity as the fault of those who suffer it and as something that can be remedied with effort and appropriate action (Reynolds, 2016). The emphasis on personal responsibility reflects New Zealand's neoliberal political rationality (Reynolds, 2016), a position several scholars use to critique community gardens as a social good. Community gardens produce an abundance of food, some of which makes its way to those suffering food insecurity, along with various other social benefits. Gardens, therefore, appear to advance social justice, but Reynolds (2015) cautions that a distinction must be made between alleviating the symptoms of injustice, such as limited access to fresh, affordable food, and disrupting the structures that underlie the injustice. Providing food or enabling food

production through community gardens does not necessarily lead to more just food provisioning than improving access to shops or boosting incomes, for example (Duell, 2013).

The framing of community gardens as a remedy for food insecurity reflects rising levels of poverty, and the two are strongly correlated (Dixon & Richards, 2016). Poverty is often characterised by linked issues of food insecurity, insecure housing and low household income, which disproportionately describes households with children headed by a single adult, usually a woman (Hyman, 1994). Food insecurity is, therefore, heavily gendered but I found that this aspect of food insecurity is rarely explored in the literature on community gardens, although several scholars address the way that gender is implicated in alternative food discourse. Szabo, for example, describes a growing body of popular literature that encourages people to "'reconnect' or 're-engage' with their food by doing things like cooking from scratch, growing food, shopping conscientiously and connecting with food producers" (2011, p. 548). She argues that even though the scholarly literature on modern food practices is nuanced and critical, it rarely canvasses the significant barriers to growing and preparing food from scratch. Szabo highlights the ways in which contemporary employment conditions, the shifting make-up of households and the unevenly distributed burden of social reproduction overwhelmingly affects women. Flammang (2009) also discusses the discord between idealising homegrown food and home-cooked meals while failing to acknowledge the factors that have led to a decline in family meals and home-cooked food. In a rare reference to community gardens in the literature on gender and domesticity, she notes the potential of gardens to promote reciprocity and provide social glue to bind struggling communities together until longer-term social and economic development come along.

There is an element of nostalgia in calls for people to "reconnect" with their food as if it is a connection that has been lost along with the traditional family arrangements that made home-cooked meals the norm. Nancy warns us against this longing for a 'lost community', however, arguing that it recalls a past that never existed as such or being blind to the uneven burden borne by some to maintain it, such as domestic divisions of labour (1991, cited in Mulqueen 2018, p. 30). Even today, in New Zealand households with children, which are often the target of community gardening and cooking initiatives, women do 94 per cent of the food preparation (Smith, Parnell, Brown, & Gray, 2013). Guthman (2003) points out that home-grown produce and home-cooked meals presume a tremendous amount of unpaid, female labour. Domestic labour arrangements are beyond the scope of this research but the question

of who does food work, or who would need to do it if households adopted grow-your-own as a mode of sourcing food, is rarely addressed in the literature about community gardens.

3.7   MAKING SUBJECTIVITIES

The provision of gardening space to those suffering food insecurity so that they can garden their way out of it is typical of processes of neoliberalisation. These entail the rolling back of the social safety net in favour of new social and economic relationships based on ideas of entrepreneurialism, self-sufficiency and personal responsibility (McClintock, 2014; Pudup, 2008). The critique of community gardens as enablers of neoliberalisation is particularly widespread in the literature from the United States and Britain, where community gardens and initiatives such as food banks and community pantries have been described as a stalking horse for Britain's anti-state agenda (Crossan et al., 2016). In Britain, the 'active citizenship' entailed in community initiatives is framed as an essential antidote to the 'dependency culture' fostered by the welfare state (Featherstone, Ince, Mackinnon, Strauss, & Cumbers, 2012). The concept of active citizenship, a policy trope that frames the withdrawal of public services as a redistribution of power from the central state to individuals, families and local communities, has become almost synonymous with efforts to reduce citizen dependence on state social services and other welfare arrangements; an essential part of a longer-term project to reform and curtail the welfare state (Garthwaite, 2016). Successfully growing one's own food thus facilitates and legitimises the further withdrawal of the state from the provision of social and amenity benefits (Allen & Guthman, 2006; McClintock, 2014).

Several scholars contest the active citizen interpretation of community gardening. Stevens (2017) finds that politically-minded community gardeners in New Zealand believe that the anti-state stalking horse has already bolted, and the neoliberal project is already well-entrenched. Reynolds (2016) points to increasing levels of household food insecurity and community initiatives such as gardens and food banks as evidence of the depoliticisation of hunger. Other scholars critique the way that progressive narratives about the positive social and health impacts of community gardens can legitimise and perpetuate iniquitous welfare systems. Reynolds (2015), for example, questions the extent to which gardens can address structural injustice, which often has global roots.

3.8   DISCIPLINE AND DOMESTICITY

The literature depicts community gardens as one of a group of solutions to food insecurity that seek to bolster individuals' ability to make appropriate choices and take corrective actions. Other initiatives aim to address deficiencies in domestic skills such as budgeting, cooking and

preserving through initiatives such as school gardens (Graham, Stolte, Hodgetts, & Chamberlain, 2016). Farmers' markets, school cooking and gardening programmes and food banks similarly emphasise the need for domestic skills. Several scholars argue that framing food insecurity or poor health as a question of deficient skills obscures uneven class relations and access to resources (Graham, 2017; Shamasunder, Mason, Ippoliti, & Robledo, 2015).

Coveney et al. (2012) argue that the greatest importance is accorded to domestic skills such as cooking and gardening when they are thought to be declining, or their use found wanting, limited or inadequate. The social meanings and material uses of gardens can, therefore, be understood as a response to social uncertainty (Bhatti & Church, 2004). Morris (2006, p. 39) uses the phrase "moral landscapes" to describe the social pressures on individuals to conform to a commercially-generated garden aesthetic in their flower gardens, but the phrase can usefully be adopted to describe the social and economic forces that encourage and expect home vegetable gardening, especially for those suffering from food insecurity or the effects of a poor diet.

The idea that a lack of gardening, cooking and budgeting skills underpins food insecurity is widely held but is not supported by research. Beavis, McKerchar, Maaka, and Mainvil (2019), Graham et al. (2016) and Reynolds (2016) find that a lack of domestic skills is not especially prevalent among low-income households in New Zealand and that many are adept at juggling meagre resources. Until the emergence of the "working poor" in New Zealand following labour market reforms in the 1990s (Rasmussen & Lind, 2014; Skilling & Tregidga, 2019), poverty was associated with unemployment, which leads to a supposition that those experiencing food insecurity have the time to prepare and maintain a garden but lack initiative and drive (Graham & Jackson, 2017; Guthman, 2008). The emergence of the working poor hasn't shifted the association of poverty with idle time or a lack of motivation. Despite this, the belief persists that growing food at home or in a community garden will make use of idle resources to alleviate food poverty.

3.9   PUBLIC HEALTH AND GOVERNMENTALITY

Problematising gardeners' food practices is an expression of Foucault's concept of governmentality in which the freedom to choose foods and modes of eating is constrained through the deployment of authoritative discourses on health, cooking and eating (Coveney et al., 2012; Vander Schee, 2009). Scholars describe the ways in which food discourses tend to produce a good/bad dichotomy with some foods or eating practises being good, meaning that the decision to choose them denotes virtue, while others are construed as bad, which denotes

ignorance or moral laxity (Coveney et al., 2012; Guthman, 2008). Choosing fresh, nutritious vegetables, for example, becomes a better moral choice than choosing processed or pre-prepared food. Food practices such as gardening, home cooking, parsimony and thrift can be contrasted with less morally sound or 'bad' practices that lead to unhealthy bodies, profligacy and waste.

The literature on school, prison and community gardens suggest that governmentality hones attention to the ways that public health discourses generate notions about how gardeners are expected to function at home as well in the gardens (Burrows, 2017; Vander Schee, 2009). School gardens are especially likely to implicate gardeners' families in the governance of healthful lifestyles as school health initiatives position children as transmitters of health information, perfectly situated to carry lifestyle messages through the porous boundary between school and home (Pike & Leahy, 2012). Public health discourse sets out what work families are required to do to produce appropriately self-regulating children, able to be active on their own behalf in the quest for self-improvement, the maximisation of life chances and exercise of correct choice – above all in the pursuit of health. Burrows (2017, p. 498) argues that school gardens are part of "a juggernaut of family-focused health initiatives that position children as either victims of unhealthy adult practices or the reason why adults should change what they do".

The Australian and New Zealand literature that considers the work that school and community gardens to do transmit cultural norms looks at established programmes such as Australia's "Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Programme" (Block et al., 2012) and New Zealand's "Garden to Table Programme" (Wakefield, 2013). Like the programme included in this research, these programmes teach both cooking and gardening to children. The programmes are explicit about their aim to set good examples and engage "children's curiosity, energy and tastebuds" (Garden to Table Trust, 2016) to create pleasurable and memorable food experiences to form the basis of positive lifelong eating habits. There is some literature on the ways in which prison gardens fulfil similar pedagogical roles to school gardens in providing engagement with the natural world, physical activity, familiarity with fresh produce and good eating practices (Baybutt, Dooris, & Farrier, 2018; Flammang, 2009; Moran, 2019; Timler, Brown, & Varcoe, 2019). However, no research has been done on the potential role of community gardens to rehabilitate offenders performing community service.

Some scholars resist the characterisation of institutional gardening programmes as laboratories of passive governance. Hayes-Conroy (2010) and Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2013), for example, argue that the daily effects of school gardening projects are more

complex, contradictory and changing than current scholarship admits. Hayes-Conroy (2010) argues that the suggestion that motivating children to eat more healthfully produces neoliberal subjects is a serious critique that demands thorough interrogation. She argues that while school garden projects are neither clearly neoliberal, nor clearly not neoliberal, this observation is both obvious and mundane. For Hayes-Conroy, the point of school and community gardens is to consider how gardeners' motivated bodies can be both parts of inequitable systems of discursive and material reproduction while also becoming sites of resistance.

3.10   PUBLIC PEDAGOGY

Several academics approach community gardens from the perspective of public pedagogy, which is a frame for exploring the learning that occurs outside the formal education system (Hsu, 2018). Public pedagogy emphasises the ways in which the spaces of mundane daily life are the places where meaning is produced, assumed and contested, and where certain discourses, narratives and practises related to food and eating compete for legitimacy. Despite its attention to non-formal sites of education, the public pedagogy framing is often applied to school gardens and cooking programmes, which are located in formal educational institutions but pass on lessons about food, health and eating that can also be found in sites as diverse as community gardens, office canteens and cookbooks (Leahy & Pike, 2016). Food pedagogies are many and varied; they cover technical, visceral and emotional matters. Hayes-Conroy (2009), for example, considers the way that school and community gardens work to encourage an emotional connection with food. She describes the potential of gardening to prompt an intellectual awakening in regard to the origins of food and to engage gardeners' senses in such a way as to unlock 'correct' emotional responses to food that have been clouded by over-familiarity with processed, 'unnatural' foods. This strand of literature also notes school and community gardens' appeal as a means of addressing a perceived lack of connectedness to nature, providing opportunities for physical activity, and improving understandings of seasonality, sustainability and the food system (Gaylie, 2011; Malberg Dyg, 2015). This aspect of the literature addresses the pivotal role of garden organisers, directors or managers, especially when considering school gardens. Other literature on community gardens tends to presume a greater degree of collectivity in the way garden activities are organised.

The literature that links cultural experiences of gardening, cooking and eating describes a widespread belief that cooking skills are in decline as households purchase more pre-prepared and processed food, and that this is having an adverse effect on health, well-being, and "family wholesomeness" (Coveney et al., 2012, p. 617). Concerns about declining cooking and

gardening skills reflect a broader sense of anxiety about the future and our ability to fend for ourselves in uncertain times when our lack of familiarity with the source of food might mean that we do not eat at all. Coveney et al. (2012) suggest that school gardening and cooking programmes frame the skills they impart as essential for survival because, without them, life is precarious and risky. Curtis and Curtis (2015) describe anxiety about uncertain futures as "liquid fear" – the notion that contemporary capitalism is marked by amorphous fears and anxieties.

3.11   THE GHOST OF GARDENS PAST

The thread that ties food and community together in community gardens is nostalgia for a time before food insecurity stalked New Zealand households when people routinely prepared and ate meals at home with their families. Nostalgia frames garden organisers' efforts and underpins their narratives about the importance of gardening. Tannock (1995, p. 454) suggests that nostalgia provokes a positively evaluated past world in response to a deficient present world. By invoking the past, gardeners are mobilising to overcome the present experience of loss of identity, absence of community or loss of threads of New Zealand identity such as a belief in egalitarianism; nostalgia thus approaches the past as a stable source of value, identity and meaning.

The nostalgic appeal of gardens as an effective response to food shortages in times of precarity motivates garden organisers to promote gardening as a basic survival skill that might enable gardeners to create a safety net for themselves. Graham and Jackson (2017) find the assumption that growing fruit and vegetables is a realistic solution to food insecurity to be common in New Zealand and argue that this makes gardening into a moral act. They point out that this view ignores the social and structural factors that make gardening possible, writing,

> *there is a nostalgic appeal to the idea, embedded in notions of 'kiwi-can-do' and assumptions about previous generations who uncomplainingly grew abundant food. When asking 'Why don't people simply grow their own food?' the underlying judgement is that when people do not grow their own food, it is due to laziness and a lack of initiative. There is the assumption that people living with poverty and food insecurity have the time, resources, knowledge, support, space, physical ability and good health to prepare and maintain a garden (Graham & Jackson, 2017, p. 1).*

The persistent myth of New Zealand's egalitarianism masks some of the challenges that a "can-do" attitude cannot overcome. Gardening is therefore not as much a question of morality, or choice, as it is a question of capacity. Graham and Jackson (2017) point out that growing your own food tends to work well when you are in a position to take risks with expenditure, have

time and resources, and secure housing over which you have control, which are the very resources that families living with food insecurity tend not to have.

Other literature supports the view that it is possible to see the gardens as a nostalgic reinvention of the home gardens of memory in times of insecure tenancies and infill urban development – public sites for private activity (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2017). They can also be seen as a reflexive, considered response to unwelcome social change evidenced by inequality, poverty and ill-health – pernicious global problems that conventional policy responses have failed to address (Ministry of Health, 2019; Reynolds, 2016). Gardens can, of course, be both a genuine grass-roots challenge to policy ineffectiveness and an expression of nostalgia or a wish to return to a time when family values and social obligation had more salience. One of the more common themes in the community gardens literature is that gardens and gardeners can perform many overlapping and often contradictory functions at once (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011).

3.12   PLANTS AND GREEN SPACE

The material agency of plants is rarely acknowledged in the literature on community gardens and is, I admit, something I did not consider myself before I began my field research. Apart from their widely acknowledged function as food, plants and the natural world tend to be relegated to the segment of community gardens literature that considers urban biodiversity, experiential health and well-being, and environmental learning. Despite the attention to engagement with the natural world in these strands of literature, they are still human-centred, asking what plants and people can do for each other rather than considering plants and other creatures of the natural world as actors with little interest in human designs.

There is a broad range of literature that considers people's experiences of engaging with nature in gardens more generally, however, which resonates with the community gardens literature. Despard (2008), for example, describes gardening as the separation of ordered space and wild space. Gardening is the act of making distinctions between the garden and uncultivated spaces, between intentional and 'natural' effects, between weeds and plants. Gardening thus describes a desire to control as well as create, an urge that Trieb (1991, cited in Despard, 2008, p. 89) writes is "a sad and somewhat pathetic attempt to literally re-root oneself in a world of rapid change and rampant mobility. We grasp at the little power we have left…" Jones and Cloke (2008) argue that the active materialities of plants influence how gardens develop as well as how humans perform within them. They write that gardens are more than processes and narratives but represent ecologies of interrelating trajectories that

link the local and the global, an argument that evokes Clément's concept of the planetary garden.

3.13 SUMMARY

The literature on community gardens is broad and presents mixed views about what constitutes a community garden. I've focused on the literature that considers food-producing gardens and found that issues associated with food – who grows it and where, who eats it and how, and what food practices signify – overwhelm consideration of the "community" in community gardens.

Nevertheless, much of the literature acknowledges that some aspects of community gardens promote community cohesion and the development of social capital. The cultivation of producer, citizen, and activist subjectivities (over those of consumer, entrepreneur, and volunteer); the elevation of the use-value of shared space (over a site's potential exchange value) and the advancement of spatial justice through community access to non-privatised space; and food justice, through non-commodified means of obtaining food resist the alienating processes of modern food systems and the socio-economic order (Barron, 2017).

I opened this chapter with a brief history of gardening in New Zealand because I found that New Zealand's history of self-provisioning still shapes attitudes about the potential of gardens to meet a range of household needs, as well as shaping ideas about what sort of people garden and cook for themselves. The potential of community gardens to mould the subjectivities of individual gardeners is widely canvassed in the literature, which considers their role in advancing processes of neoliberalisation and depoliticisation. The counter-argument – that gardens are sites of political activism that challenge the hegemony of industrial food systems or inequitable welfare provisions – did not resonate with my research findings, although community gardens still tend to be characterised as part of the alternative food movement. Their alterity and potential for oppositional politics shaped the way I approached this project, however, and I have outlined the history and practice of community gardens as a response to urban dereliction and political marginalisation in post-industrial cities.

Overall, the literature offers a lively debate on the effectiveness of gardens in meeting the wide range of social, economic, health and personal objectives ascribed to them. There is a lack of consensus on the extent to which gardens reinforce or subvert socio-economic structures and inequalities, and researchers are divided on the role of gardens in food systems and their ability to challenge hegemonic food production networks, or secure food supplies in times of shortage. Many scholars note that gardens do many, often contradictory, things at

once. Despite this, almost all the literature holds a quiet optimism about the potential of gardens to improve the lives of participants and the urban environments in which they live. Whether this optimism is warranted depends on the agency of the natural world, which is viewed as benign but appears to hold the key to gardens' success. My research adds to this debate by offering a perspective on the way that community gardens work as sites of identity construction in which dominant cultural values are transmitted to gardeners by national managers.

COMMUNITY SPACES: EASTERN COMMUNITY GARDEN

17 - WORKING BEE, EASTERN GARDEN

18 - CHILD'S TOY, EASTERN GARDEN

19 - SUMMER ABUNDANCE, EASTERN GARDEN

4   METHODOLOGY

"We want volunteers who are prepared to get their hands dirty and help kids learn where the vegetables on their plates come from. The kids have absolutely no idea! We'll get them composting. We'll plant seeds. Even just looking at seeds - they have no idea where this seed comes from and what it's going to turn into. So, we'll start with that" Coordinator, Plant to Plate Aotearoa

This chapter describes how I conducted this research, the methods I used and the reflective and analytical processes I employed to interpret what I found. The project involved participating as a volunteer in three community gardens in Palmerston North, interviewing garden organisers and supporters, and analysing documents such as blog posts, annual reports and funding proposals. I describe the context and explain how I found the three gardens that I joined as a volunteer. The chapter concludes with a description of my position and how this has affected my interpretation of the information that I gathered.

4.1   THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

I conducted my research in Palmerston North, a small city in the Manawatū region of New Zealand that is home to 88,700 people (Statistics New Zealand, 2018). When I began this project, I had only recently returned to New Zealand with my family. My son was settling into a new primary school, and it was a pleasant surprise to find so many community gardens in the city.

I began the research exploring the relationship between local government and alternative food initiatives. At the time, I conceived of community gardens as a way for local authorities to deliver services such as recreational amenities and community development, as well as improving health outcomes through the provision of fresh produce and gardening skills. Because I also saw community gardens as sites of oppositional politics and community organising, I was curious as to how local authorities balanced these tensions.

I chose to focus on a single local authority area. By concentrating my research efforts in this way, I was able to spend more time in each of the gardens, participating in each one over several growing seasons, and developing deeper relationships with garden organisers and other volunteers. I was also able to trace connections between the gardens, their organisers, funders and gardeners. During my research, I came to see that the parameters of government are more fluid than I initially understood; and that the boundary between public and private realms is more porous than I imagined. I also came to appreciate the limited role of local

government in New Zealand. Unlike local authorities in Scotland which manage schools and provide social care, welfare benefits and housing from a broad revenue base, New Zealand's local authorities manage a narrower range of services funded primarily by a property tax (LGNZ, 2019). While both countries' councils provide local amenities such as parks, libraries and other recreational facilities, Glasgow city council devoted more resources to community-led initiatives such as community gardens than Palmerston North city council did. The broader range of Glasgow's funding initiatives reflected the larger population of the city, its considerable financial resources and its role in delivering services that are the responsibility of the central government in New Zealand.

4.2   FINDING COMMUNITY GARDENS

Anthropological research is mainly qualitative and relies on ethnographic fieldwork and other primary empirical sources (Scott, 2013). This research reports on ethnographic research carried out in three gardens located in different parts of Palmerston North.   By describing and theorising how everyday practices in specific places are related to broader processes and structures, an ethnographic approach enables the study of phenomena such as urbanisation, inequality, and community relations (Englund, 2018), which are all themes that emerge in community gardens literature and which I expected to observe in my research sites.

I found potential sites for this research by following a series of personal recommendations from acquaintances who were familiar with community gardening initiatives around the city. I became aware of the school-based gardens after seeing an advertisement in a community newspaper seeking volunteers, which I answered. A mutual friend introduced me to the organiser of one of the other gardens. She, in turn, gave me the contact details for the manager of the Community Corrections service, which brought offenders to the same garden to meet their community service obligations. I joined this garden as a volunteer, working with others in the communal plots. Several acquaintances suggested visiting the third and final garden chosen for this project. I first visited on a weekday morning after dropping my son at school. A sign on the garden noticeboard advised that the garden coordinator would be at the garden each Saturday morning and gave his name and mobile number. I visited the garden the following Saturday with a friend, explained my research, and asked the garden coordinator if I could join the garden as a volunteer. He assigned my friend and me a plot of our own to cultivate, and I became a member of that garden, too.

I received several recommendations for other gardens that I might be interested in, and I sought them out. These included the Sharing Garden in the nearby town of Fielding and the

RECAP (The Society for the Resilience and Engagement of the Community of Ashhurst and Pohangina, Incorporated) garden in Ashhurst, another nearby town, which were both thriving and were managed by active community groups. Their somewhat distant location posed practical difficulties given my child-care responsibilities and their preference for evening and weekend working bees and community events. The Fielding garden was also in a different local authority area. I decided to keep in touch with the garden organisers and to visit when I could, but not to include them as participatory research sites.

Other suggested gardens were not as easy to find, and some seemed to no longer exist. Several people recommended visiting a church-run garden that produced food for the church's soup kitchen but couldn't provide me with location details. I eventually discovered that the garden, which was on the outskirts of the city, had been abandoned and the gardener who had worked there was now working in one of the gardens I had already joined as a volunteer. I also sought another garden that produced food for a church soup kitchen, but I found that a single gardener, who lived on-site in a dilapidated dwelling, tended it. I found a beautifully constructed raised bed garden shaped like a giant spiral in the northeast of the city. It sat in a public park adjacent to a private kindergarten but was overgrown and neglected when I visited. As my research came to an end, I found that the garden been revived and is now cared for, in part, by the kindergarten. Lastly, I sought out a community garden at a church in the city but found that it was defunct. The church garden had been the first community garden to be granted seed money by the Palmerston North City Environmental Trust (Community Gardens Palmerston North, 2009). I heard various stories about why the garden had failed, including that a group of founding members had spent the seed money on a watering system that could be controlled remotely via a phone app, leaving an insufficient amount for actual seeds. There had been disagreements amongst the founding members about who should manage the app, what they should plant, and how they should divide the work. I couldn't verify this story, but I do not believe that anyone has revived the garden since.

My research reveals the significant influence of broader social and historical forces in community gardens, but the ethnographic research method kept the research grounded, quite literally, in a specific time and place. Two of the community gardens I have included in this project – the school gardens and the Eastern garden – had been operating for several years when I joined them and tended to have a settled, established feel to them. The timber on the raised beds was weathered, for example, and the paths around them were well-worn. The South West garden was a more recent addition to the city but it, too, had an air of permanence as so much time had been invested in clearing the land, laying paths, planting

fruit trees and building the raised gardens. None turned out to be as permanent as they seemed, however. Some of the school gardens were dismantled by vandals or displaced by new school buildings. The Eastern garden lost its lease when the land on which the garden sat was acquired by new owners, and the community garden was uprooted and moved to another site. The South West garden ceded territory to weeds and grasses once the relationship between garden organisers broke down. My research, therefore, captures gardens in a time and place when they appeared to be more established and durable than they turned out to be. This transience reflects their shifting position in our imagination and reality.

4.3   PARTICIPATION AND OBSERVATION

Participant observation is at the centre of ethnographic data collection. I spent more than two years in the field, working alongside gardeners and cultivating a plot of my own in one of the community gardens. Schensul and LeCompte (2013) describe the intent of an ethnographic research approach as being the observation, recording and analysis of a culture or phenomenon; the ethnographer observes what people do and why before ascribing meaning to those observations. Participating and watching the gardens develop across several seasons was a way of trying to understand the rules and expectations that governed cultural practices in the community garden and the broader community development and food sectors (Walsh, 2012). As a gardener, I experienced the challenges of primary food production and gained insight into how difficult it can be to produce a reliable supply of food. I also came to appreciate how unrealistic the organisers' expectations were in terms of cultivating a love for gardening in the gardeners, or even of passing on sufficient knowledge to enable them to grow food for themselves. It was a way of understanding what the garden organisers thought they were doing from the perspective of garden participants.

As well as gardening with others, I attended garden management or board meetings, garden events such as harvest and spring planting days, and public events at which one or more of the community gardens had a presence. Each of the gardens operated differently, with different organisational structures, but I endeavoured to participate in all of them to some degree.

I also spent time just being in the gardens – sitting on wooden benches and chatting to other gardeners when they were there, and the occasional visitor who came by. When there were no other gardeners around, I would sit and observe the wildlife in the garden, the plants, the pests, the weather and the neighbours. This observation time was quite distinct from the periods of tending my plot or the shared communal plots. I made notes about the sounds and smells in the garden, watched wild roosters hop through the fence to scratch in the compost

and saw rabbits hopping about amongst the lettuces. I took photos of moths and other insects, moulds and blemishes on fruit trees and other crops that might have gone unnoticed in the busyness of gardening. These helped to understand the way that non-human actors in the garden influenced garden outcomes.

Joining community gardens as a volunteer meant that I was able to experience the materiality of gardens alongside other gardeners, digging gardens beds, weeding plots and harvesting vegetables. It also enabled me to explore aspects of community gardening that I hadn't considered when scoping the research; issues posed by gates, weather and public transport, for example. Volunteering in community gardens and cultivating a bed of my own at one site, gave me insight into the grounded and ground-level challenges of community gardens, which changed my perception of their radical potential. Participation shifted my understanding of where the radicalness of gardens sits, moving my focus from global food systems and capitalist modes of organisation to gardeners' lived experience of procuring, preparing, sharing and eating food within that system.

It bears noting that, while I joined the gardens as a volunteer and cultivated a plot alongside other gardeners, I was especially interested in the way that gardens were managed and organised. The cultural rules and expectations that I particularly sought to understand were those of the 'managerial class' in each of the gardens. Not all gardens have a managerial group or officeholder. Many groups of gardeners run their sites collectively or cooperatively, but each of the gardens that I worked in had a distinct division of roles amongst participants, which shaped the practices of the garden. Approaching this question from the basis of ethnographic comparison highlighted the cultural nature of specific phenomena, such as the distribution of economic and social resources, which are so common as to be understood as natural rather than culturally contrived and enacted (Scott, 2013). Comparing the gardens revealed how varied the enactment of "community garden" can be; how they do not conform to a singular notion of alterity but differ geographically, historically and contextually, challenging efforts to frame them as oppositional or transformative.

The question of positionality confronts researchers who engage closely with their research subjects. The term "positionality" relates to the standpoint or positioning of the researcher in relation to the social and political context of the research project—the community, the organisations to which garden organisers are linked and the participant gardeners. My positionality affected every phase of the research process, from the way the research question has been developed to the way the research was designed and conducted, including the ways in which engaged with others in the garden. I brought many positions to the garden – as a

parent, gardener, cook, and person responsible for organising my household's meals and family budget, for example. Some positions were more prominent or relevant than others in the different gardens I joined so rather than make a statement of positionality here, I have described the most appropriate standpoint in each of the ethnographic chapters and laid out background and the context for this research in the introduction.

Gardening over several seasons alongside others enabled me to document everyday tasks and challenges in the garden, including how the gardeners harvested produce to eat and noting details such as the use of certain plants that some gardeners treated as vegetables and other saw as weeds. Gardening in three different gardens, each with a diverse constituency of gardeners enabled a comparison of the way that broader political, economic and social structures manifested in the lives of the people using the gardens. The power of a participant-observer approach is that it enabled the development of context-dependent knowledge about the reproduction of social practices around food and notions of individual and family responsibility. Such knowledge has significance beyond the gardens in challenging the numerous proposals to use gardens as a means of addressing issues of poverty, food insecurity and health (Batten, 2008; Witheridge & Morris, 2016). As a research method, participant observation allowed for some flexibility of approach that enabled me to follow garden produce from the point it was planted to its delivery to a table or food bank as well as engaging in multiple encounters with people and non-human actors in the garden.

An advantage of the ethnographic research method is that it enables acknowledgement and consideration of the role of non-human actors such as gates, pests and pesticides in shaping garden relations and gave me a chance to engage with the physical, material and sensory aspects of cultivating crops. When I initially framed the research proposal, I gave scant consideration to the agency of the plants and other non-human actors in the gardens. During my research, I came to see their influence over the functioning of the gardens; that gardens are more than gardeners, a site and a collection of social objectives. A focus on the human actors and their human concerns assumes the cooperation, submission or adaptation of plants and other non-human actors in the gardens' development. The ethnographic approach was useful in coming to understand gardens as institutions, events and processes that enrol actors from both the social and material realms.

4.4   FIELD NOTES, PHOTOGRAPHS AND INTERVIEWS

To enable interpretation and the attribution of meaning, ethnographers produce what Geertz (1973, p. 310) describes as "thick description". Thick description is a highly detailed or

"microscopic" description of the context in which behaviours and interactions occur to enable interpretation of what observations mean in the time, setting, circumstance or environment in which they were made. Detailed description enables researchers to understand the many possible meanings of what they witnessed in their context (Walsh, 2012). The process of writing the description itself reveals new meanings.

I have based the description of the gardens and garden practices in chapters 5– 7 on detailed notes and hundreds of photographs that I took during the research period. My field notes, both written and voice recorded, illustrate my experience of being in the garden and ability to attend events and meetings but necessarily do not capture others' experiences. The notes reflect my complex and changing feelings about community gardens, my biases, opinions and interpretations (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). I compiled field notes after each visit to the gardens, some more detailed than others, and some consisting primarily of photographs supported by some explanatory text. I often made quick voice recordings on my phone (a constant companion) to capture an observation or conversation while it was fresh in my mind. I also wrote notes detailing my experiences handling garden produce at home. I recorded the extensive washing, chopping and preserving that was required, which gave me some insight into how the garden labour extends into the kitchen and beyond.

Beaulieu argues that while "the field" as site, method and location in anthropology is essential in defining ethnography, even more central to the ethnographic approach is "the concern to provide accounts of what activities mean to people who do them, and the circumstances that give rise to those meanings" (Beaulieu, 2004, p. 159). She argues that while field notes or description is the primary method used to create the output of ethnography, this fieldwork is actually "subsumed to a partnered understanding of context," and this search for context behind the observations is essential to creating a more precise definition for the word "culture". As I've described, I spent more than two years in the community gardens and cooking programme, so the context of the gardens was revealed slowly over this time. It took many conversations and management meetings for the underlying meaning of the practice of gardening and the food that the gardens produced to become clear to me.

Demos (2007) points out the complexity of performing accurate and well-considered fieldwork when an unconscious, a priori cultural standpoint is lurking behind every observation. She writes "Observation alone is dangerously inadequate. To see is not always to understand. Cultures need prodding to reveal themselves" (Demos, 2007, p. 12). Interviews are a useful way of prodding for a deeper understanding of how values, perceptions, motivations and beliefs have become attached to specific practices and outcomes. Interviews reveal the

complexities, contradictions and tensions of garden relations. They also illuminate the contextual and historical relationships involved and enabled me to locate the garden projects in a broader social and political context. To this end, I supplemented my observations with interviews, which allowed specific prodding, and revealed cultural expectations and interpretations that might not otherwise have become apparent. I conducted interviews with garden organisers and council officials. The conversations were an opportunity to ask gardeners and funders directly, in a more formal setting than the gardens themselves, why they had set up or facilitated the garden projects.

Interviews provided insight into the hidden organisational challenges of the community garden projects such as applications for funding, issues of land title, relationships between government and non-governmental agencies; and between central and local government. They also provided historical context for the way that the different gardens operated. None of this was evident from within the gardens and supported Demos' (2007) contention that observation alone is inadequate. I conducted eight interviews with key stakeholders who were people involved in the establishment, operation or funding of the community gardens. I selected interviewees based on their day to day involvement with the gardens or their role in local government. One interviewee was not involved in any of the gardens I worked in, nor local government, but was involved with various community gardening and orchard projects in a nearby town, including the RECAP garden that I excluded from my research. The projects with which he was involved fell under the auspices of a Transition Town initiative, and he volunteered to explain the initiative's politics and processes. In doing so, he provided helpful insight into the workings of community groups and their relationships with the local authority (which was the same local authority under which my research gardens operated).

In terms of garden organisers, interviewees included one of the founders and the current manager of the Plant to Plate school garden project; the manager of the Community Corrections Service which ran the South West garden; the manager of The Green Hub which ran the parallel garden at South West; and the co-ordinator of the Eastern community garden. I attempted to secure an interview with the chair of the Community Trust that initiated and funded the Eastern garden but was unsuccessful. I did have informal discussions with him and his wife in the community garden during all-hands garden tidying events. I also interviewed two city councillors, who set the strategic direction for the city council, and one council officer, the manager of Community Services, who is responsible for implementing the Council's strategic plans. People familiar with the community gardens and supporting institutions will be

able to recognise my respondents, despite the use of pseudonyms. I have discussed the ethical implications of my research in section 4.6, *Ethics, access and consent*, below.

The interviews were an opportunity to explore observations I had made during fieldwork and helped me understand the various perspectives, experiences and activities of the city council, community groups and individuals. The interviews revealed the many links between organisations and the complex histories that some of them shared. The interviews also highlighted the extent to which the garden groups were isolated from each other, despite long-standing connections between their members and leaders. They revealed community gardeners' limited engagement with the alternative food movement in which I had initially located them, leading me to question the idea of the movement as a coherent oppositional force, at least in Palmerston North.

I attended several public events that featured people active in the community gardening scene while I was doing my field research. These included public talks given by the instigator of a community garden and sharing table in Fielding, a town to the north-west of Palmerston North, and by Wellington's Urban Agriculture Advisor, a role located in the community services team of the Wellington city council. I was able to participate in a nascent Community Food Network that was being piloted by the Volunteer Resource Centre, which is a charitable trust that supports and promotes volunteering. Garden organisers from two of my ethnographic sites were involved in the Community Food Network project, and we attended a series of exploratory meetings that included representatives of the city council, food banks, churches, a student sustainability group, a community harvest group, the free food store and other groups involved in the production and distribution of food in the city. This greatly improved my understanding of the way food was distributed in the city outside of the retail sector. It also gave me some insight into the participants' varying perceptions of food security and social need in the city, and their approach to the charitable distribution of food which emerged as an issue in some of my research sites. The Community Food Network did not gain traction and eventually stopped meeting.

One of the more valuable aspects of an ethnographic research method is the ability to incorporate various documents and artefacts as well as interviews and observation. For this research, I reviewed garden-related documents such as blog posts, newsletters, annual reports, funding applications and school handouts as well as taking notes, photographs, and conducting interviews. I used this material to trace the gap between what garden organisers stated were the aims of their garden projects, what they described to me in person, and what I observed. While some information was easily obtained from websites, I encountered problems

tracking down minutes and other formal documentation of decisions about garden leases and other council support. There are no minutes available of the council meeting that agreed to lease the land for one of the gardens to Community Corrections, for example. There is a record that a meeting occurred, but not what was decided or how the decision was to be implemented. The way the garden was formally constituted became a matter of contention between the parties, and I found it curious that the decision had not been documented. Similarly, while I was given copies of funding applications by two of the garden projects, I was not able to see detailed responses from funders that accompanied the funding decisions. These issues became less important as the research developed in the direction of understanding what motivated gardeners to initiate their projects and less concerned with the way local government interacted with garden projects. Overall, the documents and other artefacts I reviewed greatly added to my understanding of the ways in which gardens come to be established, and the ways they are presented to funders and supporters.

4.5   PUTTING THE GARDENS DOWN ON PAPER

Gardening is as much a physical and emotional experience as it is an intellectual one. There are spatial and temporal elements to gardening that are as important as the material elements of soil, plants and wheelbarrows, for example. I have tried to capture some of the material aspects of the gardens by describing what each of my three research sites looks like – their layout, the colours of the flowers and the gardens' aesthetic qualities, which range from orderly to haphazard. I have also referred to some of the more sensory experiences of gardening such as the rustle of wind, the low hum of bees and the dampness of the soil.

I have described some of my emotional responses to gardening and garden produce, such as my worries that all my hard gardening work would be undone by weeds when I couldn't visit the garden for a few weeks; and the feeling of being overwhelmed by produce that had to be eaten, shared or shamefully wasted. Many of the garden organisers and volunteers expressed emotions, such as frustration and disappointment with their fellow gardeners, which I have also tried to capture. One of my research sites hosted offenders sentenced to community work, and here, there were flashes of anger as well. Overall, however, relations with my fellow gardeners were convivial, and I hope that I have captured the friendliness and collectivity in reporting our conversations and chatter.

The spatial aspects of gardening are reflected in the descriptions of the location of gardens in the town, and their accessibility by public and private transport. The temporal aspects of gardening include the long time horizons over which gardeners plan their planting, the seasonal rotations of crops and the conflicting needs of the gardens for care and gardeners for

holidays over the peak summer growing season. I have tried to describe the importance of these to the community gardens.

I've included photos from each of my research sites in the ethnographic chapters and used additional photos from my sites, and of other community gardens, throughout this thesis. While they give some idea of what the gardens look like at different times of the year, they can't convey the deep silence that I often experienced when I was alone in the gardens. Nor do they convey the sense of wonder and surprise that I often felt on discovering an unexpected plant or insect.

4.6   ETHICS, ACCESS AND CONSENT

Ethnography, as a research method, is an intensely personal endeavour. It required the development of relationships with others in the garden environment and my research flowed into my family life and home as I brought produce home or took my family members with me to the gardens. In one instance, my participation in a school gardening programme took me to my son's primary school, where I worked with some of his classmates and friends in digging over a plot. Because of the community setting, my methodology emphasised the development of relationships with other gardeners and I sought to understand the influence of non-human actors in the garden through active participation in the garden settings. I began my fieldwork as an outsider, unfamiliar with the city and not knowing the people in the gardens or local authorities. Over time, I built relationships with others in the setting and was invited to participate in the more formal aspects of running the garden projects.

At the outset of my research, and before I began volunteering in the community gardens, I obtained agreement from Massey University's Human Ethics Committee that my research presented little risk to participants so was, therefore, a "low-risk notification". The Committee supports researchers in upholding ethical principles in their research, which it describes as including respect for persons; informed and voluntary consent; respect for privacy and confidentiality; and the avoidance of any deception.

I came into contact with many people in the gardens, often meeting individuals only once in the course of my research, and it was not possible or necessary to inform all of them of my position as a researcher in the gardens or seek their consent to my observation of garden activity. Most of the gardeners are not identified in my narrative in any way, and their identity is unlikely to be able to be deduced from my description. Few of my photographs include people's faces and those that do have had the faces obscured. Those people with whom I had more sustained contact through my work in the gardens were made aware of my role as a

researcher by garden organisers or by myself in conversation. I explained that I was undertaking research into community gardens to my fellow gardeners. In some cases, the long duration of my volunteering led to questions about how long my research and writing would take and jokes about the apparently frivolous nature of academic enquiry. I did not seek consent to my observation in writing from fellow gardeners whom I came into contact with while gardening, even when I have reported fragments of our conversation in this dissertation. I have changed details of their identity for any such people to preserve their privacy.

I did seek informed, written consent from individuals with whom I conducted formal interviews. Copies of these are stored securely in electronic form on a password-protected University drive. I have used pseudonyms for those people whom I interviewed and worked with in the garden but have identified individuals who I interviewed in the context of their official position as council officers by referring to them using their job title. Even with these precautions, some participants will be identifiable to some of those involved in local government, community development or any of the garden projects who choose to read this document. Nevertheless, much has changed in the community gardens since I finished my participant observation. Some of the gardens included in this research are no longer operating; another has moved to a new site and attracted new gardeners, while some gardeners did not follow the garden to its new location. One of the councillors interviewed for the research did not stand for re-election, another was unsuccessful in his re-election bid, and the council officer has moved to a new role in a new city. Several of the garden organisers have retired from active involvement in the gardens. Garden communities have dispersed, and I feel that it is unlikely that anything included in this document threatens the privacy or confidentiality of my respondents, or will affect their position or relationships in any way.

4.7   SUMMARY

Exploring the alterity of community gardens using an ethnographic approach enabled exploration of the complex motivations of people who do community gardening. The flexibility of the approach permitted consideration of the non-human actants – other life forms in the gardens and the institutions that shaped their operation. It also allowed for the incorporation of my social, experiential and affective location in constructing my understanding of what the gardeners were doing in, and with, the community gardens. Ethnography is premised on the researcher's bodily presence in the research site, and in this case, I was able to bring a key part of the research site – the garden produce – into my domestic space, separate from the context in which it was produced. Preparing and eating the vegetables enabled knowledge to be

produced in a tactile, gustatory and social way that less interpretive methodologies could not accommodate.

The following chapters provide thick description of the community gardens used as case studies and peel back the layers of meaning signified by the re-emergence of community gardens in urban food networks. Each of the chapters describes the location and physical appearance of the gardens, my experiences of working there, and the wide range of issues that emerged.

5   EASTERN COMMUNITY GARDEN

20 - EASTERN COMMUNITY GARDEN

I have generally described my research as being done in three community gardens – the Eastern Community Garden, the South West Community Garden and the school gardens overseen by Plant to Plate Aotearoa – but there were several gardens contained within each of the three. The school gardens, for example, were a collection of tiny gardens scattered over the city, which I have conceived of as a single, if distributed, community garden. All the sites were located on school premises, and a single organisation kept them going. The other community gardens were in many ways more divided, despite occupying a single site each. The Eastern Community Garden was divided between individual and collective plots and was divided along the lines of ethnicity and vision or purpose. The main groups of gardeners, who were Bhutanese, Nepali and Tongan, grew food for themselves and their families while garden organisers and the volunteers who maintained the communal beds, who were mostly Pākehā, grew produce for charitable food providers and to "build community" through gardening. The South West Garden was run as two gardens occupying the same physical space but divided by time and the ambitions of the two incompatible groups that set up the garden. One was the Community Corrections service which brought offenders to the garden, and the other was a small local environmental organisation. The different communities in the garden were kept

separate and certainly held no bond of emotional commitment to each other, Batten's (2008) criteria for the development of a community in community gardens.

The garden described in this chapter, Eastern Community Garden, is the one that best reflects the model of community gardens most often described in the literature. It occupies a single site, includes communal garden plots, is run by a community trust and attracts a diverse group of gardeners. Key themes that emerged in this garden include the way in which the donation of surplus garden produce to charitable organisations shapes the way the garden is run and the meaning ascribed to gardeners' work. The first part of this chapter describes the appearance of the garden, how it came to be established, and who comprises the garden community. It also describes my experience of cultivating a plot of my own. The second part of the chapter explores some of the complications that arise when disciplinary power, governmentality, managerial belonging and the agency of plants come into conflict. It also considers the way in which garden organisers objectify some groups of potential gardeners and some of the practices of resistance employed by gardeners against objectification.

5.1   THE GARDEN'S LOCATION

Eastern community garden was set in a vacant block of land in suburban Palmerston North, at the end of a street edged with former state houses, most of them single storey and built of weatherboards or brick. The neighbourhood was quiet and leafy. Census data revealed that the streets immediately surrounding the garden formed a small pocket of deprivation in an otherwise affluent part of the city. Households in these streets tended to be older and have a median income that was only a third of that in the wider neighbourhood (Statistics New Zealand, 2013, p. 9). The relative deprivation was evident in the bare gardens and want of household maintenance. Creeping gentrification is slowly changing the character of the neighbourhood, however. Many of the state houses have passed into private hands and feature new paint, landscaping and freshly concreted driveways.

The garden occupied a little less than a hectare on the north-west side of a two-hectare vacant site. The site had been earmarked for a high school that was never built. At the time of my research, it formed part of the deferred settlement estate set out in the Rangitāne o Manawatū Treaty of Waitangi[10] deed of settlement. At the time of my research, the iwi had yet

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[10] The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of New Zealand. It is an agreement that was entered into by representatives of the Crown and of Māori iwi (tribes) and hapū (sub-tribes) in 1840. The Treaty is a broad statement of principles on which the British and Māori made a political compact to found a nation state and build a government in New Zealand. Since the Treaty was signed, successive governments have taken actions that have resulted in the alienation of Māori land, waters and other

to decide whether to take up the property and in the meantime, the community trust that administered the garden leased a portion of the site at a peppercorn rental. The remaining part of the property had half a dozen cattle roaming it, a small pastoral idyll in a part of the city that is losing trees and green space to infill housing development.

The garden's coordinator, a man named Steve, was confident that even if the iwi took on the land, it would be some years before it was developed. This did not prove to be the case, however. Shortly after my field research ended, the Crown settled the Rangitāne o Manawatū claim, passing control of the land to the iwi, which promptly ended the garden's rolling lease. The community garden was given notice to move in March 2018 and had to find a new location by June of that year, in the winter. The community trust that managed the garden sought the assistance of the city council in finding a new site. The council considered turning over space in one of two public parks, and eventually offered space in Awapuni Park after some discussion about having to remove trees. The decision seems to have been eased by the pressure of the growing seasons, with one councillor noting that widespread consultation with residents living near the park might result in the loss of a planting season. The councillor emphasised "the value of the gardens in terms of producing, activity and socialising" (Rankin, 2018a) and noted that too much delay would mean that the garden would have to go into abeyance for a year. The community trust received permission to occupy the new site in December 2018, "a bit late in the season for potatoes" (Rankin, 2018b), but the gardeners were optimistic there would be plenty of their favourite crops of beans by the end of summer.

5.2   WHAT THE GARDEN LOOKED LIKE

I joined the garden as a volunteer at its original site on the eastern side of town. Access to the garden was at the end of a *cul de sac* through a farm-style wire gate. Visitors walked or drove along a bumpy gravel driveway to arrive at a shed and picnic area with play equipment and two picnic tables. Garden plots stretched out in neat lines towards the corrugated iron fence at the far edge of the property and to the wire fences that mark the boundaries on either side. The plots were defined by frames of four-by-two timber donated by a local timber merchant. A series of longer, narrower beds were marked out by railway sleepers. These were closest to

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resources from their owners, generally without proper consent or compensation. In 1975, the Waitangi Tribunal was established to consider claims by Māori against the Crown regarding breaches of the principles of the Treaty and to make recommendations to government to remove the prejudice and provide recompense. This has provided Māori with an important means to have their grievances against the actions of past governments investigated (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2017). The **Rangitāne o Manawatū** Deed of Settlement was the result of a claim made by the **Rangitāne o Manawatū** iwi and set aside a number tracts of land as redress, including the site of the community garden.

the shed and were the first to be established when the garden was set up. These beds were gardened communally, with a portion of the produce earmarked for food banks and a local free-food store, Just Zilch.

21 - GARDEN STRUCTURES

The rows of rectangular wooden frames marching along gravel paths were the only neat thing about the garden, and they could barely contain the exuberant crops that gardeners had planted within them. Some of the plots were home to rampant artichoke bushes and clumps of silverbeet. A few plots had rickety structures made of found materials like old clothes-drying racks which were used to support beans and tomatoes. Some of the communal beds also had towering bamboo structures and sat next to old tractor tyres that were planted with herbs. Compost bins made of wooden pallets were dotted around the garden. None of the plots was fenced, and gardeners don't seem to add nameplates to their plots. In my first summer in the garden, the edge of one plot was marked by a line of enormous sunflowers as big as dinner plates that tower over my head, as in Figure 10 - *Sunflowers, Eastern garden*.

In the early days of spring, the plots were more restrained, and tidy rows of seedlings began to appear. By the summer and early autumn, the range and abundance of produce and flowers were dazzling. The large communal patches in the centre were planted with corn and beans, as were many of the individual plots. Tomato plants and zucchini bushes were laden and heavy with yellow flowers. But there is no time of the year when the garden was empty. In autumn, gardeners cleared away the remnants of summer crops and, when the pesky white butterflies had gone, plant crops of brassicas and mangetout. In winter they grew large white radish, mustard greens and onions, and in spring they planted pumpkins, potatoes and turnips. Walking around the garden on a warm afternoon was a sensory experience. The garden was quiet, with no traffic noise. The birdsong, hum of bees and rustling corn stalks were the sounds of a country garden, not a pocket of suburbia. The sheer exuberance of the plants and the

abundance of crops seemed to challenge a discourse of global food scarcity and the need for a productivist, technological approach to agriculture.

The garden was a public space in that it was accessible to the public, its gate latched but never locked, but it was often empty. It attracted occasional visitors with interest in community gardens who had found it online or been told about it, but the garden didn't seem to be widely used by nearby residents as a recreational space despite there being picnic tables and play equipment available in the common area. The garden was at the end of a street in a neighbourhood with no through road, so it was a destination rather than somewhere that could be stumbled across.

22 - GARDEN SHED AND BOOTS

The garden had two buildings. The first was a garden shed secured with a sliding bolt, but not locked, that held a dozen pairs of white gumboots and stacks of the plastic buckets that one of the volunteers regularly brought from his place of work. It also had an assortment of gardening tools, a stack of donated vegetable gardening guidebooks dating back to the 1980s, and posters detailing the garden rules and the crop rotation plan for the community beds. There were jars and plastic bags filled with seeds, most of which were unlabelled but seemed to consist mostly of dried broad beans. There was a large paper sack labelled "lupin" which I later discovered was destined be planted as a cover crop, "because it fixes nitrogen in the soil, or something like that", the garden coordinator told me. The other building was a shipping container that held lawnmowers, wheelbarrows, sprayers, chemicals and a rotary hoe. It was kept locked, and the garden coordinator held the key.

5.3   LOSING THE PLOT: MY EXPERIENCE OF GARDENING

Of the three gardens I volunteered in, this was the only one where I cultivated a plot of my own. I took on a plot at the community garden in February 2016. I had visited the garden with a friend one Saturday morning when I knew the coordinator would be there. I'd visited several times before, out of curiosity, and seen the faded notice with a photograph of Steve, his phone number, email address and advice that he would be at the garden every Saturday morning.

When we arrived, the garden was busy, with several plots being attended to. We asked a man who was constructing bean frames from bamboo where we could find the garden manager. He pointed to another man with a pair of ear protectors clamped to his head, wearing a stained singlet, baggy shorts and black rubber boots. The man was pushing a large mower around some fruit trees. The man with the bamboo, whose name was Roger and who I found to be the most regular of volunteers, told us that the manager preferred to be known as 'the garden coordinator'.

We approached and waved to get his attention. Steve stopped the mower, smiled and introduced himself, explaining that he was the garden coordinator, "not a gang-master", he joked, gesturing towards half dozen Bhutanese people digging up potatoes.   We explained that we wanted to help in the garden and cultivate a plot. He walked with us to an area of bare land towards a corrugated iron fence at the end of a pebbly path and offered us a plot. It would be constructed the following week, he said, once he had cleared enough weeds to build six plots and sprayed the ground. I asked what he sprays with, and he said, "pink spray". I'd told him in the course of our introductory chat that I was interested in cultivating a plot as part of some research for a thesis on community gardens. After my questions about the spray, Steve told me that the garden is not organic, and asked if that will be a problem for the research. He says that he occasionally sprays some plots with pesticide, "yellow spray", but that he prefers not to.

23 - MY NEW PLOT, EASTERN GARDEN

When we returned the following week our new garden plot was waiting, marked out by a wooden frame made with lengths of four-by-two timber. It had been thoroughly turned over by a rotary hoe and featured shrivelled brown grasses and weeds. The pink spray seemed to have been a herbicide. I saw it sprayed along paths and around the edges of plots several times over the following months. Each time I asked the person doing the spraying - Roger, Steve, or an occasional volunteer - what the spray was but each time I received a vague answer along the lines of "it's the path spray from the shed", or "I can't remember the name of it". I sensed some caginess about the spray and

could not understand why no-one would tell me what it was. One Saturday morning, I asked Steve again, saying I wanted to know so that I can get some to spray the weeds in my driveway.

"It's the generic Round-Up from Bunnings," he said.

"Glyphosate?" I clarified.

"That's the one!" he confirmed. Mystery solved.

The Community Garden Code, the rules for individual plot holders posted in the shed, stated that "Individual plot holders may not use fertilisers, insecticides or weed repellents that will, in any way, affect any other plots". I did not see any fertilisers being added to plots apart from sacks of horse manure, which gardeners brought to the garden from the racecourse and a pony club; dark, fragrant compost, which was donated and delivered by City Enterprises, a city council trading operation; and, once, urine which came from a small boy in pyjamas and a bathrobe. He had been tugging at his father's trouser leg and hopping from one foot to the other until his father scooped him up and held him over a freshly dug plot to pee. Over the following months, I did not see any

24 - MY PLOT, READY FOR PLANTING

sprays being used by gardeners either. Gardeners seemed to use other methods to control pests in their plots, and they removed weeds by hand. When I sprinkled lime dust around my plot to combat clubroot, a fungal disease that was affecting my cauliflowers, a man who was gardening a neighbouring plot came over to ask what I was doing. He seemed puzzled. I pulled out a stunted cauliflower and showed him the lumpy ball of roots. He raised his spectacles to take a closer look at the deformity and told me that he had never seen such a thing. His cauliflowers were glowing white in the sun; their large green leaves clearly fed by healthier roots than mine.

The day after I was allocated a plot, I drove out to the racecourse stables to collect some sacks of horse manure. I also collected two tubs of coffee grounds from a local café. Back at the community garden, Steve pointed out a mound of soil covered in plastic weighed down with

old tires. He told me it was compost and to help myself to whatever I needed to build up my plot ready for planting. My friend and I loaded the compost into a wheelbarrow and tipped it into the plot, mixing it with coffee grounds and manure until the plot was full. We watered it and planned to come back the following day to plant it up with seedlings. As we were leaving, we began talking to a woman, Ruth, who was weeding one of the large communal beds. She was also a regular volunteer and actively managed the shared plots. Ruth told us that the compost we had loaded into our plot was not really compost; it was the topsoil and weeds that had been cleared off the vacant lot as the garden expanded. "It's still good to grow in," she told us. "Covering it with plastic and leaving it in the sun for several months should have killed off the weeds", she said but advised us to look carefully for the roots of cooch grass which are white and difficult to kill. She suggested we pick over the soil carefully before adding it to the garden, but it was too late. Several times over the coming months I helped other new gardeners load their plots with soil from the covered mounds of topsoil, but I never told them about the cooch grass and it did not seem to appear in any of the plots.

The following day, I visited a local plant nursery and bought bundles of seedlings. I had been reading about crop rotation – a method of planting different types of crops in rotation around beds to minimise the risk of disease and maintain nutrient levels in the soil – and I had asked Ruth whether it was possible to rotate crops within a single plot. She had told me that it was and I had included some marigold seedlings to mark the divisions between my rotations because I had read that marigolds help to keep away some pests. My friend met me at the garden, and after the digging, composting and planting, our plot had gone from looking bare to slightly less bare, and we were feeling rather optimistic.

25 - BRAVE NEW SEEDLINGS

Our plants did well in the late summer sunshine, and we soon had rows of pak choy, rainbow chard, yellow marigolds and a variety of lettuce. There were a couple of empty rows, so I brought more seedlings, purchased at a supermarket. When I went to plant them, I couldn't remember the crop rotation that my friend and I had decided on; I couldn't understand the notes I had made, and I had no idea where in the rotation cycle the

seedlings I had brought should be planted. I made holes in the soil in various places around the garden and dropped the seedlings in. Then I watered and weeded my bed and one of the communal beds, which were long narrow beds near the shed built from old railway sleepers. The communal beds weren't marked as such, but they had been pointed out to me by Steve when I first joined the garden. My friend and erstwhile co-gardener rarely seemed to visit the garden, although she lived much closer than I, and hadn't done any weeding or watering. One afternoon, I visited the garden to find that she had harvested all the pak choy. I felt a little resentful. When I saw her a week later, she acknowledged that she'd neglected the garden and bowed out of the project.

26 - My plot: Food and flowers

Taking care of the plot and working in the communal area of the garden proved to be time-consuming. The garden was three kilometres from where I live, so I rode my bicycle to the garden unless I planned to harvest vegetables, collect compost, coffee grounds or seedlings, or needed to take gardening tools with me, in which case I took our family car. There was no public transport option. Taking the car was possible as long as no-one else in the house needed it.

I tried to visit during school hours or in the evenings after my husband got home so that I didn't have to bring my child to the garden with me. My son was not at all enthusiastic about either growing or eating vegetables and stubbornly resisted my efforts to get him to come to the gardens with me. During school hour visits, I was usually the only person in the garden. During the late afternoons, a few Bhutanese gardeners would arrive in small cars, usually women or elderly couples. They brought supermarket shopping bags and small knives to harvest what looked like enough produce for a meal. Sometimes they would tell me what they planned to cook, but often their English language couldn't furnish any detail beyond "dinner". Early in my garden tenure, a young Bhutanese couple came to the garden to harvest scarlet runner beans. Their English was good, and they explained that they ate a lot of vegetables because they were Hindu and did not eat meat or eggs. They told me that they grew most of their food and bought very little beyond rice, flour, cooking oil and condiments. The man, Dili, worked in a rest home, and his wife cared for their two young children. A few weeks later, an older Bhutanese woman came over to inspect my plot. She was wearing a sari and had a caste

mark on her forehead. She told me that she had arrived in New Zealand six years earlier, having spent nineteen years in a refugee camp in Nepal. She explained that two adult sons and a daughter had come with her to New Zealand, while two other sons had settled in Pennsylvania in the United States. I asked her if she was Hindu, and she told me that she was and that she only ate rice and vegetables every day, "no eggs, no meat!" She told me this twice more over the following months, always with emphasis!. One of her sons was with her, and he told me that they grew their own vegetables because they tasted better. They had grown almost everything in Nepal, too, he said, because they had lived in a rural area with few other sources of food. He was young, in his mid-20s which suggested that he had lived most of his life in a Nepali refugee camp.

27- My plot after a summer of neglect

The seasons affected the amount of time I needed to spend in the garden. One winter, there were four weeks between visits because of school holidays and other commitments. I had expected a riot of weeds when I returned, but the garden seemed much as it did when I had left. It was not the same in the summer months. I came back to the garden after four weeks away to find that my broccoli and perpetual spinach were as high as my head and sporting bright yellow flowers. I had to fossick amongst the enormous weeds to find traces of the peppers and tomatoes I had planted.

The time when the garden was most productive and needed the most intervention was the time when I was least able to visit because schools were closed, my son was at home, and I needed to travel to see family for Christmas. The mismatch between school holidays and the growing season is a particular problem for school gardens, as I discovered when I joined the school gardening programme. It was also a problem for the South West garden which was run by a government agency and a community organisation that both closed for several weeks over the Christmas holiday period. Even the Eastern community garden was left unsupervised

by garden organisers in its first year. The first community garden newsletter advised gardeners that organisers would not be available from Christmas Eve until January seventh, 2011.

5.4   THE GARDEN'S ORIGIN STORY

The garden had been running for several years by the time I joined as a volunteer. Steve recounted the garden's origin story to me one afternoon while we took a break from weeding. He told me that the garden had been the vision of a local resident who wanted to provide a community asset for the refugees who were being settled in the neighbourhood at that time. The man used to walk his dog through the vacant land and had the idea to start a community garden. He engaged the interest of members of his church who lived in the wider suburb, and they started the garden in the corner of the vacant lot in 2011. The garden was supported with funding by a local community trust, which also had links to the church. Photos taken at the time show four Pākehā couples, a Kenyan couple and two other Pākehā residents wearing matching green T-shirts with the community garden logo on them, which they must have had designed and printed just as they began to establish the garden. They are holding gardening tools and toddlers who are also dressed in green logo shirts.

28 - EASTERN COMMUNITY GARDEN

Early blog posts on the garden's website describe the garden instigators as "a group of people who have a vision for a vibrant community hub where neighbours are collectively involved in various sustainable living initiatives that provide healthy food, encourage social connections, and reduce family food budgets" (Bourke, 2011). They hoped the community garden would achieve these goals by providing land and sharing skills for those new to gardening. The group hoped to attract sole-parent households, which they believed would benefit from home-grown vegetables to lower their grocery bills. The blog posts also noted that the area around the garden was home to refugees and migrants who had been settled in the city, including Bhutanese, Congolese, Nepalese and Burmese people, along with a strong Tongan community, and Māori and Pākehā. The organisers hoped to run social events

and community meals to bring the various groups together, along with budget cooking and preserving workshops and the provision of "homegrown school lunches" (Bourke, 2011).

Organisers' emphasis on gardening as a way to reduce household food bills was consistent with the literature which describes the framing of community gardens as a remedy for food insecurity suffered by those in poverty. Their efforts to attract recent migrants, Pasifika and sole-parents reflected the over-representation of these groups in lower socio-economic groups. The organisers aimed to provide space to garden and to share skills with new gardeners as if the lack of these was what stood between the targets of their outreach and full pantries. As some of the relevant literature discusses, this perception of gardening as a realistic solution to rising bills overlooks the complexities of both food insecurity and gardening.

The garden organisers' blog posts acknowledged the diversity of the gardeners, and they signalled welcome and a willingness to build community by reaching out for recipes to exchange. In an early blog post, the organisers wrote: "Many different cultures and ethnicities are represented in these streets, and we are looking forward to trying some new dishes with our families" (Bourke, 2011). The organisers requested that the recipes be "affordable [to prepare] and healthy (or a tasty treat)," and included some recipes of their own in the welcome pack given to new garden recruits. On one occasion, they advised that a "free healthy lunch would be served" at the garden, provided by garden organisers. On another, they asked gardeners to bring a picnic to share, along with a picnic blanket and sunscreen. It is unclear how long the community meals continued for, or how frequently they occurred, but one of the early newsletters described how "everyone loves the community feeling down at the garden – gardening, chatting, eating and playing sports together" (Bourke, 2011).

Sharing food and swapping recipes is a way of having intercultural exchanges and enabling empathy, tolerance and connection across ethnic and class difference – food constructs, reconstructs and mediates difference in multicultural settings (Wise, 2011). In more formal, transactional settings such as restaurants or cultural festivals, Hage (1997) argues, it is possible to have multicultural encounters by eating ethnic food without actually encountering people from other cultures. In the garden, organisers used food and shared meals to encourage everyday interactions with what they hoped would be a diverse assemblage of gardeners.

29 - EASTERN COMMUNITY GARDEN

Picnics and shared food involve different social rituals and practices, and could potentially mediate the way that various ethnic and class identities – and power relationships – were traversed or re-worked amongst the group (Wise, 2011). Organisers felt the need to direct these food-based encounters, however, by setting parameters around what was appropriate to bring or offer in the form of a recipe, which are themselves specific cultural artefacts[11].

Multicultural food encounters in the gardens were an occasion for the assertion of managerial authority by garden organisers and the advancement of particular pedagogies of eating centred on health and affordability.

The last garden newsletter was published in December 2011, the second of only two, and efforts to organise community picnics and cooking workshops seem to have lapsed shortly after. Only a few of the original group of garden instigators were still actively involved when I took on my plot, joining in with biannual working bees and serving on the board of the community trust. The garden itself was thriving, however. The community trust had started the garden by constructing two long raised beds to be gardened communally and four individual beds for families to garden, with the support of local businesses and the city council. By the time the last newsletters and blog posts were published, there were sixteen family plots alongside the two communal plots. When I finished my field research, there were six communal raised beds, frames for beans and tomatoes, several square metres of communal open beds and more than 110 family plots.

In the early days, the garden was developed under a strict regime of Saturday working bees. A poster setting out the rules specified that gardeners weren't permitted to use hoses or sprinklers and could only harvest vegetables from the community plots on Saturdays under the

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[11] Written recipes, which are often accompanied by photos illustrating the steps involved in preparing a dish and the finished product, ready to serve, offer more than just instructions for meal preparation and reation; they indicate acceptable cooking methods – steaming over frying, for example – along with acceptable foods and essential kitchenware. They are infused with domestic ideologies and offer commentary on their social context (Kennedy & Lockie, 2018).

supervision of committee members, who would distribute them amongst the gardeners (Bourke, 2011). When I joined the garden five years later, hoses snaked along the paths and families visited the gardens whenever they needed to, often visiting four or five times each week to harvest food for that evening or the following day. The garden included a children's climbing frame, picnic tables and an extensive flower bed that was planted with tall cottage garden perennials by an American gardener, who was an early and highly-skilled recruit.

Neighbours reported that the garden struggled to gain momentum in its first few years. A committee of volunteers managed it, and the number of plots grew slowly. In 2014, the community trust appointed a paid coordinator, Steve, who began to visit the garden weekly on Saturday mornings. Steve took on the role of the early green-shirted organisers in acting as a single point of contact for gardeners. He was active in establishing and assigning plots, arranging for deliveries of compost for gardens and gravel for pathways, mowing lawns and organising working bees. He was supported by a committee drawn from the gardeners and volunteers. After his appointment, dozens more families joined the garden, most of them from the Bhutanese refugee community, some of whom lived nearby. When I joined the garden, Steve said he had a waiting list of ten families, and that the demand for plots drove the continued expansion of the garden.

1 - The original plan for the garden

Steve was an effective manager. Although he assured me that he was not a gardener and didn't cultivate a plot, he was not shy about organising material and people in the garden to undertake the various tasks that kept the garden functioning. He seemed to be good at securing resources from local businesses and the city council, such as compost and gravel for the paths. Steve spoke a little Hindi which he says he learned while working with Muslim street children in Delhi. His Hindi is not the same as that spoken by the Bhutanese gardeners

but was close enough to make himself understood to those Bhutanese with poor English, and he issued instructions in an amalgam of Hindi, English and gesticulation.

5.5   THE GARDENERS

The people who began the community garden had wanted to create a space where the diverse members of the local community could come to bond over "gardening, chatting, eating and playing sports together" as well as promoting healthy eating and sharing cooking and gardening skills (Bourke, 2011). The community around the garden is diverse. State housing bound the garden on two sides, and its tenants included refugees from a range of countries who were settled in the neighbourhood by refugee services. These include the Bhutanese refugees who began to arrive in 2007 and had been enthusiastic members of the community garden from the beginning. Over time, the Bhutanese began to purchase homes of their own or move into rented accommodation of their choice and the community had begun to disperse (Halley, 2014). They still came together in the community garden, however, comprising around ninety per cent of plot holders. When it came time for the garden to move to a new location in 2018, one of the attractions of its new home was that it was in the same neighbourhood to which many of the Bhutanese gardeners had moved.

The original garden's neighbourhood was also home to some of Palmerston North's Tongan community. This community was served by a small church a block away from the garden, and the church's minister lived on the street that ends at the garden gate. Two Tongan families cultivated plots in the community garden. One of the families lived immediately adjacent to the garden in a state house. The other family lived in a *cul de sac* that ended at the garden's corrugated iron fence. I rarely saw either of the families in the garden although their productive and well-tended plots suggested that this was bad timing on my part. When I did see them, they were there to harvest crops, filling sacks with corn, cauliflower or kumara, which they told me they shared with family members and neighbours. Neither family joined garden working bees or attended committee meetings, and largely kept to themselves.

The family who lived adjacent to the garden had a large area of land around their house that was uncultivated. When I saw one of the men in the garden one morning, I went over to admire his community garden plot and ask him why he didn't grow more food on his section. He said the soil was "no good". Steve told me later that the whole section used to be planted in tobacco, which stripped the soil of its nutrients so that nothing else would grow there. "They've moved their garden into the community garden", he said. The Tongan gardeners were early recruits and had marked out extensive freeform gardens along the edges of the site

bordering their section. A few times during my tenure in the garden Steve swept his hand towards one or other of the gardens cultivated by the Tongan families and said: "they've got all that" or something similar, indicating the expanse of their gardens which were much larger than the rectangular plots assigned to other gardeners. He first said this to me when I asked why he was constructing new raised beds that encroached on the Tongan families' gardens.

In a later interview, Steve described the Tongan gardeners as having been invited to join the garden when it was being established "because we wanted to get buy-in from the real locals and at the time they were using their entire back yard for growing things. We offered them some land, and they've gradually encroached more and more". He also told me that their proximity to the garden was an advantage "because they live right on the boundary and keep an eye on things. It's an open fence, and the kids are always hanging around. It stops crime, we think." Steve's ambivalence about the Tongan gardeners' participation in the community garden stemmed from what they chose to grow in their plot, which included tobacco, despite the security they provided.

Other groups had come and gone over the years, including other refugee groups who had been settled in the area but didn't take to gardening in the same way as the Bhutanese. Steve described working with a group of Afghani refugees to establish gardens at the behest of the Red Cross refugee program. They were assigned plots which they dug over and planted with donated seeds. After a month or two, their attendance at the garden dwindled, and their plots were eventually reassigned to others. Steve believed that the Afghani families had moved to Auckland, where most of New Zealand's Afghani community lives. It was unclear why the Red Cross initiated the gardening program for the refugees, but Steve suggested that it was to help them meet some of their household food needs, have an activity outside of their homes and meet some of their neighbours. These aims perfectly aligned with the original aims of the garden's instigators but by the time the Red Cross approached the garden, the original green t-shirted committee members had given up their regime of Saturday morning supervision, and there was no formal programme for sharing gardening-skills. The Afghani
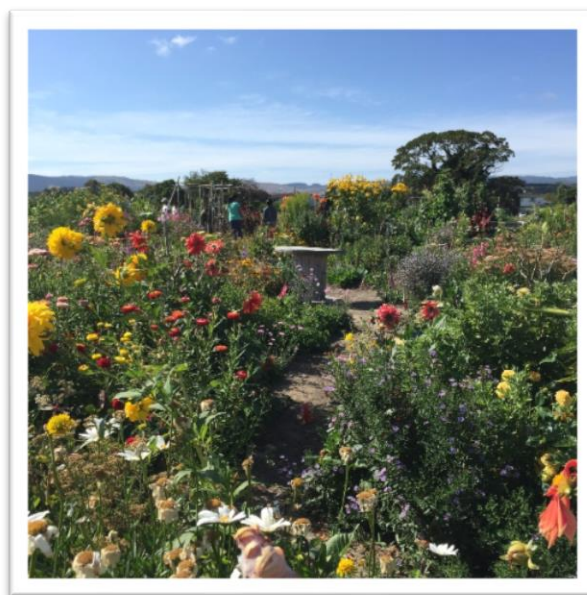
30 - Eastern garden flowers

refugees had little experience of gardening and, according to Steve, didn't demonstrate much enthusiasm for it. The refugees didn't initiate the gardening activity themselves, either, which may have been a factor in their failure; gardening was someone else's idea of a solution to a perceived problem.

Steve also reported that a group of people with intellectual disabilities had joined the garden for a while, working in the communal plots with their support workers. This group had also stopped attending after a short while. Steve said the group's support workers had struggled to keep the group on task and lacked gardening skills themselves. They weren't sure what needed to be done in the garden and, as they came on weekdays, there was rarely anyone there to help them.

The handful of other regular gardeners was a mix of Pākehā, Americans and Europeans, who lived in other parts of the city, as did Steve. Together, they formed the second largest group in the garden. Several were volunteers who didn't cultivate plots of their own but visited the garden regularly to mow lawns, prune, harvest crops and carry out any of the myriad other tasks that needed to be done in the garden. One of them, Roger, was a committee member and reliably attended the garden every Saturday morning. He was a member of the church that first established the garden. Roger worked at a local dairy processing plant and was the source of the white rubber boots in the shed. Roger also salvaged ten-litre plastic buckets from his workplace, which can't be reused in the dairy for regulated hygiene reasons. He brought them to the garden where they were stacked neatly in the shed. Gardeners used them to collect weeds as they tended to their plots, or to carry their harvest to their cars.

Another regular volunteer was a young Korean man who I only saw on Saturday mornings. He was also affiliated with the church and helped Steve with lawn mowing and weed eating but didn't cultivate a plot of his own. On the day of a working bee, I met the chair of the community trust that funds the garden and his wife. They did not have plots in the garden either but told me that they owned the half dozen cattle roaming the wasteland beyond

thegarden fence. They visited the garden from time to time while I was there and attended garden working bees and other events.

Among the Pākehā gardeners who did cultivate plots were two women in their late sixties, Ruth and Helen, who had plots of their own and managed the community beds. They each told me that they also gardened at home. Ruth had retired from work and Helen was semi-retired. They visited at weekends and often during the week. Another regular gardener was an American woman who had been an early recruit to the garden. She had a meandering plot that was densely planted with vegetables and herbs. It featured a winding path and neat compost piles bound by chicken wire. She had also planted flower beds along the driveway, although "flower beds" is not the best phrase to describe the area as it suggests order and restraint. The phrase does not accurately describe the wild and unstructured form of the beds. Most of the flowers were perennial, flowering annually at different times so that there was always something in bloom. The flowers were tall and colourful, their foliage growing in dense clumps with wild strawberries and creeping thyme that spread along the edges of the path winding through her plot. I imagined that her flower beds cared for themselves, as if they really were wild, until I saw Ruth and the American woman on their hands and knees for hours over the course of two weekends, weeding and thinning out the rhizomes of irises.

The contrast between the lush, meandering flower beds and the neat rows of tobacco and cauliflower that grew in the rectangular beds highlighted the range of activity and outcome that can be considered gardening, or a garden. The gardeners who cultivated the flower bed were, for all their hands-and-knees work, applying a light touch to their garden. They took a Clément-ian approach to the flower beds, intervening to thin out the rhizomes which improved air circulation and light but otherwise left it to grow. They, and the other gardeners, were rewarded with aesthetic pleasure year-round. The flowers added colour and scent, as well as providing food for the bees and other insects in the garden. The American gardener was able to take the same approach to her vegetable plot, which appeared equally wild but was, in fact, carefully cultivated and productive. Other gardeners took a more hands-on
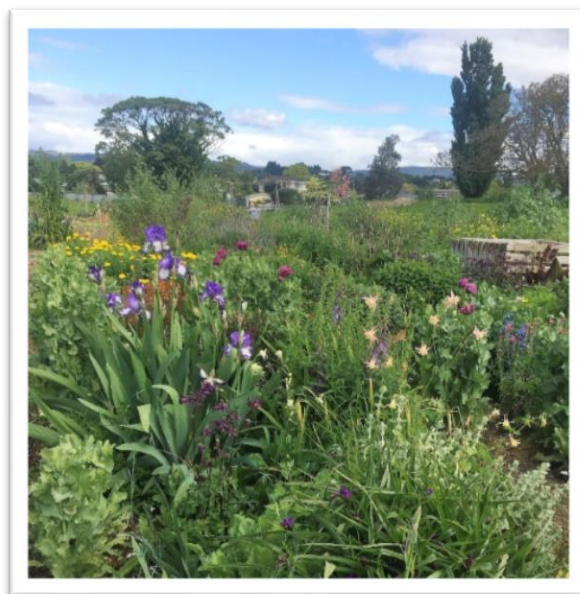
31- Eastern garden flowers

approach to their plots, planting seedlings for one or two varieties in each plot, removing weeds as the seedlings grew, and clearing the plots when the crop had been harvested, ready for the next seasonal planting. This meant that there were always a few bare between-crop plots. This was also aesthetically pleasing, if less joyful. The neat rectangular plots lined up along the paths, with their tidy rows of seedlings, conveyed a sense of order and productivity. It was the vision of the early gardeners, sketched out in the diagram of straight lines, brought to life.

The few abandoned plots, which were overgrown with weeds and towering broccoli gone to seed, stood as a reminder that gardens are always *en mouvement,* between a state of nature untouched by human labour and a state of nature transformed and subjected to the human desire to occupy it (St-Denis, 2007). As Clément argues, the agency of the natural world challenges notions of order and permanence by revealing that the dynamic order of the natural world differs from the static order of cultivated gardens. I found the dynamism of the natural world to be a source of frustration at times, as I struggled to maintain the static order of my neatly planted bed. Like other gardeners, I hoped to achieve a balance of dynamic vegetable growing and static weeds but nature's dynamism transcended the human categorisation of plants as desirable or not.

32- Tobacco plants in the garden

The gardeners at the community garden could make their own decisions about what to plant and when in their plots. The garden rules posted in the shed only specified that gardeners shouldn't harm others' plots with sprays or take anything from another plot without asking. Apart from the large bed of perennial flowers at the top of the driveway and some tobacco plants which were grown by one of the Tongan gardeners, almost all plants grown in the garden are food crops.

Steve explained that I was welcome to harvest anything from the communal patches as long as I helped to care for them. The beds included three varieties of kale, amaranth, radishes, several varieties of beans and leeks. A dozen artichoke plants growing along a fence line and fruit trees planted around the site were also communal. The rule for taking produce was to only take as much as you and your family could eat in a single meal. Ruth, the gardener who

was most committed to the communal beds, explained that the communal gardens worked on a "Little Red Hen" approach, a reference to a folk tale the promotes the value of work and initiative. "If you put in the work, you can reap the rewards," she said. "But only take as much as you can eat."

5.6   SURPLUS FOOD AND CHARITABLE GIVING

As the Eastern garden expanded, sections of it were devoted to growing crops at scale with the aim of producing enough of a surplus to donate to charitable food providers. Gifting food became a recognised part of the garden's purpose in a way that it hadn't been at the outset and was mentioned in publicity and funding applications for the garden. At one working bee, Steve reminded the gathered gardeners that "part of the purpose of this place is to bless people who don't have much food. So that's why we're doing the community garden today." The shift in emphasis from community building to charitable food donation reflected the shift in week-by-week management of the garden from the original instigators, who focused on building community, to Steve who was employed to manage the actually-existing garden and turned his focus to growing food for the needy.

The garden produce, including the potatoes, was donated to Just Zilch, which is a free food store that collects surplus food from catering establishments, distributors and retailers and makes it available to the public through its shop. The shop is open to anyone and visitors can take goods away at no charge. Staff may ration the number of items that shoppers can take in a single visit but do not question their right to use the shop or attempt to evaluate their level of need. Even though Just Zilch does not screen its customers for need, it operates in such a way that those with a choice about where they source their food will go elsewhere. The shop opens twice a day from Monday to Friday for limited hours. A queue can begin to form outside the shop more than an hour before it opens, snaking along the very public pavement outside. Once inside, shoppers choose from an unpredictable range of items, many approaching their sell-by or use-by dates. Deliveries of fresh vegetables stand out from the range of other goods available, which tend to include short-dated dairy deserts, jars of cooking sauces, sliced bread and odds and ends from cafes around town.

Donating food to Just Zilch affected the way in which garden organisers framed the gardening activities and the gardeners. In the Eastern community garden, favouring food crops and food charity established unwritten rules about what was 'good' and 'bad' to grow, and subtly demoted the value of other garden outputs such as community building, active recreation and urban greening. The original vision of the garden as a vibrant community hub implied an

33 - CORN IN THE COMMUNITY BEDS

internal locus and suggested that it was up to gardeners to define what form the garden took. The growing of food for gifting to food banks suggested that the vision had shifted to an external locus where the needs of those beyond the garden influenced what happened within it. The garden was reframed as a place that served a wider community of need, rather than a place that supported the development of local community cohesion and intercultural encounter. These needy 'others' were present in the garden in a disembodied form – they influenced the types of crops that were grown in the large communal beds which tended to be sturdy, common crops like cauliflower, pumpkins, potatoes, beans and corn suitable for donation to food banks. Steve described them as "standard" crops; vegetables that had a universal appeal that "most people" knew how to recognise and prepare. When the garden received a tray of miniature cauliflower seedlings from a local nursery, Ruth decided not to plant them in the communal beds and offered them to me instead. "No-one wants miniature cauliflower," she said. "What's the point?"

As well as promoting the cultivation of food over other plants, the emerging charitable purpose of the Eastern community garden restricted what gardeners could do with their harvest. Produce couldn't be sold or traded, for example, or shared along networks not condoned by the garden organisers. When the garden co-ordinator discovered that a gardener had been selling surplus vegetables from his plot to neighbourhood convenience stores, he threatened to take the gardener's plots away from him if he didn't stop. When I asked if there was a prohibition on selling produce, he responded,

> *It's just not our community values. We're here to help put the food on the tables in that house or to donate it. If they want to do a commercial operation, they can do that themselves. And we're a charity ourselves so the garden isn't costing them anything and we don't want them making money on it.*

Steve pointed out to me that gardeners did not pay for their plots; the church-based community trust funded much of the cost of the garden with the balance met by grants from central and local government, various other charitable trusts and donations in kind from local

businesses. The purpose of the garden was to feed families, either directly from the garden or via a charitable provider – not to promote enterprise[12] .

In a later interview, Steve described his efforts to redirect food donations away from the free food store and towards Methodist Social Services' food bank. The free food store gives away food to all comers – there are no eligibility criteria, and no questions are asked of recipients as to their level of need. The food bank, however, screens applicants for need and requires them to accept various support services such as budgeting advice. Steve felt that this was more satisfactory because "it's not just a donation of food. There's some longer-term plan as well." Similar sentiments emerged in the South West garden where the two organisations that ran the garden differed over the value and purpose of food donations. The idea that recipients of surplus garden produce had to have their life choices scrutinised and evaluated reflects an underlying idea that they lack the appropriate knowledge, skills and determination to exercise their "free will" in matters of food and household management appropriately. Their position of need is problematized as indicating a lack of self-awareness and competence, making scrutiny and intervention appropriate.

Concern that people might receive food without such scrutiny meant Steve resisted efforts by gardeners to share produce along private networks. After Steve had reminded the group gathered at a working bee that gardeners were entitled to "harvest enough for one meal if you've been helping but we want to make sure that we have enough left over to bless people who have not enough food", a gardener asked if he could share the food with people who he believed were in need but did not patronise Just Zilch or Methodist Social Services. Steve said no, that it was better to make sure people got the support offered by formal social services.

Not all the gardeners ascribed to this ethos of charitable giving. When the garden's communal potato crop was ready to be harvested one summer morning, I watched half a dozen Bhutanese gardeners shaking the soil from potatoes and piling them into white plastic buckets. Steve was also watching them and reminded them that they could harvest one bucket for themselves as long as they harvested an additional bucket for him to deliver to a charitable food provider, Just Zilch. He explained to me that he and the other gardeners would harvest

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[12] Some community gardens encourage micro-entrepreneurship through the sale of a portion of their produce, or products made from their produce, to shops and restaurants. Examples include the WorkerBe sites in Wellington, which grow salad greens for restaurants and make a range of drinks and packaged salads for shops and cafes, or the Bee Project in Epuni, which aims to supplement household incomes through the production and sale of honey. The gardens included in this research had a domestic, rather than entrepreneurial focus, however.

around a third of the potatoes that day and the rest over the following weeks. I went back the following morning to find that all of the potatoes had been dug up. When I saw Steve in the garden the following Saturday, he expressed irritation that the whole bed had been harvested in contravention of the "only take what you can eat" rule. He had had to leave the garden early, so couldn't supervise the potato digging. Steve felt that the harvesters, who had been reminded of the rule while I was there, took advantage of his absence to strip the bed, knowing the recriminations would be generalised to the whole garden membership rather than being directed to the suspected potato rustlers.

5.7   RESISTANCE

The people who instigated the Eastern community garden had clear ideas about the garden's purpose, how it should operate, and to what end. The garden co-ordinator also had clear ideas about the garden's purpose, which had a slightly different emphasis, as noted above. As the original organisers bowed out of the project, letting go of their ideas about creating a closely managed community hub, Steve's ideas of developing its charitable purpose gained influence. Other gardeners also had ideas about the garden's purpose and how it should operate, however, and the main groups of gardeners, the Bhutanese, Tongan and Pākehā, engaged in various practices of resistance against Steve's vision and to advance their own aims. The potato rustling was one example of this. Another was the Tongan gardeners' practice of growing tobacco, discussed in the following section, which attracted the disapproval of Steve and the community trust.

The Pākehā gardeners had less need to resist as they were fully subscribed to the aims and practices of the garden. They were also over-represented on the garden committee and the board of the community trust. They made decisions about what would be planted in the communal areas, whether sprays would be used, and where any surpluses would go. Even so, they had ways of protecting their personal interests. Ruth confessed one day that she was guilty of picking things from the community beds before they were ready just to make sure she didn't miss out. She said crops were harvested promptly with far more seeming to go out of the garden than the amount of labour that went in, in violation of The Little Red Hen principles that were supposed to govern the communal beds.

Actions such as rustling potatoes and planting tobacco weren't always consistent with the way the garden was represented in social media or conceived of by Steve, or the Trust that funds the garden. But then, the gardeners themselves were not always the objects that organisers conceived them to be. The Bhutanese gardeners, for example, as migrants and refugees, were

part of the community identified as potential beneficiaries of the garden project by the original organisers. The original garden project aimed to "provide healthy food, encourage social connections and reduce family food budgets" (Bourke, 2011). The Bhutanese benefitted from the social connection offered by the garden project, describing the garden as "very important to us, not only to grow vegetables but for people to get together and see each other and share the food" (Rankin, 2018b). They didn't need any encouragement to eat healthy garden produce, however, as many followed a strict Hindu vegetarian diet. Nor did they need kindly advice on managing household food budgets or preparing food at home. The Bhutanese gardeners reported growing most of their own food at the community garden and said they spent little on other groceries, taking advantage of local wholesalers to purchase staples like rice and flour in bulk which they cooked at home. Several of my fellow gardeners explained that they had spent up to twenty years in refugee camps in Nepal before arriving in New Zealand. They recounted growing much of their own food in and around the camps and having done the same at home in Bhutan, making do with meagre incomes then and now.

5.7.1   Growing tobacco

The Tongan gardeners were also experienced growers who were used to managing on meagre incomes. Like the Bhutanese, they had a community network beyond the garden gate through which they distributed garden produce. Tobacco was important to this network. On one of the few occasions when I saw the man who planted the tobacco, Vae'a, in the garden, he explained that he shared the tobacco with neighbours and family, along with the corn, beans, kumara and other crops that he and his children were harvesting.

Of all the plants that were cultivated in the garden, tobacco was the only one that was the subject of explicit disapproval. Tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) is a tall, green leafy plant that is native to North America and grows in temperate climates. It is perhaps most famous as a mild intoxicant imbibed by smoking, although it is also valued for its aesthetic qualities. Tobacco plants come in many varieties, some tall, with large soft leaves and attractive flowers in a range of colours. Books and online

34 - *Nicotiana tabacum*

sources of gardening advice recommend growing tobacco as a decorative plant: "nicotiana has more than a touch of class, and makes an aristocratic statement at the back of a lightly shaded or sunny border" (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2014). Indeed, the Royal Horticultural Society has given tobacco its prestigious Award of Garden Merit and at least one other community garden in Palmerston North grows tobacco in a flower bed for its decorative qualities, apparently without attracting opprobrium.

Tobacco also has some practical household and garden uses: its leaves can be steeped to make a potent pesticide or be used in cooking as a spice. It would be disingenuous to suggest that the tobacco being grown in Eastern Community Garden was being grown for decorative or culinary reasons – it was planted in neat rows between earthed up rows of potatoes and a bed of brassicas, and the growers did not hesitate to say that they cultivated the tobacco for smoking. The disapproval of tobacco *per se* discounts its decorative and utilitarian aspects, however, and prevented it being grown by other gardeners for such reasons.

Thaman (1995) offers some context for the cultivation of tobacco by the Tongan gardeners. He describes food gardens as a ubiquitous feature of Pacific Island urban landscapes which feature a rich diversity of staple crops such as kumara, taro and yams intercropped with fruit trees such as pineapples and vegetables such as beans, legumes, tomatoes, corn, eggplants and onions. Food crops are supplemented with spice plants such as chilli and lemongrass; and beverage, stimulant or depressive plants such as kava and tobacco. Thaman's description of Pacific urban gardens closely describes the Tongan gardeners' plots in the community garden, minus the pineapples and other tropical plants, and locates tobacco plants in a tradition of urban polyculture.

It is perfectly legal to grow tobacco in New Zealand, although there are restrictions on selling it, and licensed tobacco sales are heavily taxed because tobacco is associated with a range of poor health outcomes. The New Zealand government, like most governments, actively discourages smoking through a range of regulatory and public health measures. The anti-smoking narrative is so pervasive that it colours perspectives on the tobacco plant itself, and shapes those who grow it as unaware or careless of their own health and that of their families who may be exposed to tobacco smoke. Personal responsibility is considered indispensable to the achievement of health in a Pākehā context; however, Pasifika health models recognise that responsibility for health is a community concern grounded in cultural values, protocols and practices. This holistic approach to health and illness persists despite rapid culture change over several decades resulting from migration and urbanisation (Mafile'o & Vakalahi, 2016). For the community gardeners, gifting tobacco to neighbours and members of their church enabled

them to maintain traditional cultural relationships of reciprocity and respect. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that strong cultural and community ties also promote positive health outcomes (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2014; Lubben, Gironda, Sabbath, Kong, & Johnson, 2015).

The garden organisers didn't acknowledge the Pacific context or legality, however. Steve explained that opposition to growing tobacco in the community garden was linked to the potential for the tobacco to be smoked, and the association of smoking with a range of poor health outcomes that disproportionately affect the Pacific community in New Zealand. He acknowledged that growing tobacco was "a cultural thing" but that there was no place for it in the community garden.

35 - VAEA'S GARDEN

Another point of tension that the tobacco growing highlighted was the garden's aim to reduce pressure on family budgets. While growing one's own food is one way to reduce expenditure, the substitution of homegrown for store-bought tobacco provides greater relief from pressure on family budgets than garden vegetables ever could. Growing one's own is a rational economic choice for tobacco users because, at the cost of almost NZD $50 per 30g of loose tobacco, growing tobacco frees up far more household resources than any other legally permitted crop. Gardeners can grow food, but they can't grow school shoes, medication or rent. Grow-your-own tobacco can thus be understood as an effective way of adapting to tough economic times (Wiltshire, Bancroft, Amos, & Parry, 2001).

For all the concern about the tobacco plants and their potential health effects, the Tongan gardeners also grew and harvested a range of vegetables including taro, kumara, brassica, peas and corn suggesting that their diets were rich in vegetables or were, at least, no less bereft than the general population. Nonetheless, garden organisers and the Pākehā gardeners positioned the Tongan gardeners in terms of their own beliefs about smoking and the perceived health status of the wider Tongan community and deemed it appropriate to intervene in their planting decisions. The garden organisers were not entirely unsuccessful in discouraging tobacco growing in the garden. While Vae'a grew tobacco every year that I worked in the garden, the amount of space devoted to tobacco in his garden steadily

decreased. Soon after I finished my field research, however, I discovered that the tobacco had simply been displaced to another site nearby; the Minister of the local Tongan church could see the soft green leaves of dozens of tobacco plants rustling in the wind from his kitchen window as they matured in his newly dug garden.

5.7.2   Obligation and sharing

The mixed views of garden organisers and gardeners about the best ways to distribute garden surpluses and their ambivalent views of tobacco reflected different approaches to practices of obligation and sharing in the garden. The concept of obligation implies an alternative way of relating to one another, both within the garden and with the wider community, rather than the depersonalised, competitive and self-interested modes of relation thought to characterise modernity (Mulqueen, 2018). A sense of obligation is one of the characteristics of community gardens that make them at home in the "alternative" food movement.

Obligations, unlike rights, correspond to needs and exist regardless of whether they are recognised. When coupled with a longing for the past, this presents a paradoxical framework in which obligations that had no need for recognition because they were embedded cultural practices, such as caring for children or those in need, or maintaining family ties, nonetheless suffer for having been forgotten; they are at risk of having been supplanted by relations mediated by the state and the economy (Mulqueen, 2018). In our food systems, individual choice and responsibility overwhelm community responsibility for the well-being of the collective. This is perhaps why community gardens appeal to garden organisers and funders as a means to address food poverty, food deserts, and all those other expressions of the inequitable distribution of access to food. Addressing the ideological underpinnings of unequal access to food is more of a challenge than growing carrots and donating them to food banks. Community gardens also appeal to those who do seek to address the ideological underpinnings of the depersonalised state, however, because they offer opportunities to do community differently. Gardens can function as commons, where people collectively produce space to resist the self-responsibilisation of personal well-being by attending to the needs of their social networks and the wider community through collective endeavour. Such an approach defined the community gardens developed in the context of the Transition movement, but not my research sites. Community gardens keep being revived as a mode of production and community activity – and some have functioned for decades – which demonstrates the persistence of belief in alternative modes of relationality and the ever-

present possibility of living differently. Sharing garden surpluses can be understood as a way of resisting the depersonalisation of food relations even when it invites scrutiny.

5.7.3   Other forms of resistance

Gardeners resisted the normalising power of the community garden's ethos by practising gardening and the distribution of surpluses in subversive ways, as discussed in the previous sections. There were other sources of resistance to the normalising discourse of the garden organisers, including the idea that gardening is a sociable family activity. The garden was set up to attract families – plots were described as "family plots". When the garden was started, there were activities organised for children, and sponsors were invited to fund "Family Starter" packs. The original purpose of the garden outlined in the early blog posts was to provide healthy food, home-grown school lunches, and reduce family food budgets, which suggested that the family units organisers had in mind included young children.

The garden organisers' enthusiasm for family gardening activities wasn't matched in my own family, where I encountered passive and active resistance to working in the garden and enjoying its bounty. My son was aged ten when I joined the garden, and he was not in the least bit enthusiastic about gardening or garden produce. He usually refused to come with me to the garden, but occasionally, when his father was at work, and there was no other childcare available, I insisted. On those few occasions, he brought a games console with him and sat sullenly in the car while I harvested vegetables, chatted to other gardeners and took photos of the plots. The battles over whether or not he had to come with me could be enervating, and on more than one occasion, I gave in and decided not to go to the garden.

I am unsure whether others experienced the same resistance from their children. The Bhutanese gardeners seemed to garden in family groups and, as I understood from my conversations with them, to live in extended family groups also. Many were older and gardened with their adult children, who often brought their own children who tended to be younger, often just toddlers. They dug in the soil and played on the rickety swing set while their parents worked in the garden. Vae'a had children about the same age as mine, and I occasionally saw them in the garden helping to put what they have harvested into a large sack.

They smiled and chatted and didn't seem concerned that there was no wifi in the garden. The few Pākehā gardeners had adult children who had long since left home.

5.7.4   Control of the plots

I argue that garden organisers drew their authority from a sense of governmental belonging and the disciplining power of discourse, which is usually subtle and diffuse. Occasionally, more formal or regulatory forms of power were exercised by garden organisers. This was not surprising in the gardens that operated in Community Corrections and school settings, which are discussed in Chapters 6 and *7* but it was unexpected in the Eastern Community Garden. The main manifestations of regulatory control were two attempts by Steve to establish a registration system for garden plots. Neither of these attempts seems to have been successful, partly because of the complexity of the task and partly because of the quiet non-cooperation of gardeners.

It was difficult to know how many families and individuals held plots in the garden as it didn't have a "one family – one plot" rule. This was a source of frustration for Steve, who had to balance the demand for more plots from new and current gardeners with their fair allocation. Gardeners may have cared for two or three plots, and some seemed to have had as many as six. Bhutanese families linked by kinship or friendship coordinated their planting across plots so that one might be planted with cauliflower, one with beans, one with spinach and a fourth with radishes, for example. A plot of coriander seemed to move around the garden, the delicate green leaves appearing in a new location every few weeks. Steve's attempts to document who was responsible for various plots revealed that many were the responsibility of "phantom uncles" who, Steve suspected, had been invented to gain a high place in the waiting list.

36 - ONE CROP PER PLOT: CORIANDER (FRONT), BEANS, CORN

 Steve's first attempt to flush out the phantom uncles was "Registrations Day". Posters appeared on the garden notice board early one April morning in 2017, a month before the event, advising plot holders that they needed to visit the garden in person to re-register their plots or risk losing them. The posters were written in Common Bhutanese, Bhutanese (Classical Tibetan) and English. On the morning of

registration, the garden was busy, and a queue of sorts formed outside the garden shed. Inside, Steve had a laptop set up with a graphic map of the garden on the screen. He was matching plot-holders' names against a list and checking that he had contact details such as a phone number and email address. As he took everyone's name and phone number, he asked them to point out which of the plots were theirs on the map. Some of the gardeners struggled to read the map, and Steve took them outside to point at their plots. Sometimes he walked over to the plot with them and asked about adjacent plots, did they garden those also, and which other plots did they garden, could they point them out?

The coordinator told me later that, over the years, some households had registered a plot in the name of each member, or given him the names of relatives living in other cities, the "phantom uncles", in the mistaken belief that each person was only permitted to have a single plot. The posters calling for re-registration implied that individual ownership *was* expected, however, and garden rules referred to either "individual" or "family" plots and presumed individual (or single-family) ownership. The idea that gardeners "owned" or were responsible for each plot suggested that Steve saw them as a collection of private allotments, expecting a one-to-one correspondence between gardener and plot. Instead, the gardeners seem to have assembled families *of* plots, grouping them together to make more efficient growing spaces.

On Registrations Day, as he sorted through the names of the various plot holders and their relatives who ostensibly control the plots, Steve attempted to group them under the name of a primary gardener or head of the household on his contact system. I asked why he needed to reregister plot-holders, but his answer was vague. He mentioned the need to be able to contact people if their plots fell into disrepair, and a desire to limit the number of plots held by each group so that they could be shared out more fairly. For the few plots that were neglected, Steve seemed to know who they belonged to and why they hadn't been attended to – one person was in the hospital, another had moved and wouldn't be visiting the garden again, for example. In neither of these cases were the gardeners Bhutanese. Steve later told me that the threat of losing the plot for failing to register was a bluff, but an effective one. When I mentioned this to my co-gardener later, she pointed out that this was a harsh approach to take with refugees who had lost everything.

The second attempt at registration occurred during one of the quarterly working bees that Steve organised for a Saturday morning early in September 2017. About thirty people attended the working bee, including members of the church-based community trust that established and funded the garden. We spent the morning clearing away the remains of pumpkin vines and extracting junk from mounds at the edges of the garden. We had found the remains of at

least two cars in amongst the weeds – old bumpers, engine blocks and car seats losing their stuffing – relics of the site's days as a wasteland. We raked the dead grasses and weeds, which were victims of the pink spray, to clear land for more plots. We also cleaned out the shed, repaired bean frames and built a line of supports for the summer's tomato crop. At 11.15 or so everyone took a break for refreshments of cordial, cola, and packaged biscuits.

37 - REGISTRATIONS DAY GROUP PHOTO

Steve explained that he wanted a group photo, which we took, and that he would like everyone to take turns writing their name on a whiteboard and having their photo taken to help him identify who "owned" each plot. This caused a ripple of disquiet amongst the Bhutanese gardeners. People complied, however, taking turns to stand in front of the climbing frame holding a small whiteboard with their name written in Latin script as if they were having a mug shot taken.

The working bee wrapped up around half-past twelve. Steve left, and the Trust members drifted away, taking the rest of the soda and packets of biscuits with them. I had not been asked to have my photo taken, and neither had the other Pākehā gardeners. The Tongan gardeners had not attended the working bee. I ask Steve a couple of weeks later why he took the photos, and he told me that demand for plots was so high that he wanted to make sure they were fairly shared out. He was planning to add the photos to the register he had set up earlier. I wasn't sure how the photos would have helped with the fair allocation of plots, as plots can be gardened by several people, but Steve said he knew who was related to whom.

One of the drivers for Steve's attempts to register plots was a feeling that families swapped plots amongst themselves without letting him know. My observation was that this was indeed the case, with a few plots that had been tended by one couple seeming to change hands during my time in the garden. Occasionally plots would be swapped to improve the grouping of multiple family plots. While the plot swapping occurred mostly amongst the Bhutanese gardeners, it also happened amongst the Pākehā gardeners. The American woman who established the extensive flower garden and vegetable gardens early in the garden's existence returned to the United States after almost five years of participation. Her departure wasn't

sudden and was much discussed amongst the English-speaking volunteers and the coordinator in a way that didn't seem to include the Bhutanese gardeners. Her vegetable garden was eventually divided between a Greek man who was new to the garden and a Pākehā woman who already had a small plot and regularly volunteered in the communal garden. She and one of the committed volunteers took over the care of the adjacent flower beds. The Greek man dug up the dense, carefully curated foliage in the vegetable bed and planted rows of lettuces instead.

After each of Steve's attempts to assign a title to the plots to a single gardener or the head of a family group, there appeared to be no change at all in the way the gardeners worked, or how they organised their crop rotations. Steve made no further attempts to create a register of gardeners or to number or name the plots. The complexity of exerting a formal land title system without a supporting administrative apparatus or the co-operation of gardeners seemed to have defeated him.

Steve's vision of the garden as a collection of private plots competed with the Bhutanese gardeners' vision of the garden as a collective resource to be managed for optimum food production. The Pākehā gardeners also saw the garden as a series of private plots, although this was infused with the idea of the garden as having a social mission and being a space for the enjoyment and benefit of the wider community, including visitors and those in need of additional food. Gardeners competed for space and resources while Steve struggled to assert a normative vision of the garden as a site for doing good works – his criticisms of the Bhutanese gardens included that they only worked in the communal beds under direction. He framed the different views of the garden in cultural terms:

> *I think that being a refugee has programmed the way they think and act because they are always asking for more. The whole time, my biggest hassle is people asking for more stuff, can I have this, can I take that instead of people asking, "Can I help you?", which is probably a different mindset. I think it is part of being a refugee and also part of the Hindu culture which is that there is this saying in India which is "get the maximum for the minimum". I mean I love them, and I don't want to be disrespectful, but they're looking after themselves first. There's a quite a small cluster of Pakeha gardeners and I really appreciate them because they are really doing the community side of things and trying to engage with the Nepali people. I shouldn't be negative because it is changing, and people are offering to work and help.*

The idea that each plot was owned and controlled by a single gardener or family, and Steve's inability to apply this framework to the actually existing garden, seemed to reflect the early vision of the garden as a site of public pedagogy in which gardeners' food practices could be

scrutinised and corrected. As I have argued, community garden organisers attract groups whose food and domestic practices are deemed wanting. Because garden organisers are not invited to evaluate and guide practices in people's homes, the targets of their gardening efforts are invited to the quasi-public spaces of community gardens where their "private" plots are open for inspection. As vegetarians and excellent gardeners, the food practices of the Bhutanese gardeners were beyond reproach, but their lack of attention to appropriate modes of sharing and charitable giving did draw Steve's attention.

38 - WILD BY DESIGN

5.8   GARDENING SKILLS

Over the several seasons that I participated in the various community gardening projects, I came to see that gardening knowledge is both shallow and deep. Everyone in the Eastern garden was confident with the basics of gardening such as nourishing the soil, planting the right seeds for the right season, watering and weeding. These were the parameters of my gardening knowledge and were enough to produce an abundance of leafy greens and brassicas within a few weeks. The early success of my plot, which was more to do with the magic of sunshine and horse manure than any innate connection with the soil, gave me some credibility as a gardener. Steve and Ruth both remarked on it, and I felt welcomed into the gardening fold. Over time, I struggled to move past this early success and to cultivate anything other than brassicas, kale and silverbeet. These crops became established, and I was reluctant to dig them up to replant the bed with other crops. I tried to emulate the apparently random planting of the American gardener whose plot produced a variety of vegetables in a large free form bed. She had explained that while many of the vegetables had self-seeded, the garden overall was designed and cultivated to ensure that the right amounts of sunshine and shade reached particular crops. She seemed to be comfortable with Gilles Clément's gardening ethos; in her part of the garden, "even though all is not entirely mastered, all is known. The neglected spaces in the garden are intentionally so, for convenience or simplicity, but they are not necessarily undiscovered" (Clément, 2012, p. 1). It was arcane knowledge that I could

neither interpret nor apply. The Afghani gardeners, who had been new to gardening, faced almost insurmountable barriers to getting food from the garden onto their tables.

Gardeners who controlled more than one plot rotated crops through their plots to inhibit the development of plant diseases, like the clubroot that afflicted my cauliflowers, and coordinate their planting with friends and family members to ensure a continuous supply of produce. There were a rhythm and routine to planting that I began to see after many months of observation but never managed to emulate. The majority of the individual plots in the garden were planted in a single crop such as cauliflower or beans, with a variety of crops planted across the garden. This seemed to make it easier to weeds the crops and to distinguish wanted from unwanted plants, something I never quite managed to do. Planting several crops in the same bed meant that I often pulled up baby leeks, mistaking them for grass. My haphazard and experimental approach to growing vegetables did not yield as much produce as I had hoped, and I was grateful that I was not dependent on my garden for food.

Neither the gardeners nor the garden organiser seemed to have much concern about the aesthetics of the garden. Its plots were laid in orderly rows, and Steve scolded people who left piles of weeds in the pathways, but this was to make it easier to move wheelbarrows, not because of a desire to create a pleasant vista. Gardeners were tolerant of the rickety structures that others' assembled on their plots to support climbing plants, and of the raggedy carpet underlay used to protect the soil under the bean frames over the winter. It was a working garden and, with few neighbours overlooking it, there was no pressure to make it visibly pleasing to local residents. Gardeners seemed to have an easy relationship with the non-cultivated plants at the perimeter of the garden and were not unduly concerned when the corn stalks began to brown and curl and the end of the summer. The combination of gardening skill and a relaxed attitude to aesthetics and uncultivated plants left little room for the natural world to resist the gardeners' efforts, which was not the case in other gardens. The following chapter describes community gardens that had more fraught relationships with the natural world as well as within their garden communities.

I found that a deeper layer of gardening knowledge was passed on through casual conversation and observation rather than methodically. During a conversation between the garden coordinator and Ruth about whether to dig up some amaranth plants which had seeded, Ruth pointed to the tips of the fronds which seem to have been cut. She explains that amaranth is very similar to a South Asian vegetable and that the Bhutanese had been harvesting the tips of the stems "for delicious curries". Sometime later I learned that it's possible to speed up spring planting by blanketing the soil through the winter with old carpet.

One of the volunteers had repaired some bean frames that ran along the driveway towards the main gate and laid carpet underlay along the length of the frame. There were dozens of techniques like this that I picked up through observation, questioning and instruction during my time in the garden. It was like learning another language, where the ability to use simple words slowly develops to include idiom.

The founders and organisers of the garden described in the next chapter, South West garden, shared many aspirations with the founders and organisers of the Eastern garden. Both groups aspired to share gardening and cooking skills with gardeners and the wider community, with a view to improving people's competence in these areas. They shared the hope that it would lead to healthier eating and stronger communities. Both gardens also aimed to share surpluses through charitable food networks. The two gardens had quite different outcomes, however, and this can in part be attributed to the garden organisers' different ways of seeing their gardens. Whereas Eastern gardeners viewed the garden as a place for productivity, as private property or as community space – all of which could be reconciled – the South West garden's organisers saw the garden from distinct and irreconcilable perspectives. One group of organisers viewed the garden as private, closed space while the other viewed it as open, public space.

6   SOUTH WEST GARDEN

39 - RAISED BEDS, SOUTH WEST GARDEN

South West Community Garden is the largest of the gardens that I joined as a volunteer. The notes I made of my first few visits recorded the impressive size and scale of the garden, likening it to a commercial operation and changing my view of the potential of community gardens to address food insecurity through the sheer volume of produce being cultivated in a community garden setting. By the time I left the garden, I had changed my views of what made the "community" in community gardens – calling something a community garden isn't enough to make it one.

This chapter describes the location and form of the garden and my experience as a volunteer. It considers the community that the garden serves and investigates the complex relationship between the two parties involved in managing the garden, and the city council, which provided the land. The garden began as a partnership between two organisations: Community Corrections, which is the arm of the Department of Corrections that manages offenders sentenced to community work; and The Green Hub, which was a small community environmental organisation that had been active in the city for many years. The chapter discusses organisers' aspirations for the garden and considers the factors – people, politics and plants – that lead to the breakdown of the relationship between the parties and eventual closing of the garden to members of the public. It considers the ways in which the two organisations, which shared the same aims of building knowledge about where our food comes from, how to grow it and what to do with it once it has been harvested, weaponised the

legal and organisational structures within which they operated to attempt to assert control over the garden.

6.1   THE GARDEN'S LOCATION

South West garden lay at the end of a gravel road running between the corrugated iron fences that marked the boundary of private houses on each side. The gravel road looked very much like a private driveway, despite a stack of yellow road signs fixed to a lamppost that pointed towards the various club rooms located along it. The road passed the Manawatū Archery Club rooms and Riverdale Scout Hall on the left; and the Manawatū Hot Rod clubrooms, the Deaf Society meeting rooms, and the Manawatū Rifle and Shooting Association clubrooms on the right before reaching the garden gate. To the left of the gate was a tower belonging to the Manawatū Amateur Radio Society. It was behind a tall fence and never seemed to have visitors. During the months that I worked in and visited the gardens, the Archery Club was the only group that appeared to use its clubrooms regularly, running target practice in a field adjacent to the northern edge of the community garden. The area around the community garden was therefore largely unpopulated and somewhat desolate. The garden was not a place that casual visitors could stumble across, and even those who sought it out might have difficulty finding it the first time they visited.

A low wooden fence and wooden farm-style gate protected the entrance to the garden when I joined as a volunteer. The gate remained locked when neither of two groups that managed the garden was there, but visitors and volunteers could access the garden by clambering over the gate or walking up a short clay bank at one end of the fence. By the end of my research, a two-metre-high wooden fence and wire gate with a heavy chain and padlock prevented anyone accessing the garden this way.

The southern boundary of the garden shared a tall wire-mesh fence with the adjacent wastewater treatment plant, but the other fences that surround the garden were post-and-wire farm style fences that anyone determined to access the garden could climb. Throughout the time I volunteered in the garden, there were suspicions that people visited at times no-one was there to harvest vegetables, coming through the trees from the gravel road and climbing over the low wire fence. A path worn into the grass between the trees bounding the back fence was not well used but never disappeared completely, suggesting that the suspicions of regular vegetable theft were not without foundation.

All of the community gardens I worked in reported concerns with theft but South West garden suffered from the most significant plundering. As well as vegetables, Items stolen included a

trailer used for collecting manure from the nearby racecourse which was lifted over a locked gate at night, along with hoses, sprinklers, garden hand tools, mowers, weed eaters, and even the gate itself. The garden's isolated location and easy access meant that it was difficult to deter theft. The regular introduction of new offenders serving community sentences to the garden also meant that its location and amenities became known to a group of people with a proven disregard for others' property rights.

Once through the garden gates, the gravel road widened into a turning circle with parking space for vehicles. The garden was approximately 90 metres wide, from the water treatment plant's fence to the Archery Club's fence. It stretched approximately 100 metres in the other direction, from the gravel road towards the river although there was potential to extend the length of the garden another 100 metres as far as Tip Road which, as the name suggests, runs to the Awapuni Resource Recovery Centre. The patch beyond the garden, the potential garden, was home to wild grasses and weeds. That land was under city council control and was untenanted and uncultivated. Tip Road separated the untended patch of land from the riverbank cycleway, Panieri Park and other public recreational amenities.

6.2   ABUNDANCE, WASTE & ANXIETY

I began volunteering at the South West garden in June 2015. I had discovered the garden's existence through a chance meeting with Julia, the manager of the Green Hub, which was one of the organisations that started the garden. She took me to visit the site on a weekday afternoon and invited me to volunteer and harvest whatever produce I needed. I recall being impressed with the size and scale of the garden. The sheer quantity of food produced there challenged my expectations of how large and productive a community garden could be. I began to visit once or twice a week, driving or cycling across town to the garden with gloves and a few gardening tools in a bag. I usually visited on a Monday or Tuesday morning after taking my son to school, and again on one of the weekend afternoons when I had childcare available and did not have to drag my reluctant child to the garden with me.

I began harvesting vegetables for our family's use almost immediately and quickly found that I overestimated the amount of produce we could consume each week. I had similar experiences in the Eastern community garden, although there I had to rely on my own efforts to produce harvestable crops as the communal plots were small and well-picked over. In the Eastern garden, my early imagining of frequent visits to harvest my carefully cultivated produce gave way to the reality that there were many calls on my time and attention, the supermarket was

closer, and that keeping on top of the weeding, planting, harvesting and preparation was difficult on my own.

I was liberated from these constraints in the South West garden, which was much larger and was tended by many gardeners, most of whom (the offenders) were not permitted to harvest what they grew. The garden produced such a variety of vegetables, and in such quantities that I tended to pick far more than we needed. The abundance and scale of the garden also meant that I was unconstrained by fears that I was depriving someone else of needed food. As spring and summer came, crops became even more abundant and matured so quickly that many went to seed before I could harvest them. I did not like to see crops being "wasted" in this way, but it was impossible to consume all the crops, and the other gardeners seemed unable to harvest and distribute them all to food banks.

My guilt and anxiety about food waste encouraged me to develop a series of complex practices to prevent the food I harvested being wasted and to ensure I realised the pleasure of eating the food. As with produce from the Eastern community garden, I washed or trimmed everything I picked to remove dirt and pests when I got home. I then chopped the trimmings into smaller pieces so that they would break down in our compost bin. Because I would pick a week's worth of vegetables at a time, I had to rearrange the contents of our refrigerator to make room for the vegetables. Sometimes I would steam vegetables and freeze them for some future lean period. When I harvested dozens of artichokes, I trimmed, cooked and preserved them in olive oil. Depending on what I had harvested, the washing, trimming and storing took more than an hour after each visit. Cooking and preserving could take hours more. It was exhausting and often boring. The thrill of self-reliance soon turned into another domestic pressure. Two jars of feijoa jam, which wasn't a particular success, were still in our pantry when the next year's feijoa harvest rolled around. I learned to leave the feijoas on the ground.

It took a shift in the way I thought about the vegetables in the garden to let go of the guilt and anxiety about leaving food to rot or go to seed in the garden. I learned to accept that unpicked vegetables in the garden were not necessarily waste or wasted opportunity. I chose instead to see them as future compost or as the natural expression of the plants, which produce fruit and flowers for their own reproduction and not because humans can eat them. Leaving the crops to go to seed and rot in the garden plots was a passive way of practising rational agriculture, or Justus von Liebig's principle of "giving back to the fields the conditions of their fertility" (Ergas & Clement, 2015, p. 9), to ensure their future productivity. The insects, rabbits and wild

chickens that feasted on the vegetables appreciated my leaving them there, and my garden visits because less fraught.

6.3 WHAT THE GARDEN LOOKED LIKE

At its peak, the garden comprised a series of 46 raised garden beds, four large patches of tilled earth, flower gardens and permanent frames for beans and tomatoes. There were forty feijoa trees, ten citrus trees and thirty other fruit trees including peaches and

40 - TURNING CIRCLE AND HERBS

apples planted around the site. All of the beds were communal beds – unlike Eastern garden, individual gardeners did not have plots of their own. This meant that gardeners had no freedom to choose what to plant or how to complete various garden tasks – they planted and did what garden organisers said they needed to.

When I first joined the garden in the winter of 2015, the centre of the turning circle featured flowers and edible plants such as artichokes, lettuces, rhubarb and walking onions. Gardeners had filled three large tractor tires lying on their sides with soil to form raised gardens that were bursting with coriander, parsley and mint. They had also planted flowers along the perimeter of the turning circle which were there for decoration and to attract bees from the hives at the nearby Beekeepers Club.

The raised garden beds ran in rows from a collection of sheds and shipping containers towards Tip Road. A pair of six-metre long bean frames in the south-west corner marked the edge of the cultivated garden, and rows of wire fences or frames to support tomato plants marked the northern edge of the cultivated garden.

The buildings on the site included a rickety shed with a padlocked door that held garden tools and barrels of seaweed-based fertiliser. It had a lean-to roof to one side that provided shelter for discarded plastic containers, lengths of pipe and offcuts of timber. The Green Hub's manager, Julia, described these items as "Corrections' junk", and it was unclear where they had come from or whether they had any purpose in the garden. Behind the shed was a

shipping container that Community Corrections[13] used to secure timber for the woodworking workshops it offered to offenders at the site. There was a deck with a roof between the back of the shed and the shipping container. A large whiteboard attached to the back of the tool shed under the roof was marked up with a diagram of the garden and a planting schedule; it gave the decked area the feeling of a formal meeting space.

The Community Corrections manager described plans to build glasshouses and shade houses to help with the development of a plant nursery on site. He explained that he was struggling with planning restrictions on building at the garden site, saying "we've got the materials there ready to go, but it's like jumping through hoops with the council". None of the buildings offered toilet facilities, and the site did not have a connection to the city's sewerage system, despite being adjacent to the wastewater treatment plant. This caused practical difficulties for volunteers and Community Corrections workgroups.
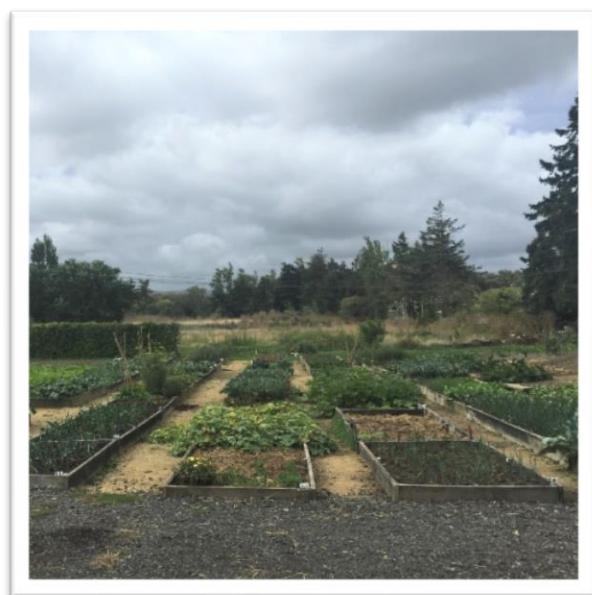
41 - RAISED BED GARDENS

Julia's husband, who is a plumber, had installed taps for hoses throughout the site, which meant that volunteers or offenders could water the garden. He had installed the plumbing at no cost to the garden and without seeking council approval, if any was required, saying "I can always take it out if they object." When relations between Corrections and The Green Hub broke down towards the end of my field research, Julia threatened to remove all the taps and pipes but, as far as I know, never did. Removing them would have made it almost impossible to cultivate crops in the warmer months when the

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[13] Community Corrections is the arm of the Department of Corrections that manages offenders who are on probation, which means that they are serving their sentences in the community rather than in prison, have been released from prison on parole, or have been released with special conditions such as restrictions on living and working arrangements. Community Corrections works with offenders "to motivate them to make changes in their lives" by, for example, attending programmes to address violence and substance abuse, obtaining a driving licence or other basic work and living skills. The types of skills taught include basic computer skills, cooking, parenting, budgeting, literacy and numeracy (Department of Corrections, 2019).

garden dried out. As much as it would have made life difficult for Community Corrections, Julia was unwilling to consign the garden to certain death.

Community Corrections staff also described having engaged friends and family to help establish the garden. One, a senior member of the Community Corrections team, described having called on a friend to loan him a tractor to turn the soil over and get the garden started. He explained that "his boys" (he was referring to offenders

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assigned to work in the community garden), had gone on to construct the compost bins and raised garden beds from timber they had sourced themselves.

6.4   THE GARDEN'S ORIGIN STORY

When I first arrived at the garden, I understood that it was a partnership between The Green Hub and Community Corrections because the city council's Community Development Officer had described it to me this way: "It's a partnership between The Green Hub and Corrections, and the Council offered the use of the land for that purpose. The primary purpose is to generate food for the community gardeners to utilise, but they also supply Just Zilch." The phrase "partnership" evoked a formal, contractual relationship, perhaps guided by a vision statement, Memorandum of Understanding or an agreed set of key performance indicators. It soon became apparent that there was no agreement, formal or informal, as to how the garden would be run and for what purpose, and that no consideration had been given as to how the predictable issues that arose would be addressed.

Despite their partnership and shared objective of distributing garden produce to Just Zilch, Corrections and The Green Hub did not agree on matters such as how the garden should be managed, who should have access, and how supplies should be procured. I discuss this in more detail below in section *6.12.1,Two gardens in one space*, but it is worth noting here that Corrections and The Green Hub never agreed on a name for the garden or branded it in any

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way. I have referred to the garden as the South West garden after its location, but Community Corrections referred to the garden as "The Corrections Garden", and The Green Hub referred to it as "The Green Hub Garden". A newspaper article about the garden, which reported on the donations of vegetables made to Just Zilch, described it as "The Palmerston North Community Garden, which is managed by Community Corrections" (K. Lawrence, 2015). The Green Hub volunteers sometimes referred to the garden as a community garden, and Julia often discussed her plans to open the garden to the wider community by linking it to the nearby cycle trails and walking tracks. I never heard anyone from Corrections refer to it as a community garden, although the manager did describe the work offenders did there and the food they donated as "giving back to the community".

Relations between the two organisations were deteriorating by the time I joined the project, but they must have been able to work together long enough to establish the garden which was extensive and productive.

6.5   THE GREEN HUB

The Green Hub's role in establishing the South West garden reflected the interests of its manager and chair, Julia, who had a forceful personality and determined the ever-changing purpose of the garden, at least from The Green Hub's perspective. The Green Hub had been involved in a variety of community activities since its establishment as a charitable trust in 2009. It began by recycling e-waste and other waste products in Palmerston North from premises in the city centre where it collected the waste, offered a fluorescent bulb crushing service, sold native plants, heirloom Italian vegetables, environmentally-friendly household goods and ran a café, a range of activities that reflected Julia's personal interests. It also offered training courses in horticulture and a national certificate in retail (Lacy, 2012).

Changes to national policy on e-waste recycling had led to the establishment of a central government fund in 2011 for the development of regional e-waste recycling depots. Palmerston North City Council's operations and service arm, City Networks, began to recycle e-

waste that year, the activity that had been the *raison d'etre* of The Green Hub. The council's entry into the e-waste sector almost led to the collapse of The Green Hub, causing anger and resentment amongst its trustees and staff. This would have implications for the community garden in later years. The Green Hub had withdrawn from the e-waste recycling field and refocussed its efforts on skills training and establishing the community garden at the South West site.

6.6 THE COMMUNITY IN THE GARDEN

The "community" that the South West community garden served was less well-defined than the Eastern community garden, which identified people living in the neighbourhood as its target group. The city council identified the gardeners and patrons of Just Zilch as the beneficial community of the South West garden – the vegetables were to be grown for "community gardeners to utilise" as well as for Just Zilch. Community Corrections saw the "community" in the community garden as being its own mandated community of offender-gardeners and did not seek to include anyone else. In fact, Corrections actively worked to exclude others on the basis that their internal community could not safely accommodate outsiders.

The Green Hub's idea of which communities should be targeted more closely aligned with the city council's vague definition, but it shifted over time. When I first began working in the South West garden, Julia made frequent references to inviting families in need to join the garden, who she felt would benefit from learning to grow food themselves. Joining the garden would improve their access to healthy, nutritious food and reduce their household food bills, which exactly echoed the hopes of the Eastern community garden's founders. Julia said she would find families by liaising with social services agencies in Highbury, Roslyn and Awapuni which are the city's most deprived wards. Highbury and Roslyn, which has a community garden of its own, are some distance from the garden, however, and there is no public transport link that would enable people without a car to visit. Awapuni is a sprawling suburb and the garden was at the far edge of it. There were no public transport links between the garden and the rest of

Awapuni either. None of the families who eventually came to harvest vegetables had been referred by social services.

Eventually, Julia stopped making reference to targeting people in need and set up a membership scheme. This entitled anyone who paid a weekly membership fee of $15 to visit the garden to harvest vegetables for their own use. Julia expected the scheme to generate enough money to pay for fertilisers, seedlings and other garden inputs. The membership fee was to be paid directly into The Green Hub's bank account. This payment arrangement prevented access to the scheme to anyone without banking facilities or confidence that a regular $15 payment could be made from the account without risking penalty charges.

The membership scheme enabled people to harvest vegetables without having to garden. Members didn't need to volunteer to work in the garden and weren't expected to learn or share any gardening skills either. This arrangement was the least communal or community-minded of all the gardens I volunteered in. It was also inconsistent with The Green Hub's funding objectives and with Julia's developing vision for the garden, even though she had set up the scheme. When I asked where she found subscribers for the scheme, she said that they came via word of mouth or were people who contacted her after seeing a newspaper story about the garden. I was never confident in the number of the regular subscribers that The Green Hub reported having. Julia sometimes suggested that the number was as high as forty and at other times as being "around a dozen", but I only saw the same four or five people harvesting produce in the garden over the time I volunteered.

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Julia explained on several occasions that she wanted the garden to become a "community hub" that drew as many people as possible to the site. The garden is within a kilometre of the public riverside pathway which the City Council has been developing into a significant recreational amenity and is close to the Mangaone stream pathway that meanders along the southern edge of the city. Julia proposed connecting the cycleway and the Mangaone Stream with a pathway through the community garden. She envisaged extending the garden into a fruit orchard on the adjacent vacant land. As was the case in the Eastern community gardens, Julia wanted the community

garden and proposed orchard to offer classes in various aspects of gardening and horticulture, even cooking, as well as delivering surplus produce to the free food store, food banks and other charitable food distributors. To realise her vision, Julia arranged a meeting with the Mayor, who she claimed was supportive and made presentations to various council planning committees. Despite her vision of the garden as a community hub and provider of fresh food to charity, when Julia set up the membership scheme, she stopped delivering surpluses to Just Zilch, as described below.

6.7   THE VOLUNTEERS

Julia's membership program brought people to the garden who only harvested the vegetables that others' grew – they were not required to garden themselves. The vegetables were grown by people brought to the garden by both Community Corrections and The Green Hub. Along with Julia, I was one of five people associated with The Green Hub, who regularly worked in the garden. John, a gardener who had previously worked at another garden growing food for a church-based food bank, was the only person paid for garden work. Julia paid him a wage for ten to fifteen hours of work each week from The Green Hub's funding. He seemed to spend more time at the garden than this, however. A third person, Mary, was a member of The Green Hub board. She was an experienced home gardener who was unemployed after leaving work to care for an elderly parent, who had recently died. She told me that the community garden gave her solace and that she found donating vegetables to local food banks satisfying. The final volunteer was Julia's husband. He would visit the garden in the evenings and at weekends to turn garden beds between crops with The Green Hub's rotary hoe. He seemed to take particular care with the potatoes, earthing up the rows of plants and digging hundreds at a time when they were ready to harvest.

The Green Hub's 2015 *Statement of Service Performance,* an annual performance report required of charities in New Zealand that receive public funding, stated that 8 volunteers "participated in the garden learning skills and interacting with the wider community" and indicated that twelve would be working in the garden the following year. The only other people I saw working in the garden, however, were associated with Community Corrections.

6.8   THE "VOLUNTEERS"

Community Corrections brought hundreds of offenders sentenced to community work to the garden over the time I spent volunteering there. They would bring around ten people each day from Wednesday to Saturday, arriving at 8.30 in the morning in a Corrections van. The offenders who came to the garden were some of the 30,000 offenders serving their sentences

in communities across New Zealand at any one time [14]. Community Corrections staff supervised and directed the offenders while they were at the garden, and the Corrections service manager explained that he hired staff who had a range of skills including "basic building skills and gardening because we do jobs such as riparian planting for the Department of Conservation and working with iwi". Corrections staff did not need to have gardening qualifications or specific experience but must be "multi-skilled or at least have an interest and be willing to extend their skills and extend on their knowledge", he said.

Offenders did much of the labouring in the garden such as weeding, digging over patches of ground to make new beds, building raised bed gardens and constructing vegetable frames. They also mowed verges, trimmed trees, turned compost and cleared the site of debris. After I had spent an hour and half weeding a single box garden with Mary one sunny afternoon, I realised how dependent on Community Corrections' work teams the garden was. Julia estimated that Corrections "volunteered" around 5000 hours of labour each year, an indication of the time required in building and maintaining such a large, productive garden. Julia's assertion that offenders volunteered to work in the garden was borne out after a fashion by the Community Corrections service manager. He explained that offenders could choose or be assigned to work activities such as the care and maintenance of churches, cemeteries and public buildings, graffiti removal, litter picking, and other projects sponsored by eligible agencies. He said that working in the garden was a popular option for offenders, who chose it if given a chance. Nevertheless, it is something of a stretch to characterise a preference for garden work over other activities as "volunteering".

The Department of Corrections describes community work sentences as a way for offenders to pay something back for the offence they have committed by doing unpaid work in the community, to take responsibility for their offending and as an opportunity to learn new skills and work habits (Department of Corrections, 2019). Offenders did not always value this opportunity, however, grumbling about the tedium of weeding or chopping piles of brassica

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[14] Most offenders sentenced through New Zealand's courts serve their sentences in the community rather than in prisons, which hold around 10000 offenders at any given time. Courts will have sentenced the offenders who worked in the garden to between 40 and 400 hours of community work, directing them to an approved service agency, a Community Corrections work centre or a combination of both. Offenders working in the South West garden were serving their sentences from the Palmerston North Community Corrections work centre. "Community work offenders do unpaid work in the community to pay something back for the offence they have committed. It also gives offenders an opportunity to take responsibility for their offending and learn new skills and work habits" (Department of Corrections, 2019).

stalks into small pieces for composting, for example. On one occasion, I observed an offender responding angrily to an instruction from a supervisor, throwing his tools on the ground and describing the work as "bloody slave labour". A lack of motivation amongst offenders was understandable, given the context in which they "volunteered" to work in the garden. Offenders were not permitted to take any of the garden produce away with them either, because that could be construed as benefitting from their offending.

6.9   THE QUALITY OF VEGETABLES

As was the case in the other gardens I worked in, garden organisers in the South West garden had faith in the power of healthy, vegetable-laden diets to improve people's health and well-being. Whereas all organisers worked to encourage the gardeners to adopt practices of preparing and eating

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vegetables as well as growing them, Julia also drew attention to the influence of gardening practices on the vegetables themselves. Julia believed there was unmet demand in the community for "healthy vegetables, nutrient-dense vegetables because the nutritional quality isn't there at the supermarket in those veges because of the Brix levels in the food." Brix is a measure of the percentage of sugars and minerals present as solids in the juice of a plant, which gardeners can check using a refractometer[15]. Julia equated Brix levels with the flavour and nutritional quality of the garden's vegetables, saying:

> *You know when you buy say, a cauliflower at the supermarket and they have no taste? I had a cauli and some leeks for tea the other night, and they were all kind of tasteless compared with what you grow in your own gardens. Everyone knows that the veges you grow in your own garden taste better, and they're healthier.*

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15 The extent to which agricultural practices influence Brix levels in fruits and vegetables is the subject of much scientific literature, which appears to concur that factors such as temperature, light levels, soil moisture, crop variety and maturity influence Brix levels (Kleinhenz & Bumgarner, 2012). The literature on the difference between organic and conventional agriculture, or between commercial and domestic agriculture, appears to be less conclusive. Nevertheless, several popular online gardening resources draw a causal link between organic gardening practices and higher Brix levels and link higher Brix levels with nutrient density in garden produce.

> *So there's a group of people out there who really want access to healthy vegetables but don't grow their own.*

The superior flavour was the reason that Julia and other gardeners most often gave for favouring home-grown, or community-garden-grown, vegetables. Gardeners in all three of the gardens, I considered shared this belief, but Julia was the only one to put it in the context of an objective measure such as Brix levels. As far as I know, she never checked the Brix levels in the vegetables produced at the South West garden with a refractometer but was nonetheless confident that her gardening methods ensured a high level of Brix and, consequently, nutrient density.

There would be much greater demand for organically grown or spray-free vegetables such as the ones she grew, Julia believed, if people were aware of market gardening practices, particularly the extensive use of pesticides:

> *I just think there's such a lack of knowledge about what's being applied to vegetables and what they're eating. I mean they plant the carrots then they spray the soil all around to kill the weeds, so there's no weeds because weeding around carrots is a nightmare. Onions and potatoes are the same. So when we eat them, bad news.*

Julia was the only person in any of the three gardens to criticise commercial growing practices explicitly and use them to rationalise the importance of the South West garden and community gardens generally. Julia described the experiences of some of The Green Hub's members to support her claim that there are significant, if poorly documented, risks from eating commercially grown produce. One member believed that her son's neurological condition worsened when he ate commercially grown root vegetables or vegetables that grew close to the ground. She attributed this to the use of pesticides and herbicides such as glyphosate in market gardens. Julia said the woman joined the garden because she could not afford or even find suitable organic produce. Another felt that switching from commercially grown to the spray-free, allegedly high-Brix garden vegetables ameliorated her children's respiratory conditions, and Julia described a third who was having chemotherapy for cancer, and who brought her kids to the garden to pick because she knew it was spray-free.

In turning attention to the way vegetables were cultivated and their resulting quality, Julia introduced a critique of commercial growing practices that was unique amongst the gardens I worked in. Individual gardeners expressed disquiet about food miles, pesticides, labour practices and other aspects of the food system but didn't link public acceptance of commercially grown vegetables to ignorance of commercial cultivation practices, or a decline

in nutrient value in the way that Julia did. The purpose of the garden, from Julia's perspective at least, evolved to become an alternative to the perceived depredations of commercial market gardens whose practices she saw as environmentally unsustainable, and whose product was, she believed, cultivated for shelf-appeal rather than flavour, texture or nutritional quality. The guiding principle for the garden thus became the right of everyone to enjoy fresh vegetables that had been grown in healthy soils and were free of pesticides, rather than charity or the alleviation of food insecurity; that is, the focus shifted to the qualities of the vegetables themselves, rather than the attributes of their consumers.

The Green Hub described the garden's vegetables as "spray-free" although gardeners sprayed the garden with a proprietary organic fertiliser called Oceans 100, which is a concoction of seaweed, whole fish waste and plant extracts. Its manufacturer claims that it "increases soil fertility by increasing the moisture-holding capacity, supplies trace metals and increases resistance to fungal diseases." The Green Hub's "spray-free" claim implied an understanding that it did not apply pesticides, fungicides or

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other agriculture preparations forbidden under organic standards, rather than that there were no spraying mechanisms used in the garden. Community Corrections, which was unable to purchase supplies itself due to its procurement rules, followed The Green Hub's organic approach by default.

6.10   VEGETABLE MATERIALITY: EDUCATING THE LOST GENERATION

The opportunity to provide education and training, both formal and informal, to their respective communities drew both the Department of Corrections and The Green Hub to the garden project initially. Community Corrections staff saw the garden as a place to realise their operational objectives such as delivering specific training programs, as well as delivering softer rehabilitation objectives which they described as giving offenders a sense of achievement and self-respect. The Community Corrections manager said that the appeal of starting a community garden was that it offered his service a longer-term project with suitable community work for offenders to do, as well as a site to deliver the training and support

services that form the core of Corrections' rehabilitation programs. Before starting the garden, Corrections were often short of suitable projects to which they could assign offenders.

One Corrections staff member, who arrived at the garden one evening when I was there alone, expressed his pride in the garden, noting the opportunity it offered offenders to learn new skills. Corrections delivered a range of training opportunities to offenders at the site, including four-wheel driving, pruning, fencing and woodworking. Community Corrections also offer informal training in what the manager referred to as "life skills" such as using and maintaining garden tools and equipment. The manager considered these skills to be among those that are being lost in the community, with younger offenders having fewer of these competencies than older offenders:

> *The younger chaps that come through are not as skilled as the older chaps. I mean with gardening, we're looking after the tools, the weed eaters, the mowers and the young fullas that come through, they don't have those skills. I mean people my age [I estimate in his late-40s] and a bit younger, but definitely older - we'd think nothing of using a weed eater, lawn-mower and that. If there's something wrong with it, we'll fix it, whereas these younger ones coming through don't have those skills.*

The informal training offered in the garden complements a formal program of Work and Living Skills offered to offenders which includes literacy, numeracy, budgeting, obtaining a driving license and simple cooking skills. Community Corrections' vision for the garden was therefore closely aligned with its operational objectives and focussed on the internal or mandated community of staff and offenders.

The Green Hub's approach to education was less well defined. The funding that The Green Hub used to establish the garden was a payment from the city council to provide environmental services, specifically information and advice on environment and sustainability issues. Julia had a clear vision for how the gardens could be replicated across the city and operate to teach people about gardening and healthy diets, and firm ideas about why such education was necessary:

> *I think there's a whole generation that has lost the skills of gardening. But really if you're going to do this properly, if the council is going to do this properly they need to set up community gardens in five sectors of the city. They need to be big produce gardens that have education, a volunteering component and a produce component and let's fund these gardens with coordinators and create employment, create networks.*

The Green Hub secured some of its funding on the basis that it would deliver environmental education, and the city council's community development officer noted that education and

training were also integral to the council's support for the Department of Corrections' involvement in the garden:

> *Because it's working with Corrections, one of the drivers of it is actually reintegration of people back into the community, so there's a social service aspect to it and in the sense of giving back to the community. There's some educational accreditation they could get too, looking forward.*

The aspirations of both The Green Hub and the Department of Corrections to provide some form of structured formal training in vegetable growing were similar but foundered on the dysfunctional relationship between the two organisations and capacity limits, notably a shortage of dedicated staff and insecure funding. Community Corrections did offer some short training courses in specific skills to offenders, and The Green Hub did enter the arrangement to offer training towards a certificate in horticulture with Land-Based Training, though this never ran in the garden. Neither organisation extended training and skills to the wider community who were either unlikely to fall within the purview of Community Corrections or were unwilling or unable to commit to a 13-week training course with strict enrolment criteria.

The Green Hub hoped to open the garden to the public for workshops in pruning, compost making, natural pest control and other aspects of gardening but struggled to find volunteers with the skills and time to deliver the workshops, which was a problem shared with other community gardens. The Green Hub's paid gardener, John, held an advanced certificate in horticulture and was skilled in all aspects of gardening. He was unable to run workshops for personal reasons, however. The only workshop run at the community garden that I'm aware of had been organised at short notice for the benefit of the volunteers and had not been advertised to the wider community or garden members. It was a demonstration of making compost heaps by the American woman who gardened an extensive plot at the Eastern community garden. The Green Hub's hope of employing a tutor and someone to build relationships with other community groups and gardening enterprises never came to fruition.

Both The Green Hub gardeners and the Community Corrections manager mentioned that many of the people who visited the garden didn't recognise vegetables, didn't know what they looked like when they were growing, or how to prepare them. Julia said, "It's amazing because even the families that come down to pick don't know whether a plant is a broccoli or kale." She ascribed this to gardening and cooking skills not being passed down through generations as fewer households maintain home gardens, saying:

> *There's been a twenty to thirty-year gap between when people had gardens, and then the knowledge has been lost. There is a whole group of people who have*

somehow missed learning gardening skills, and now those people have kids, so the loss of generational knowledge gets compounded. I mean we've just lost those skills.

The Community Corrections manager believed that not only did offenders not recognise vegetables, but they also did not eat them, either. He explained that many offenders came from chaotic backgrounds characterised by turbulent relationships and insecure housing. This meant that offenders often lacked basic gardening and cooking skills, and sometimes had limited access to a kitchen and cooking equipment. When it came to handling fresh vegetables, he said:

Half of them don't know what they are. Seeing cucumbers and tomatoes and the beans and especially the peas; that was a treat for a lot of them. They'd never seen them growing before. We had sweetcorn there; it didn't go too well but, oh well, we tried it. Seeing broccoli and lettuces and different types of lettuces, rocket, beetroot...seeing them go into the ground, planting them is a real eye-opener for some of them.

To overcome this lack of knowledge, The Green Hub or Community Corrections (both claimed credit for the initiative) produced a series of information sheets about the vegetables growing in the garden and printed them on A4 sheets of paper. They laminated these and attached them to wire stakes in each of the beds. The sheets included the name of the vegetable, an indication of how to prepare it or what sort of dishes to use it in, and how it should be harvested. John also developed a system for identifying which crops were ready to harvest after several incidents in which families or offenders harvested immature vegetables, mistaking baby leeks for spring onions, digging up potatoes before they were ready and pulling up rows of infant carrots. The system involved a series of stakes painted either red or green and marked "don't pick" or "pick now" respectively. John moved the stakes around the garden as crops reached maturity. This seemed to be an effective way to communicate with the more inexperienced gardeners and the vegetable infanticide decreased.

6.11   PLANTS AND NEEDS

As in the Eastern Community Garden, the South West gardeners planted what they thought the recipients of any surplus were likely to cook and eat, and whatever seedlings a local nursery and others donated to them. The nursery donated the surplus of its most popular crops so the garden would receive trays with hundreds of cauliflower or cabbage seedlings at a time. The Green Hub allocated some of its funds to purchasing additional seedlings to increase the variety of crops in the garden for the benefit of garden members and volunteers, extending the range to include different brassicas, several varieties of beans and tomatoes,

lettuces, potatoes, pumpkins, alliums, various varieties of peppers, kale, chard, silverbeet and spinach, strawberries and herbs. As relations between The Green Hub and Community Corrections grew increasingly tense over the period of this research, Julia brought a tray of seedlings to the garden with the intention of vexing Corrections' supervisors. She planted the winged peas and bitter melons in one of the raised beds with a chuckle one afternoon, hooting that, "Corrections won't have a clue what they are!"

The sheer size of the garden and the number of seedlings planted made it difficult to manage the rate at which crops matured. John developed a planting schedule for the garden that provided for crops to be planted in batches over several weeks. This would stagger the date at which they matured and ensure a steady supply for The Green Hub's volunteers and members and for Just Zilch.

John confidently scheduled the planting, crop rotations and feeding cycles. He mapped out the various beds and box gardens around the site onto the whiteboard attached to the back of the shed. He marked all the beds with numbered wooden stakes and labelled his plan with the corresponding number. The diagram on the whiteboard indicated what gardeners should plant in each location and included some instructions on weeding, soil preparation and watering. The whiteboard seemed to be the only formal or structured means by which The Green Hub and the Community Corrections staff communicated with each other about the operation of the garden. It indicated how best to direct the human resources of garden volunteers and offenders towards the needs of the garden and its plants.

While John marked out a planting and maintenance schedule on the whiteboard each week, the Community Corrections team did not always follow them. I understood from John that he consulted with Corrections' supervisors in developing the schedules but, given the poor state of communications between the two organisations, I am not sure that the Corrections team recognised the consultation as such. In any case, the composition of Corrections' work teams constantly changed as offenders completed their sentences and the Community Corrections manager rotated supervisors to other duties, so any information wasn't necessarily passed on.

Regardless of whether the gardeners followed the schedule, the gardens did not produce food as planned. Weather patterns and pests disrupted growing cycles and meant crops sometimes matured all at once or occasionally failed. The constantly changing cast of Corrections' gardeners – both staff and offenders – meant that none developed a relationship with the garden that would enable them to observe and respond creatively to the constant and subtle changes that occurred. Corrections staff made decisions about garden activities that suited

their employment objectives in supervising offenders rather than the needs of the garden, and the offenders, lacking agency and gardening experience, complied with instructions. They removed whatever plants they were told to, as well as other plants through carelessness or error, and planted whatever seedlings had been donated.

The South West garden experienced the same absence issues as the Plant to Plate garden, described below in Chapter 7 - *Plant to Plate Aotearoa*, which was that the Community Corrections program closed for four weeks over the Christmas holiday period during the peak growing season. The Green Hub also closed for more than a month. Julia encouraged volunteers to visit the garden and keep it watered, but she herself went to her holiday home on the coast before Christmas and did not return until late January each year. Just Zilch also closed at this time. The vegetables, weeds and white butterflies did not take a break over the summer holiday period, however. Summer is the ideal growing season for many crops, especially those that favour long sunny days, cool nights and gentle breezes, such as tomatoes. Both plants and weeds grew, with a shortage of water the only limitation. As plants bloomed and fruited, the wild roosters and rabbits roamed the garden, eating their fill. A cloud of white butterflies hovered over the garden and caterpillars ate holes in the leaves of the brassicas. When the human gardeners returned in late January, they had to clear the beds of spent vegetable crops and plant again.

In anticipation of their break, Corrections staff and offenders or The Green Hub volunteers picked any crops that were ready to harvest in the weeks leading up to the Christmas period, leaving little for The Green Hub's members to harvest. The volume of vegetables donated at this time overwhelmed Just Zilch's ability to distribute them, and one year the Community Corrections team delivered whatever Just Zilch could not take to the Salvation Army's soup kitchen. A Salvation Army volunteer later told me that it was struggling to process and distribute the abundant vegetables available from its own garden when Corrections delivered more and that much of the delivery went to waste.   The delivery reportedly angered the Salvation Army's gardener who carefully built up his garden during the year to provide enough for the busy Christmas period.

There is little research on the amount of food produced in community gardens (Miller, 2013) so it is impossible to measure how much was "wasted" (in the sense that it could have been eaten by people, rather than rabbits) through neglect and the closure of distribution networks such as Just Zilch over the Christmas holiday period. Nevertheless, it was curious to observe the abrupt suspension of concern for food security and the careful management of food resources in needy households, especially at a time when children were out of school and thus

not able to access school meals either. As discussed in the literature review, community gardens have nostalgic appeal as an effective response to food shortages in times of employment precarity and insecure incomes. The wholesale closure of the gardens and distributors of surpluses such as Just Zilch for the traditional holiday break revealed that they could not be depended upon to plug holes in the welfare safety net, however. People who had paid their subscriptions to The Green Hub's membership scheme could climb over the low wooden fence and harvest vegetables, as could I and the other volunteers. We did not have access to the shed with its hoses and garden tools, however, which meant that harvesting was a passive way of interacting with the garden. As the garden dried out in the summer winds, its utility as a source of food, a place of active recreation and a site of quiet enjoyment of nature declined.

6.12   WHO RUNS THE GARDEN: WORKING TOGETHER IN PARTNERSHIP?

I knew that there had been some tensions in the garden when I started volunteering there. I had spoken with the first garden co-ordinator that The Green Hub had employed before John, who described the reluctance of Corrections' staff to engage in discussions about planting schedules or discuss work needed, and their refusal to let him direct or coach offenders in gardening practices. That person's employment with the garden was short-lived, and by the time I began visiting the garden as a volunteer, The Green Hub had engaged John as the garden coordinator.

The Green Hub staff and volunteers and the Corrections staff and "volunteers" did not work well together in the garden. The Green Hub volunteers reported finding Corrections staff and offenders to be aggressive and angry. Mary, one of the volunteers and Green Hub board member, described feeling unwelcome when offenders were there, and characterised the Corrections supervisors as suspicious and even intimidating, questioning her right to be in the garden at all and challenging any attempt to harvest vegetables for personal use. This was consistent with my own experience when I visited the garden at Julia's request to harvest vegetables for a community event. Community Corrections offenders and a supervisor were there. Two of the offenders were cutting grass with a weed eater, and others seemed to be clearing waste from around the site. One was asleep on a bench in the meeting space. The supervisor came up to me to ask if my car was locked, informing me that anything visible was likely to be stolen because his charges "weren't there for singing too loud in the choir". He was tall and broad with a shaven head and tattooed arms. He wore wraparound dark glasses that he did not remove and stood close enough to have to look down at me. When I explained that I had come to harvest vegetables for an event, he said that no one had informed him about it.

He said it didn't look good if people just came and took vegetables because the offenders thought they were growing them for Just Zilch. He seemed unimpressed by my connection to The Green Hub, insisting that it was not their right to say who could take vegetables. I took what I needed anyway, enough to fill a small box, and drove away.

Julia and John seemed unbothered by Corrections' attitudes to The Green Hub and persisted in trying to coordinate planting schedules and other tasks with the supervisors. Mary and I generally restricted our visits to the garden to times when Corrections was not there, which was after 4pm, or any time on Monday, Tuesday or at the weekends. Mary said she felt resentful and dispossessed of the garden by Corrections' surly behaviour. When the relationship between Corrections and The Green Hub broke down some months later, Mary was the most insistent that The Green Hub should take steps to reclaim all or part of the garden.

6.12.1   Two gardens in one space

The question of who was in charge of the garden was a contentious one. Julia considered that it was The Green Hub's role to manage or coordinate the garden, using offenders' labour to bring The Green Hub's plan to fruition:

> *The coordinator's role is to manage the compost, the pests, the rotation, the whole thing; then you can use Corrections as labour. That's what's wrong with that garden; it's all the wrong way around – Corrections are the labourers, not the planners.*

For its part, Community Corrections in no way acknowledged Green Hub's assumed management role and supervisors rarely consulted Julia or John before assigning jobs to offenders. They seem to have followed the planting schedule that John sketched out on the whiteboard but did not take direction on doing other garden tasks. Corrections did not share or discuss their own training timetable or curriculum with The Green Hub even when both parties were in the garden at the same time, and gave no heed to The Green Hub's annoyance. The two parties seemed to make little effort to coordinate their activities or communicate their plans to each other either in the garden or outside of the garden. This led to misunderstandings and resentment. In one instance, Corrections staff ran a fencing workshop for offenders on the site. The day after the fencing workshop, Julia and John complained to me that the Corrections supervisor had had offenders building a fence when there was garden work to do. They believed offenders were building the fence at the behest of the city council and considered it evidence that Community Corrections staff were clueless about gardening

and the seasonal needs of a garden; that they were not committed to the garden; and that they disrespected The Green Hub's management of the garden.

Another example of their disregard for each other was reflected in their different approaches to harvesting vegetables. When Julia set up The Green Hub's membership scheme, she stopped donating vegetables to Just Zilch on the grounds that the recipients did not value the vegetables because they did not have to pay anything towards them, not did they volunteer in the garden. Community Corrections continued to donate vegetables to Just Zilch and to publicise their donations in the local press. This was symptomatic of the lack of coordination between the two parties involved in the garden and the different paths they saw for the garden. While the garden was ostensibly established as a joint project, my experience of working in it led me to understand that the garden was two distinct projects operating in the same space.

6.12.2   The lease arrangements

As well as contending with issues of management and control in the garden, the parties also had to deal with the thorny issue of legal responsibility. The land for the garden was owned by the city council, which offered it to Community Corrections and The Green Hub after they made a joint presentation to Councillors. When the lease was drawn up, the council officers issued it in the name of the Department of Corrections only. The Green Hub, perhaps confident of the two organisations' shared objectives, did not challenge this arrangement. This proved to be a tactical mistake on Julia's part because the council officers' action crystallised relationships, past and present, between The Green Hub and the city council which had been poor for many years.

Julia and The Green Hub board members related a history of strained interactions between various council agencies and individuals over past projects and funding, including the city council's decision to take over e-waste recycling, described in section *6.4*. They suggested that decisions over the lease arrangements for the garden had been made with regard to past relations between the actors rather than the merits or needs of the project in hand. When asked why The Green Hub had agreed to the collaboration with Community Corrections, Julia explained that Corrections had also approached the city council about establishing a community garden on council land. A council officer suggested that the two interested parties share the land and seek the endorsement of elected councillors. In hindsight, Julia attributed

nefarious motives to the council officer's suggestion, perceiving that the real intent was to prevent The Green Hub gaining control of the land:

> *The guy who was in charge of the land is the head of City Enterprises. He doesn't like The Green Hub because we used to do the recycling. So he suggested Corrections drive the project because they were looking for a garden as well. And we weren't a stakeholder even though it was a joint project. The council only put Corrections on the lease, so they sabotaged the project from the outset.*

Julia believed that the managers of City Networks and City Enterprises, which manages the city's waste, intervened in the council's decision-making process to exclude The Green Hub from the lease. She described what she believed happened on several occasions:

> *What I think has happened with the garden is that the council has had the word from City Enterprises that they should not sign the lease with us and that's been the whole problem. The council let the land to Corrections, so it became a Corrections project, and Corrections called the shots. The whole project was hijacked by Corrections.*

The Green Hub complained that in addition to the formal recognition of their role that having their names on the lease would have afforded, the omission made it difficult for them to raise funds for the project through community funding schemes.

Community Corrections also found the lease arrangement unsatisfactory. While it gave them ownership of the project, it also placed the burden of responsibility for health and welfare in the garden on them. Risk and accountability arising from the lease arrangements were cited by the Community Corrections service manager as the reason for the breakdown of the working relationship between the two parties in the garden:

> *If anything happened while other people are down there on the land that we lease from the council, we'd be held accountable. And they [The Green Hub] weren't happy with that but, when it comes down to it, we're responsible, and that's the way it is.*

The lease arrangements exacerbated the tense relationship between the two parties in the garden and gave the Community Corrections service manager the means to exclude The Green Hub from the garden entirely as the relationship broke down.

6.12.3   Funding

Apart from the lease, lack of resources and competing visions for the garden, another factor that shaped relations between The Green Hub and Community Corrections in the garden was money or funding. The Department of Corrections receives funding through Vote Corrections,

which allocates a little over 15 per cent of its budgets to community-based sentences and the monitoring of people on bail[16]. The Community Services manager described running his service within a strict budget and a financial reporting regime that limited his flexibility in purchasing garden materials. He explained that the Department of Corrections had a list of approved suppliers of goods and services. Any purchases are made through a purchase order system whereby the Department requests a *pro-forma* invoice from the supplier for the required goods and the expenditure had to be approved before the service could order the goods. The Community Corrections service didn't use cash as a matter of practice, and the manager commented that he didn't want his staff to be handling cash around offenders anyway as it put them at risk.

The Green Hub, by contrast, was a community enterprise and obtained funds from the city council and various community trusts, the Lotteries Commission and the Community Organisation Grant Scheme (COGS) [17] in regular funding rounds. It sought to augment its funding by selling vegetables. Julia noted that the conditions of one source of its funding required any funded projects to generate an income, which was inconsistent with the Department of Corrections' operational constraints:

> *Lotteries Commission fund community outcomes and learning. They don't like people getting stuff for free, though. If I set up a garden and gave everything away for free, that's not going to get funding because it has to be sustainable. There has to be an income of some sort, and that's why the families at The Green Hub garden were paying $15, but that didn't fit with the Corrections ethos; Corrections didn't like that.*

Before setting up the membership scheme, The Green Hub had sold vegetables by laying out freshly picked produce on a table in the foyer of a local community arts organization with an honesty box so that people could choose vegetables and pay as much as they felt was

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16 The Department of Corrections generates a supplementary revenue stream from offender employment in areas such as farming, forestry, distribution and industry activities, but the work offenders do in the community garden doesn't contribute to this, and the Palmerston North Community Corrections service has no means of selling the vegetables it grows.

17 "The Community Organisation Grants Scheme or COGS provides grants to non-profit organisations delivering community-based social services that contribute to achieving locally-determined outcomes," according The Department of Internal Affairs which administers it. Applicants must demonstrate that any funding received will Organisations requesting COGS grants need to show how their community-based services or projects will contribute to encouraging participation in communities; promoting community leadership; developing community capability; promoting social, economic and cultural equity; or reducing the downstream social and economic costs to communities and government.

appropriate. The honesty-box system produced little in the way of revenue, however, so The Green Hub set up the membership system to generate a more regular income stream.

The issue of whether the subscription or membership fee could be construed as "selling" the vegetables was a matter of contention between The Green Hub, Community Corrections and other organisations such as the Salvation Army. Julia reported that the Salvation Army, which ran an extensive garden just outside the city, used to give hundreds of seedlings to the South West garden but stopped giving them once the garden opened to paying members because it was not consistent with the Army's ethos of charity. The issue seemed to be that the Salvation Army gave the seedlings to The Green Hub with the expectation that the vegetables grown from them will be donated to Just Zilch, food banks or other community groups, and not sold. The Green Hub's view, however, was that the $15 per week charge was a membership fee that entitled members to pick vegetables from the garden; it was not a charge for the vegetables *per se,* and the vegetables were not, therefore, being sold. Furthermore, Julia argued that the level at which the membership fee was set still meant that vegetables were being given away below the cost of production and the subscription arrangements could not be considered a commercial proposition.

The members of the garden I spoke to did see the subscription as payment for vegetables, however, or at least for the right to harvest vegetables. Some said they had decided to stop their payments in the winter because the range of vegetables available to harvest was limited to brassicas. They said they were spending their grocery budget elsewhere and either didn't want or couldn't afford to keep making payments to the garden. Their view of the garden subscription as part of the household food budget rather than a subscription for garden services – recreational or environmental as well as for garden produce – revealed a weakness in the way that The Green Hub communicated the purpose of the membership system. The Green Hub's gardener, John, pointed out that expenses in the garden increased at the very time that the range of vegetables diminished, in the late winter and early spring. He explained that to have an abundance of vegetables in the months from spring to early winter, the land needed to be prepared and fertilised over the winter, and seeds purchased and sown in early spring.

John felt that members' perception that they were paying for vegetables rather than to support the garden as an enterprise revealed how little people understood about the process of gardening; the amount of planning, preparation and growing time required to produce food. He felt the membership program had developed in an *ad hoc* fashion and that Julia promoted

the opportunity to harvest vegetables as a benefit to members, rather than promoting the needs and benefits of the garden as an enterprise.

The Community Corrections manager, meanwhile, explained that he was uncomfortable with people paying a subscription or membership for the right to pick vegetables because the subscription model implied that garden members had a right of access to the garden. He reiterated that, as the leaseholder, Community Corrections was accountable for the safety of visitors, and this wasn't consistent with the unsupervised, out-of-hours access that members expected. The manager acknowledged that the subscription arrangement and The Green Hub's funding enabled The Green Hub to purchase fertiliser, seedlings, fruit trees and garden tools. When the Green Hub had left the garden, he claimed that once he had explained to suppliers that Community Corrections didn't receive any funding for the garden, they donated the materials anyway: "We're getting them for free now, and once we said that we weren't taking donations people started offering more and bringing in plants even."

Regardless of the manager's claims, running the garden without a source of funding seems to have affected the extent and variety of planting in the garden. In the years following the end of the arrangement with The Green Hub, the area of land cultivated by offenders reduced by more than half and the flower beds at the entrance were returned to grass. The manager had expressed an interest in developing a nursery at the garden and teaching offenders to propagate vegetable seedlings and possibly native plants, but this hadn't progressed.

Julia has been scathing of Community Corrections' efforts to keep the garden going without financial support, arguing that community gardens:

> *can't be done without money as Corrections have found out. It's all going to weeds. They go down to Awapuni nurseries looking for donations, but they only get scraps really. I don't think Just Zilch has got any veges from them so why are they doing it? They just want to sign off their hours. They just don't care – the lease should be in our name and Corrections should be working with us. I mean they can't get funding! They should come in as the community gang, but they've hijacked the whole project – it's shocking. If the council is serious about setting up community gardens, then they must come with funding, including funding for coordinators' wages. Also, you have to have the equipment. The Green Hub purchased a rotary hoe, and you just can't manage a garden without a rotary hoe.*

Community Corrections' struggle to run the garden without funding reinforced Julia's belief that the city council was not truly committed to supporting community gardens in the city. She argued that if they had a genuine interest in the gardens, it would be reflected in the city's strategic documents, such as the Active Recreation Strategy, Safe City Strategy or the

Biodiversity Strategy; and in the 10 Year Plan which guides budget decisions. She noted that

for money to be made available for a garden co-ordinator's wages and capital equipment,

> *it has to be in the Plan. The money has to be in the plan for the funding to be*
> *allocated. So for the Council to decide they want community gardens, and that's*
> *one of the things they claim, well where's the funding? Is it in the plan? There is a*
> *three-year contract for funding that you can apply for that is a contract for service*
> *funding but that three years has just been let so where do we get the funding*
> *from? If you're going to do community gardens and the council is serious about*
> *community gardens, then they need to look at the management, the strategy, the*
> *equipment, the funding.*

Like many community groups, The Green Hub drew its funding from a range of sources which

fund different objectives. These did not always align directly with The Green Hub's activities,

purpose or direction, although these often had aspects that suit the funding criteria. Julia

noted that there was no funding source available to The Green Hub that prioritised healthy

eating, so she presented other aspects of the garden project to funders:

> *People aren't into the health issue. People don't understand the health issue.*
> *We're actually quite blind to the health issue, aren't we? So we frame it as*
> *volunteering, community engagement and learning skills. The Corrections project*
> *was great because there probably would have been at least 5000 hours of*
> *volunteering[18], easy, with Corrections plus our own volunteers down at that*
> *garden.*

The Green Hub and other community garden organisations I spoke to complained about the

time involved in securing funding. Organisations prepared unique grant proposals for each

funding source so that they presented their project in a way that best matched the funding

objectives, even if the funding on offer was quite small. Julia noted that:

> *COGS [the Community Organisation Grant Scheme] is more for volunteers having*
> *things to do in the community; it's more about getting the community to help*
> *themselves through involvement and volunteering. If you went on to the COGS*
> *site they have different objectives like people can move around the city, people*
> *have things to do...every year they'll set priority outcomes and so on for their*
> *funding, so you have to address those. But really it's only $3 - 5k, so it's not much*
> *that you get.*

Community garden organisations tended to cobble together funding from several sources to

meet their operational costs, and they couldn't always match the funding to the activity

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[18] The number of hours identified as volunteer hours includes the time served by offenders in the garden
because, Julia says, "it's still volunteering".

identified in the grant application. One community organiser who serves on the board of a community garden noted that:

> *It all gets a bit cloudy really - there's city council funding, there's ECCT [Eastern and Central Community Trust[19]] funding, so that pays for some of the advocacy work. We've got some funding from the Lotteries Commission - we got funding one year, and then we got some in a three-year round. Lotteries fund education – because we do workshops and training – and sustainability, community development too.*

Crucially, there was no funding available that was substantial enough to create jobs. The Green Hub did allocate some of its funding to paying John a wage for some of his work; this was contingent on the ongoing success of annual funding bids, however. The poor personal relationships between Corrections staff and offenders on the one hand and The Green Hub staff and volunteers on the other represented the garden's greatest challenge, however.

47 - RESTRICTED ACCESS

6.13   EXCLUDING OTHERS

When I interviewed him, the Corrections service manager described work he was doing on the development of a Health and Safety Plan for all those who visited the garden. The plan would have required anyone partaking in garden activities to go through an induction process and remain under the supervision of Corrections staff while in the garden. The proposed requirements presented a significant barrier to anyone visiting or working in the garden on a voluntary basis because Corrections' staff only visited the garden three or four days each week between 8.30 am and 4 pm and didn't visit the garden at all over the peak growing month in the summer. Until Corrections insisted on volunteers being supervised by its staff, which effectively brought the partnership to an end, the groups of garden users had been choosing to divide the garden

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[19] Eastern & Central Community Trust's provides grants to community groups, sports clubs, arts organisations and similar bodies with the aim of building "stronger, more sustainable communities." It helps with operating costs, events, capacity and capability building that are in line with its strategic objectives (https://www.ecct.org.nz).

across time. The Green Hub volunteers could expect the garden to be free of Corrections staff and offenders from Sunday until Tuesday and after 4pm on other days, and they took advantage of this to enjoy the garden without Corrections there.

Corrections used the power of Health and Safety regulations to assert control over the garden. They used the plan to make it impossible for volunteers to maintain their privacy and their time-separated access to the site. Corrections followed the regulatory exclusion of The Green Hub from the garden with a physical exclusion in the form of a new gate. When I started visiting the garden, vehicular access was via a wooden farm-style gate that was padlocked when neither The Green Hub nor Corrections staff was there. When the gate was locked visitors could climb over the wooden fence or the gate or clamber up a short clay bank. The padlock was lost and replaced on a few occasions, but eventually, the entire gate was stolen, with its chain and padlock attached. The garden was gateless for some weeks before Corrections built a new two-metre-high gate with equally high fencing on either side. The new fence had a sign attached to it that forbade people to enter without permission from Community Corrections and blocked the pedestrian access that The Green Hub's garden volunteers and subscribers used. The installation of the new gate and fence coincided with the introduction of the Health and Safety plan and marked the final exclusion of The Green Hub and its clients from the garden.

48 - THE NEW GATE

The physical exclusion of The Green Hub suggests a tumultuous end to the relationship, but it seems to have ended more quietly. Indeed, there doesn't seem to have been a particular point at which the joint garden project was declared to be over. Julia told me she had never met with Corrections in any formal way to talk about tensions and concerns in the garden and that she didn't intend to, despite the provocation of the gate. I was surprised by this, given her impassioned defence of the garden and attempts to enrol City Councillors and the mayor in its support. Julia and The Green Hub volunteers only seem to have acknowledged that the partnership had ended after Community Corrections publicly laid claim to the garden in a series of newspaper articles in the *Manawatū Standard*, which is the region's daily broadsheet

newspaper, and two weekly community newspapers that are delivered to households each week. The first of the articles featured photos of the manager of Just Zilch sitting in the garden with boxes of freshly picked vegetables. The second featured the Community Corrections manager with bags of vegetables that he was donating to Just Zilch. Both articles described the garden as being the Community Corrections vegetable garden, which was maintained by community work offenders as part of their sentence. Neither article mentioned The Green Hub. These articles incensed Julia and prompted her to call a meeting of The Green Hub board to make a final decision about participation in the garden.

The Green Hub board met in February 2018, two months after the new gate was installed and the articles had been published in the press, to discuss strategies for reclaiming the garden. Julia said that she would organise a meeting "with the Council's property people, Corrections and us around the table". She also said she believed that Community Corrections would walk away from the garden in a few months' time as they struggled with funding and gardening know-how, perhaps when the lease came up for renewal later that year, and that The Green Hub could bide its time. In the end, the Board decided to write to the Mayor and advise him that the organisation would withdraw from the garden, even though they had been practically excluded already.

While the letter to the Mayor marked the formal end to The Green Hub's efforts to make the joint project with Corrections work, Julia continued to raise the subject whenever I saw her outside of the garden and told me that she had enrolled City Councillors to advance her case for regaining access to the garden. Julia had suggested to them that the South West garden could be divided into two parts, with Corrections maintaining part of the existing garden and a separate entrance created from Tip Road for The Green Hub section of the garden, which she would connect to the riverside pathways and make into a community amenity, as long planned. "Corrections can stick it up their jumper", she said.

It seems that both parties entered the project with aspirations to make it a successful and sustainable venture over the long term, despite the inclusion of the other party. When practical and philosophical differences began to emerge in how to manage the garden, which could have been foreseen given the very different legal forms and managerial styles of the two parties, the varying access to funding, their different goals, assumptions and constraints, the

fact that only one of the parties held the lease made it simple for that party to abandon the collaboration rather than mediate the differences.

6.14   CONCLUSION

The South West garden was an example of a situation where hierarchical and institutional power confounded the smooth functioning of normalising power, and where competing claims of authority or managerial belonging prevented the realisation of shared goals. It also highlighted the way in which actors outside the garden influenced its operation. Past relationships and present power relations shaped the trajectory of the garden project, and garden organisers seemed unable to overcome their determining force. The scheduling issues that arose as a result of summer shutdowns, offender sentencing, the deployment of Corrections staff and The Green Hub's volunteers posed a series of challenges for the operation of the garden, as did other issues that affected the smooth operation and development of the garden that, at first glance, had nothing to do with food cultivation, consumption or sharing. These issues were the lease arrangements and the funding streams for the garden.

The South West garden was the largest and most productive of the gardens I joined as a volunteer. When I first began working in the garden it was easy to recognise it as a community garden because it had a team of volunteers who cultivated it and welcomed new members; The Green Hub secured funding for it as a community garden; and garden produce was distributed to charitable organisations, which were all characteristics shared with the other gardens I joined. It ceased being a community garden when the two groups that shared the space were unable to reconcile their competing visions for the garden or accommodate each other's aspirations, and the garden was closed to the public.

Despite the rationale offered by Community Corrections for closing the garden to outsiders, I initially found it difficult to understand why the two organisations couldn't overcome their differences and make arrangements that protected the interests of both. Like other community gardens considered for the research, both organisations saw their work as capturing and transmitting traditional skills and knowledge that they believed to be in danger of being lost. They perceived the volunteers and "volunteers" as needing guidance and support to understand and appreciate the value of this knowledge. They also imbued garden produce with attributes that distinguished it from produce available commercially, and which could improve the lives of recipients by offering visceral pleasure and nutritional value. In the end,

the personal, historical and regulatory baggage that key players in each group brought to the garden meant that all but a very select community were excluded.

The lack of council support for the garden – or the active intervention by council officers to thwart The Green Hub, as Julia alleged – was one of the factors that led to the garden's demise as a community space. The council operated on the assumption that the two groups would work together to achieve the outcomes they had all agreed to because, they believed, that is what community groups do when empowered to act for themselves towards a shared purpose. This approach may have worked with the smaller community groups with which the council usually engaged on community projects, such as the community trust that ran the Eastern garden, but it did not work in this case.

The highly regulated nature of the Department of Corrections meant it could not be constrained by the council's concept of community development – it was 'ungovernable' in this sense. Hage (2011) describes ungovernability as the quality that emerges when something escapes the relation between a government apparatus and what it is aiming to govern – it is not an essential quality of the object to be governed. In this case, the government apparatus is the discursive formation of the community as a site of social action where community members focus on a problem such as a shortage of nutritious food, a loss of domestic skills or the ability to fix garden tools and decide on an appropriate response – a conception of the community also recognised by the funding agencies that provide grants to community organisations.

Community gardens work as sites of social discipline and community development when they enable the smooth functioning of normalising power. This happens when garden organisers transmit notions of good health, good eating habits and appropriate modes of living to gardeners as members of competent garden communities. Competent communities are collective subjects that are able to recognise and address their problems through collective action (Coveney, 1998). When there is no possibility for collective action because some gardeners are offenders whose participation in mandatory, or supervisors for whom the garden was just a place to keep offenders busy, a competent community doesn't form.

The Department of Corrections brought its own institutional culture and regulatory framework to the garden which it could not set aside to accommodate the practices of The Green Hub or the framing of the city council. For Corrections, the garden was a work site like any other, with offenders expected to do what they were told by supervisors. Supervisors derived their authority from the Department, not from any sense of governmental belonging or because

they subscribed to the values of community development and the community garden. They set offenders tasks in the garden to keep them occupied for the duration of their sentences, not necessarily out of a sense of concern that they lacked domestic skills and the ability to make appropriate food choices. The Department runs a Work and Living Skills programme, but this offers skills such as literacy, numeracy, budgeting and driver licences, as well as cooking and basic nutrition, about which the Corrections Service Manager said: "the whole purpose is to make sure they're not reoffending". It was not to make offenders into self-reflective, self-regulating individuals with appropriate concern for their health and well-being.

At the same time, The Green Hub, as embodied by Julia, became 'ungoverning' in the sense that she shifted her focus to the qualities of the garden's material output and away from the perceived need of the wider community to learn about gardening and vegetable growing, or the need to provide "good" nutritious food to the clients of Just Zilch and other charitable food providers. Julia's membership scheme let people come and harvest vegetables without having to participate in the garden as members of a competent garden community. The membership scheme enrolled people who were already eating vegetables but sought better or more correctly grown vegetables than they could purchase through regular channels – the vegetables became the targets of intervention, rather than the gardeners. Julia continued to make reference to the wider community as potential targets of gardening-related governmental strategies, proposing a community orchard and activities such as composting workshops but was never able to create a community in the garden to whom these strategies could be applied. The South West garden was so dominated by a thicket of historical power struggles and institutional inflexibility that there was no room for a competent community to develop.

The next chapter also describes the influence of institutional power on the smooth functioning of normalising power by exploring the ways that gardens work in school settings. All of the community gardens included in my research were established with some degree of educational intent, aiming to pass on skills, knowledge and competencies through social contact in shared spaces. School gardens took this a step further by seeking to become integrated into the formal education curriculum and delivering lessons in structured formats

49 - GARDENS AT A SCHOOL PLAYGROUND'S EDGE

The final garden I volunteered in was a series of school gardens that I have treated as a single garden spread across several sites. School gardens have a long history in New Zealand. They first emerged in the 1900s in response to new educational theory that favoured active engagement with the natural world over rote learning in stuffy classrooms (Beaumont, 2002). School gardens, it was argued, gave children a chance to learn about elementary agriculture and natural science through hands-on experience. In 1912 the Education Department noted approvingly that school gardens had the added benefit of improving health through exposure to fresh air and sunlight, and improving nutrition in the wider community as children took their vegetable gardening skills back into the home (Beaumont, 2002; Wake, 2015). These days, each school is an autonomous administrative entity[20], so the establishment and maintenance of school gardens is a matter for schools' Boards of Trustees – we don't how many schools have gardens, let alone vegetable gardens. Nevertheless, school gardens seem to be on the rise and are promoted as a modern panacea for the same concerns that earlier educationalists had: environmental education, healthy eating, spending time outdoors, and getting some

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[20] New Zealand's state primary schools each operates as largely self-managing Crown entity governed by a Board of Trustees drawn from their local community. Each school is responsible for employing its own staff, developing school policies and managing its own facilities to deliver the national education curriculum. It is a highly devolved model and the autonomy of schools is one reason for the variable provision of amenities such as school gardens and outdoor learning environments (Ministry of Education, 2019c).

exercise (Wake, 2008). School gardens are the physical expression of changing educational theory and social ideology and reflect shifting discourses about learning, health and nature.

Some schools engage educational charities and trusts to deliver parts of the curriculum in novel and engaging ways. Examples of educational agencies that are regularly contracted by schools include the Life Education Trust, which brings a bus to schools to teach children about mental and physical health and nutrition, and Garden to Table, which offers gardening and cooking programmes to change "the way children approach and think about food…helping them to discover a love for fresh food and skills that will last a lifetime" (Garden to Table Trust, 2016). The Garden to Table Trust operates in many parts of New Zealand, but not in the Manawatū. School gardening and cooking programs in this region are delivered by Plant to Plate Aotearoa, which operates along similar lines, albeit with a far smaller budget and lower public profile.

Plant to Plate Aotearoa was the first gardening group that I joined as a volunteer. It sets up vegetable gardens in school grounds across the Manawatū district and has been running for more than a decade. I have included it in my research because I conceive of the school gardens as a single discontiguous community garden. The Plant to Plate garden shares many characteristics with the other gardens investigated for this research, despite its physical fragmentation. For example, gardeners and project instigators share the same motivations and advance similar discourses; the dominant role of a single person or group in driving the garden project; the project's objective to share skills and knowledge with target audiences; and the way the garden employs pockets of underused space to produce food. These are similar to those found in both the South West and Eastern community gardens.

The Plant to Plate garden has some distinctive characteristics as well, which derive from its school setting and its links to the school curriculum. Unlike the other gardens' organisers, who merely aspired to run cooking workshops using garden produce, Plant to Plate runs cooking workshops in primary schools every week during school terms. Plant to Plate links its programme to the school curriculum, but the way it delivers the programme also challenges the consensus on what the curriculum should deliver by reintroducing skills and activities that have long since been dropped. One way of seeing the role of schools and education charities such as the Life Education Trust and Plant to Plate Aotearoa is as sites for the transmission of cultural values where the social order can be internalised in children's bodies, augmenting or correcting inculcation at home (Vasquez, 2013). Plant to Plate's efforts to reintroduce explicitly

domestic skills back into schools seeks to compensate for the apparent demise of these skills at home but also elevates them into subjects appropriate for classroom education.

This chapter describes my experiences volunteering in the Plant to Plate garden and the weekly cooking workshops. It explores the history of Plant to Plant Aotearoa, describes how it operates in schools, the motivations and aspirations of its founders and volunteers, and their beliefs about (or hopes for) the place of cooking and gardening in New Zealand homes now and in the future. It also briefly reviews the history of school gardens in New Zealand, tracing a pattern of concern for children's health, well-being and connection with the natural world that has persisted, largely unchanged, from one century to the next.

As with the other gardens included in this research, Plant to Plate's organisers problematised the subjects of their efforts as deficient in matters of self-care and appropriate food, eating and domestic practices. If it seems unfair to expect children to be cognizant of what constitutes healthy eating, I found that the Plant to Plate programme was directed at the children's parents as much as at the children themselves. This chapter discusses the strategies that Plant to Plate used to enrol parents in the reform of household food practices by reaching out to them through their children.

7.1   THE ORIGINS OF PLANT TO PLATE

50 - GARDEN BEDS, READY TO PLANT

Plant to Plate Aotearoa is a charitable trust that helps schools establish vegetable gardens and plant fruit trees on their grounds and offers practical cooking workshops for primary school classes. A few schools had vegetable gardens already established which Plant to Plate tended when it visited the schools, but others had none before Plant to Plate's intervention. In schools without vegetable gardens, Plant to Plate builds raised bed gardens from kits, often a series of three or four beds made from timber frames measuring one or two metres square that sit on the ground, or wooden planter boxes. Volunteers fill the beds with compost, visiting schools that are new to the programme in the weeks before their planned programme visits to establish gardens and scope out the

possibility for composting facilities.   Plant to Plate also offers horticultural advice to schools free of charge, and assists schools to find community funding to maintain their gardens.

Plant to Plate Aotearoa's objectives, as stated on their website, include promoting the integration of gardening and cooking into the New Zealand curriculum; helping children learn to grow and cook food (skills that they frame as life skills); and helping children learn to care for their natural environment and the earth's resources. In conversation with organisers, other objectives emerged. These include passing on a love of gardening, enabling children to see gardening and cooking as recreational and employment opportunities, and giving them experiences of gardens, cooking and eating that are different from those that they imagine the children experience at home.

Plant to Plate's trustees credit a local community activist with the idea for the initiative (Grant, 2011) but it was implemented by a small group of women, most of whom had retired from roles as primary school principals in the region. They perceived that school gardens were being lost to different types of play spaces, car parking and classrooms, which deprived schools of a way of delivering parts of the curriculum in a way that linked home and school through practical instruction. The founders all remembered having school gardens when they were children and felt that they'd benefited greatly from their experiences. One recalled that

> *we all had gardens at home plus the gardens at school and we used to have competitions at school. Everybody grew their vegetables, and the Department of Ag's man used to come around and judge it, and we won prizes. You had to keep a little book of your gardening…Of course, our parents thought it was wonderful because all the kids had gardens, so there was always plenty of vegetables. We didn't have a school cafeteria or school lunches or anything like that. They all came from home.*

At first, the group trialled a gardening programme in one school, which they linked to the science area of the curriculum. "There is so much going on in schools about eating good food, and part of the science programme looks at that issue so we thought we'd start the programme there," reported one of the founding members.

Shortly after they started working with a school in the Awapuni area of the city, the local Rotary club donated large quantities of crockery, tableware and other kitchen equipment to the nascent charity. Rotary is an international volunteer community service organisation with several chapters in New Zealand. The founding members of Plant to Plate had links to the organisation through membership and friendship. Receipt of the kitchen equipment and tableware prompted Plant to Plate to add cooking workshops to their offer to schools. As the school curriculum has expanded to include a raft of healthy eating and exercise initiatives such

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as the Healthy Eating – Healthy Action (HEHA) Strategy, Fruit in Schools, Push Play and Mission On (Dawson, Richards, Collins, Reeder, & Gray, 2013), schools enthusiastically invited Plant to Plate to help them to deliver this broad range of curriculum objectives. Plant to Plate doesn't adapt its programme to the curriculum or a school's particular teaching objectives. Rather, teachers draw on the programme to reinforce other lessons. This is possible because both the school curriculum and Plant to Plate adhere to discourses that position students as needing to develop "skills and understandings to take critical action to promote personal, interpersonal, and societal well-being", as New Zealand's curriculum policy on health education states (Fitzpatrick & Burrows, 2017). The programme is popular with schools in the region and Plant to Plate's calendar is filled long before each teaching year begins.
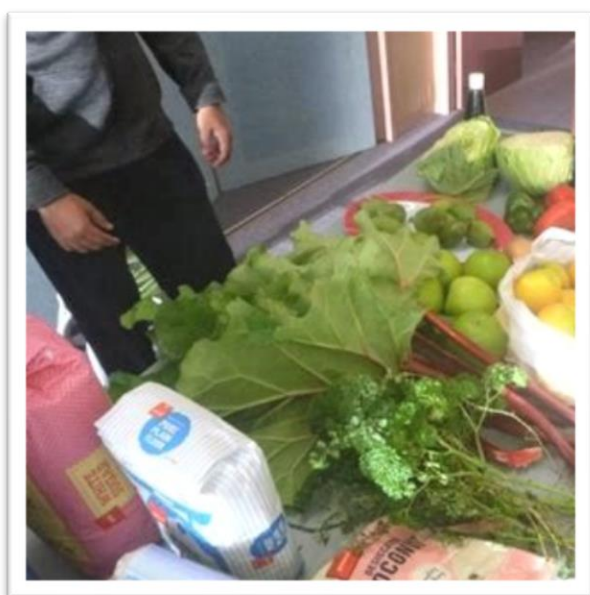
51 - INGREDIENTS FOR A COOKING CLASS

The programme had been running for almost a decade when I joined as a volunteer in 2015. Its workshops were fully subscribed, and it attracted funding support from the city council and a range of funding trusts. Most of the founding members had stopped attending the regular weekly workshops in schools but were still active on its management committee and Board. Another stopped attending soon after I joined when her husband became ill and needed care. The other founding members were looking for ways to withdraw from the workshops, which are physically and mentally demanding, while ensuring the sustainability of the programme. This meant that Plant to Plate was addressing succession issues that neither of the other gardens had had to face.

7.2   PRECONCEPTIONS AND PROJECTIONS

I joined Plant to Plate by responding to an advertisement for volunteers in a free community newspaper. I enjoy gardening, I'm an experienced cook, and I liked the idea of gardens in schools. To me, the developing vegetable gardens seemed like an ideal use of the extensive grounds that many Manawatū schools enjoy. I believed that vegetable gardens offer children a tactile and experiential way of learning about nature and food, while cooking and baking offered a fun way to turn raw materials into edible products using maths to calculate weights and measures, temperatures and time. My recollections of my primary school education,

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which were spent in a large city primary comprising three tall buildings surrounded by asphalt playgrounds, do not include gardens or much outdoor, experiential learning. My son began his schooling at a multi-storey, Victorian-era sandstone school in Glasgow, Scotland. It, too, was surrounded by asphalt playgrounds and featured spiked iron railings and gates that were kept locked during school and after school hours. This marked a significant change from his early childhood learning experience at an outdoor kindergarten, whose practice promoted playing outside for prolonged periods in the belief that this:

> *allows children more freedom to explore and gain a practical understanding of the world around them, allowing them to reconnect with nature… children are able to investigate curriculum areas like literacy, numeracy and science through real-world examples and first-hand experience. However, and perhaps more importantly, outdoor play also significantly enhances the development of their emotional intelligence, e.g. self-confidence, resilience, problem-solving, teamwork and leadership…skills that are essential to the well-rounded education that is vital for life beyond the classroom (WOK, 2106).*

This ethos is widespread and is a feature of early childhood and primary education in New Zealand – it underpins New Zealand's early childhood curriculum and is a feature of kōhanga reo and Enviroschools movements[21], for example (Alcock & Ritchie, 2018). It is also echoed in Plant to Plate and other school-based gardening and cooking initiatives in New Zealand, although the emphasis in these programmes is less on the freedom to explore than on contextually specific tailored learning (Narayan, Birdsall, & Lee, 2019). Plant to Plate's volunteers occasionally referred to the benefits of learning outdoors and the potential of the gardens to enable children to reconnect with nature. However, they were most concerned with the potential for gardening to create particular citizen subjectivities, encouraging children to grow up with the ability and expectation to grow and eat healthy food, make appropriate decisions about their self-care, and maintain stable, self-reliant communities. The

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[21] Kōhanga reo offer early childhood education in the Māori language and emphasise intergenerational knowledge transmission and respect for the natural world. The kōhanga reo movement began in 1982 as a response to research that had indicated that there were few speakers of Māori left (Alcock & Ritchie, 2018). Enviroschools publications offer the following statement of its philosophy: "The Enviroschools kaupapa [philosophy/purpose] is creating a healthy, peaceful and sustainable world through facilitating action-learning; where inter-generations of people work with and learn from nature. It weaves in Māori perspectives, combining traditional wisdoms with new understandings. Importantly, our kaupapa reminds us to be in connection: to love, care for and respect ourselves, each other and our planet" (Enviroschools Foundation, 2014). Both programmes, and New Zealand's early childhood curriculum, share the European forest kindergarten philosophy to a large extent.

opportunity to transmit messages about "how to live" (Foucault, 1979) to children's families gave the programme even greater influence.
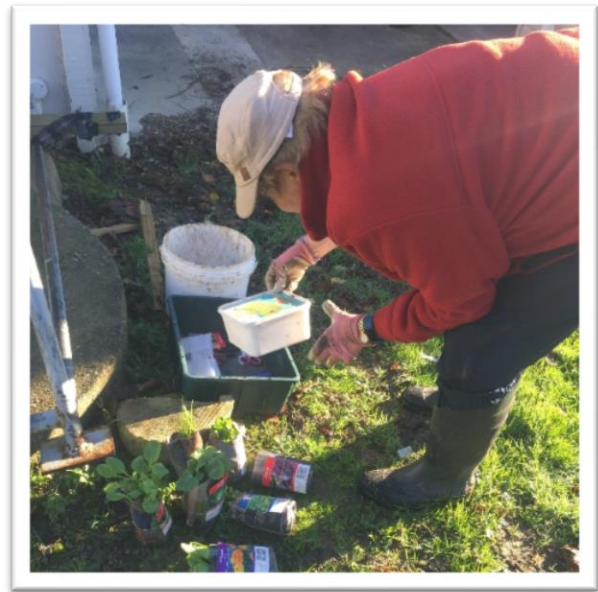
7.3   THE VOLUNTEERS

Most of my interaction with Plant to Plate was at the workshops run in schools, although I also attended Annual General Meetings, public events that Plant to Plate hosts to thank volunteers, and occasional management meetings. Plant to Plate relied on volunteers to deliver its programmes as it only had two paid employees. Throughout this chapter, I have referred to volunteers collectively as "volunteers" but also refer to the "core volunteers" or "founders" when the centrality of their role is notable. Even the paid staff seemed to work at least partly as volunteers. The organisation paid Marcie, the administrator, for a fixed number of hours each week but her role included liaising with schools, running workshops, developing teaching materials, attending management and board meetings, enrolling volunteers and coordinating fundraising efforts. She also maintained the organisation's website and wrote weekly blog posts about the workshops that the children could read. She was an enthusiastic and talented gardener who also ran the gardening programme in conjunction with one of the core volunteers, Sonja. She was also developing a new gardening programme for early childhood centres. She estimated that she works "sometimes over, sometimes under" her paid hours but I estimate that she worked many hours each week beyond those for which she was paid. In this chapter, she is either referred to as a volunteer or by her name.

The other paid staff member joined Plant to Plate at the start of the 2018 school year as a cooking coordinator. Her role was to plan and run the cooking sessions at schools, purchasing ingredients and leading the team of volunteers. Board members estimated that the role required eight hours per week during the 40 weeks of the school year. It was too soon to tell whether or how much additional time the cooking coordinator, Jane, would have to contribute to the organisation. Both she and Marcie had school-age children of their own and Jane had an infant as well. She was also undertaking post-graduate research in the area of food and nutrition.

For casual volunteers like me, Plant to Plate's workshops at primary schools began at 8.30 in the morning, although I often arrived closer to nine because I had to take my child to school first. Workshops usually ran on Wednesday mornings but occasionally ran on a Tuesday or Thursday instead which meant some regular volunteers, who had other commitments on those days, could not attend. For Marcie, Jane and the gardening coordinator, Sonja, the

sessions began earlier with visits to schools to assess the state of the gardens and the space available for cooking workshops, and shopping trips to procure supplies.

The format of Plant to Plate workshops rarely changed, with a single class or group of up to thirty children working in the school's garden to weed, harvest any vegetables that had reached maturity, feed the soil and replant the garden with seedlings. The children also cooked using recipes, ingredients and

52 - A VOLUNTEER PREPARING FOR A GARDENING SESSION

equipment that Plant to Plate brought with it to each school, ideally using produce from the garden. Occasionally, Plant to Plate ran cooking-only sessions with schools, but the sessions usually included both cooking and gardening, with half the class cooking in the first part of the session and gardening in the second, while the other half did the opposite. They then assembled to eat the food together and to clean up.

Plant to Plate attracted volunteers through newspaper advertisements or editorial content, by holding stalls at community events and by referral from organisations such as the Volunteer Resource Centre and the Manawatū Multicultural Council. Several came through Rotary, one of Plant to Plate's funders. Some were students, and others were recent migrants, were retired, between jobs, or looking for a way to improve their language skills. The majority of volunteers were women; some joined only for one or two workshops. Most were Pākehā although notable exceptions were an Egyptian woman in her thirties, a Bangladeshi woman, and a Japanese woman in her late forties whom I often worked with during the two and a half years I spent volunteering for Plant to Plate.

The weekly email call for volunteers went to around forty people, although the core group of regular volunteers was fewer than ten. I was an occasional volunteer, attending sessions for two or three weeks at a stretch before letting a whole school term go by without volunteering once. There were several reasons for my erratic attendance. These included work, study and family obligations that meant I could not commit five hours on a weekday morning to visit a school. Sometimes I chose not to volunteer because I disliked the repetitiveness of the programme. Even though each school was different, each class unique, and there were new

volunteers to meet, the programme itself followed the same pattern every week. After two or three weeks in a row, I baulked at running through the same steps again. My tolerance for groups of small children became somewhat thin, and I often found the sessions enervating.

Even though the pattern of the programme didn't change, the workshops themselves varied greatly, and they didn't all run smoothly. A smooth-running workshop would keep to time, engage the children in the activities, and require little intervention from the class teacher who would nevertheless involve herself in the workshop (I never saw a male teacher bring a class to a Plant to Plate workshop. Only twelve per cent of primary school teachers in New Zealand are male (Fraser, 2018)). Volunteers felt that a workshop had not run smoothly if there was a lack of discipline or a child refused to take part in the workshop, if it was difficult to swap the children between the garden and the cooking area at the halfway point, if they were noisy during the meal or if they were unhelpful with the clearing up.

Plant to Plate's operation was, after a decade of refinement, streamlined, so volunteers attributed much of the smooth running, or not, of a workshop to the teachers. They felt that classes whose teachers maintained a high level of discipline generally, and who took an active interest in the Plant to Plate programme, were likely to have a successful, enjoyable and smooth experience with Plant to Plate. Teachers who failed to maintain discipline were seen as being careless of Plant to Plate's objectives and timetable, failing to take the workshops seriously, "treating it like a morning off", and shifting responsibility for their class to Plant to Plate's volunteers. Marcie described some of the teachers as being "as clueless as the kids. Last week the teacher told me how impressed she was that we'd made corn fritters from scratch and I thought, "well how else would you make them?"". Those volunteers who had been teachers and principals themselves sometimes discussed the role of school principals in shaping the ethos or style of teaching in their schools, but they identified individual teachers most closely with the behaviour of their class.

The role of individual teachers was highlighted because Plant to Plate ran workshops for different classes from the same school in consecutive weeks, with different degrees of success. In one example, the first workshop run at a school in Palmerston North was declared to be "the best session ever!" by volunteers, whereas the workshop run with a different class in the same school the following week was declared to be "probably the toughest we've ever done". This experience was discussed at a management meeting scheduled for the following day. The management committee felt that they needed to visit schools before each series of workshops to explain how the programme would run on the day and what they expected of teachers. They would insist on teachers attending the presentation and committing to working with

Plant to Plate to make the workshops a success. Volunteers already visit schools to check on the gardens and cooking facilities but having to arrange a time that is mutually convenient for teachers and volunteers would add another level of complexity to the visits. "Time" had already been identified as the primary constraint on teachers taking on more responsibility for maintaining gardens, and the management committee decided to communicate its expectations more clearly to principals instead.

7.4   DELIVERING THE PROGRAMME

New Zealand does not have a tradition of providing hot, cooked meals at school, so schools rarely have much in the way of kitchen facilities, although this is changing in some schools as the government experiments with providing lunches for students (Ministry of Education, 2019a). Gardening, once an integral part of the pedagogy, is no longer a regular part of the curriculum, so schools tend not to have many gardening tools either. To ensure that it had the resources it needed to run its workshops, Plant to Plate brought two sign-written vans to the schools, one packed with all the equipment and ingredients needed to run the cooking workshops and the other packed with gardening supplies. Unloading the cooking van could be heavy work as the van contained half a dozen toaster ovens, two electric fry pans, four banqueting tables with folding legs, large plastic tubs containing pots, mixing bowls, spatulas, sharp knives, measuring spoons, cups and scales, chopping boards, whisks and graters. The van also held tubs of crockery, cutlery, cups, tablecloths, dishcloths and aprons as well as tubs of dry ingredients, a cooler of chilled fresh ingredients such as milk, meat, cheese and butter; and whatever fruit and vegetables the cooking coordinator had purchased to enable the children to prepare the planned recipes. The gardening van was almost as heavily laden with sacks of compost, buckets, watering cans, trowels and gardening gloves; seedlings, seeds and

seed potatoes all packed into tubs stored on shelves that had been built into the van by one of the founder's husbands.

After the volunteers had unpacked the vans, they would set up the area where the cooking workshop would be run. This involved assembling the four folding tables that Plant to Plate had brought with it and furnishing each one with four or five chopping boards, knives, whisks, bowls and ingredients –

anything that the children would need to make the recipes, which were printed onto A4 sheets and laminated. Volunteers pressed desks into service to hold electric frying pans and toaster ovens, and a tub of hot soapy water was set up on a chair with a few hand towels nearby so that the children could wash their hands before they began cooking.

Volunteers unloaded gardening tools from the van and stacked them near the garden beds. The gardens varied greatly across schools, but the gardening workshops employed the same tools and inputs each time – trowels, watering cans, gloves, seedlings, fertilisers and compost. Gardening workshops required access to water, and the volunteers occasionally had to locate a school caretaker to get keys for locked sheds and tops for taps if the caretaker had removed them. Once the garden workshop was set up, the garden volunteers joined the others, to wait for the children to arrive.

The children would arrive at the hall or classroom where the cooking workshop would take place with their teacher between 9.15 and 9.30am. The whole class would come together, and their teachers would direct them to sit on the floor in front of the folding tables. The person leading the session – usually the cooking coordinator – would welcome the children and introduce them to the regular and occasional volunteers from Plant to Plate, including herself. By way of introduction, she might ask the children a series of questions about their experiences of volunteering, gardening and cooking. Children would shoot their hands into the air, ready to answer or relate stories and facts they believed relevant. The answer to "who can tell me what a volunteer is?" might be "the person at a magic show who gets picked to go on stage and help the magician" or "the person who gets picked to clean the whiteboards". The cooking coordinator might then explain that volunteers get out into the community and help

people to learn things and do things without getting paid for it and that she hoped that one day the children would also volunteer to help people learn things. The cooking coordinator emphasised that the children would be gardening and cooking so that they could take the skills they learned home to try out with their parents, and that it would be fun making the delicious food at school, and that they could have fun making it at home as well.

54 - A SCHOOL GARDENING WORKSHOP

When the coordinator asked children whether they had vegetable gardens at home, between a third and half of the children at each of the sessions that I attended raised their hands. I found this surprising in light of one of the narratives that underpin Plant to Plate's efforts, the "lost generation" narrative. This was described in more detail in section *1.2 - Gardening as identity* but, briefly, it articulates the founders' belief that children's parents lack skills and knowledge in the areas of gardening and cooking because their own parents failed to pass them on. These skills are therefore believed to be "lost" to that generation and their children. It is a view that was shared with garden organisers in other gardens, each of which sought to spark the relearning of these skills through their gardening enterprises.   When asked what was growing in their home gardens, children would answer "tomatoes, corn but it's finished now, pumpkins, oranges, lemons and mandarins" or "my dad grows lots of potatoes and carrots and cauliflowers, and…and…". Children were also asked whether they cooked at home or liked to help in the kitchen. On occasion, volunteers framed the question as "do you like to help mum in the kitchen", but this particular phrasing was uncommon at this stage of the workshop. I noted that volunteers were more likely to refer to "mum" as the dominant player in household food preparation while chatting with the children during the sessions.

The number of children who raised their hands to answer the cooking question varied greatly depending on the age of the children, with the older ones more likely to say that they helped with the cooking or washing up. Some of the older, intermediate aged children reported cooking a family meal several times each week. I did not record any instances of children being asked whether they cooked vegetables from their garden. There were several occasions when

the cooking coordinator would hold up various vegetables, such as a leek or a carrot, for children to identify. Again, hands would shoot into the air and children would guess the name of the vegetable, with the older children more likely to recognise and correctly name them.

The children were not the subject of this research, and I made no effort to record their answers about cooking and gardening. Nor did I ask them the questions I often wanted to know the answers to, such as who does the cooking at home, how many in your household, who works and how many hours do they work – nosy researcher questions – but we did chat about what they liked to eat during the workshops. Children related varied food experiences and their reported favourite foods spanned the range from boil-ups[22] to salad, with pizza probably the most commonly mentioned. Apart from a few children who said they ate bought-in or takeaway foods several times each week, the children's chatter about whether they had a garden, what they liked, and who did the cooking seemed consistent across schools and was not inconsistent with my childhood eating experiences some decades earlier. That is, most meals were prepared at home; women usually prepared them; most food came from a supermarket, and only some families had gardens.

The most noticeable difference between my childhood eating experiences and theirs was evident at the morning break when the children reached into their lunch boxes and, almost without exception, pulled out individual packets of crisps or crackers and boxes of juice – processed foods developed especially for the school lunch-box market. I noticed this at every school I visited, regardless of the socio-economic status of the school or the age of the children. Power (1999, p. 51) notes the complex factors that influence the apparently simple task of packing a child's lunch for school. These include parents' notions of what is healthy and culturally appropriate for children to eat, school or community standards for appropriate lunch box foods (many New Zealand schools prohibit sweets and sugary soft drinks, for example); what children need to demonstrate conformity to peer-group standards, and what is available in the house. Research indicates that half of all foods purchased in a typical New Zealand supermarket are processed foods, which are defined as products that are made from a combination of ingredients and "are typically ready-to-eat, ready-to-heat or partially prepared and require minimal preparation time" (Coriolis, 2017). This suggests that processed foods were likely to be what was available in the house for school lunch boxes and that parents had purchased the snack product that best fulfilled the other criteria. It further suggests that

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[22] A boil-up is a Māori style of cooking. It typically includes root vegetables, meat and greens such as puha cooked in broth and is sometimes served with dumplings (Petley, 2012).

meals prepared at home included a mix of fresh or raw components and pre- or partially prepared components, with the latter beginning to dominate. The line between fresh and processed food is increasingly blurred. I only noted one child saying that his family used a meal-kit subscription service such as My Food Bag.

55 - Stuffed courgettes made in a cooking workshop

After the introductions, children were instructed in good hygiene practices such as washing hands before handling food and after touching their hair or face; and in basic knife safety skills such as how to carry knives, how to safely chop vegetables without chopping their fingers, and to not leave knives in sinks during the washing up. Their teachers then divided the classes into two groups; one of the groups went into the garden while the others lined up to wash their hands in the tub of soapy water and don an apron. The cooking coordinator directed the children to one of the three or four cooking stations that had been set up earlier. When I worked in the cooking session, which was quite likely as fewer volunteers were needed in the garden, I would stand at one of the stations either alone or with another volunteer. The children would come over to the table, and I would introduce myself and ask them their names. We would look at the recipe we would be making, which included a photo of what the finished product could look like. Some recipes, such as those for cakes, muffins, pizza and fruit kebabs elicited squeals of delight while others, such as those for stuffed courgettes or silverbeet fritters elicited silence and a look of foreboding.

Volunteers approached the cooking sessions in their own way as Plant to Plate offered no training and didn't specify a particular teaching method. I developed a system that began with an explanation of the format of the recipe – that it, like most written recipes, listed the ingredients needed to make the dish, specified how much of each ingredient was needed, gave instructions on how to prepare and combine the ingredients, and how to cook the dish – whether to use a stove or oven, what temperature it needed to be cooked at and for how long. If the children were old enough, I would ask them to read the recipe and tell me whether any ingredients needed to be prepared by peeling, grating or chopping, pointing out that some recipes specify this in the list of ingredients while others include this information in the

method section of the recipe. I also took them through the various abbreviations used and asked them to show me a tsp, or teaspoon measure; a tbsp, or tablespoon measure; and a cup measure. We would divide up the tasks, and we would set to grating, chopping, whisking and weighing. As we went through the various steps, I made a point of explaining that the measures are standardised and that, for example, a teaspoon of baking powder means a level teaspoon, a cup means a level cup in a standard cup measure, not just any old coffee mug from their kitchen cupboards. If the children were older, I would explain about baking powder's role as a raising agent, why it was important to distribute the raising agent and salt by sifting them with the flour, or that the purpose of rubbing butter into flour for scones was to coat the powdered grain with fat evenly. My aim was to pass on some of the stores of technical knowledge I have accumulated over my life so that they could approach other recipes in other contexts with some confidence.

Explaining various elements of the cooking process to the children made me realise how much detailed knowledge I had accumulated over my lifetime from a wide range of sources such as my parents, experience working in the hospitality sector with chefs, bakers and kitchen hands, living abroad and eating food in many different of countries. While I did not watch the competitive cooking shows on television that the children often referred to, I have watched online videos featuring chefs and their restaurants, and instructional videos on how to make unfamiliar dishes. I also own a large collection of recipe books that I refer to frequently because I cook almost every day, usually more than once. I was far less confident in the gardening workshops, and this reflected my lack of knowledge and experience in this area. I owned only one gardening book, which had been a gift, and felt that I had retained little

information passed on by my parents or other sources. I knew enough to be a help rather than a hindrance in the gardening workshops, but my advantage over the children was small.

56 - CHEESE MUFFINS WITH AN INSTAGRAM ENHANCEMENT

Sometimes I worked with other volunteers who took a different approach, perhaps measuring ingredients out before the children came or launching straight into the preparation and explaining the cooking process as we went. The approach taken seemed to make no difference to the children's enjoyment or the outcome of the recipes, which varied wildly but tended to look nothing at all like the picture. Occasionally, children expressed disappointment at the difference between the picture on the recipe sheet and the food they had made. I commiserated with them when this happened and pulled out my phone to demonstrate the effectiveness of Instagram filters in improving the dish's appearance.

7.5   TABLE MANNERS

The children ate what they had prepared at the end of each workshop. Once the children in the cooking workshop had prepared all the food, washed and put away the kitchen equipment, and the gardening was finished, the classes would come together in the hall or classroom where the cooking workshop took place and set the folding tables with tablecloths, cutlery, plates and cups. When the children were seated at the tables, one of the volunteers would ask them to imagine that they were in a restaurant and to behave accordingly. This was defined as "using your pleases and thank-yous, remaining seated and making quiet conversation." Volunteers served the food that the children had prepared, with an instruction that they must try every item at least once. The word "yuck" was explicitly forbidden, but many of the children clearly thought the food was yuck. They employed various strategies to avoid eating it like pushing it around their plates and offering it to others.

Occasionally, the children made "lunch box food" in the cooking workshops, which was food that could be eaten with the hands and could be prepared at home in advance to bring to school in a lunch box. On these occasions, the children were asked to bring an empty lunch box to school, and they lined up while a volunteer put a piece of each dish in their lunchboxes.

They ate the food they had made from the lunch boxes with their hands while the volunteers reminded them that they could double up the recipes to make large batches of muffins, pizza or whatever they had made when they got home so that they would always have something to bring to school to eat.

When the children finished the meals, they would clear the tables, scraping any waste into a compost bucket (there was usually a lot of waste) and stacking their plates and cutlery for washing. The children helped to wash and dry the dishes, receiving frequent reminders that they could help out with the dishes at home. They helped to put away the Plant to Plate equipment before gathering to say a group thank you to the volunteers on their way back to their classrooms.

Plant to Plate attracted fewer volunteers with an explicit interest in the gardening aspect of the programme, and this seemed to reflect the dominance of cooking over gardening in our collective daily allocation of time – most households cook or prepare something every day whereas fewer have gardens and those who do, don't attend to them daily. It also reflects longstanding gender divisions in domestic labour, which the founding member most active in the organisation, Joan, described as "mum cooked, dad dug the garden". Plant to Plate attracted far more female than male volunteers, and this flowed through to the number of volunteers interested in the gardening part of the programme, or rather, meant that most volunteers felt more comfortable in the cooking sessions where they could use their experience.

The recipes that the children followed in the cooking workshops were based around vegetables that could be grown in home or school gardens. Unfortunately, the issues that Plant to Plate had maintaining school gardens, and the infrequency of their visits, meant that there was often little in the garden that could be used in the recipes. Volunteers often brought produce such as rhubarb, lemons and herbs from their private gardens to the cooking sessions but most of the vegetables came from a local supermarket that supported Plant to Plate with a discount on its purchases. Joan noted in our interview that this undermined their efforts to teach children that food came from somewhere before it gets to the supermarket shelves. She described the strategies she employed to help the children make the link between their gardening activities and their cooking activities:

> *When we bring vegetables into the schools - and we have to buy a lot because of the issues with the gardens – I always take them out of the packet and take the labels off them because I don't want the kids to get that link between the food and the supermarkets. What we try to do, and it has worked to a certain extent*

> *... we go in like last week, and we cook that food, and we plant the same food, so they know they can use that recipe again if we don't cook exactly what they planted.*

Just as there is often a mismatch between what the children were cooking and what was available in the garden, there were also occasions when garden produce reached maturity, but Plant to Plate had no recipes in its canon for that particular plant, or the cooking coordinator had procured ingredients for different recipes. Organisers seemed to discount the ease of access and proximity that they had to their private gardens as a factor in their ability to get homegrown produce on to their dinner plates – popping out the back door enables home gardeners to keep a vigilant eye on what is going to be available and start the mental processes involved in planning and gathering ingredients to turn the produce into a meal. Garden organisers could not do this with the remote school gardens.

 The disconnection between what was growing in the garden and the recipes that the children followed in the cooking workshops came about for several reasons: workshops were planned some weeks ahead, and recipes were selected depending on the age of the children, the availability of space and cooking facilities, and expectations of what, if anything, would be available from the school's garden. As demand for the programme grew, demands on volunteers' time increased. It was not always possible for volunteers to visit schools at the planning stage to assess whether any vegetables would be ready to cook. In any case, Plant to Plate's ideal of visits spaced out of several weeks so that children could plant seedlings, then cultivate, harvest and prepare the vegetables was rarely achieved.   Furthermore, planning and organising for the gardening workshops, cooking workshops and recruitment of volunteers could be done by different people. The person who liaised with the schools over visits, for example, might not be the same person who decided which recipes would be prepared and what needed to be purchased.

The availability of vegetables from the garden could also depend on the care the garden received between visits, the weather, whether the gardens had been vandalised, what seedlings had been donated to Plant to Plate for earlier gardening workshops and whether any had self-seeded between Plant to Plate's visits. On one occasion, there were broad beans and silverbeet that had self-seeded over the summer in the garden, but none of the recipes brought to the school called for either. On another occasion, the gardening coordinator called into a school in advance of the session and found that the pak choi seedlings that had been planted some weeks earlier were ready to harvest. Plant to Plate had no recipes for pak choi, so Marcie emailed volunteers for suitable recipes. I volunteered a recipe for stir-fried pak choi
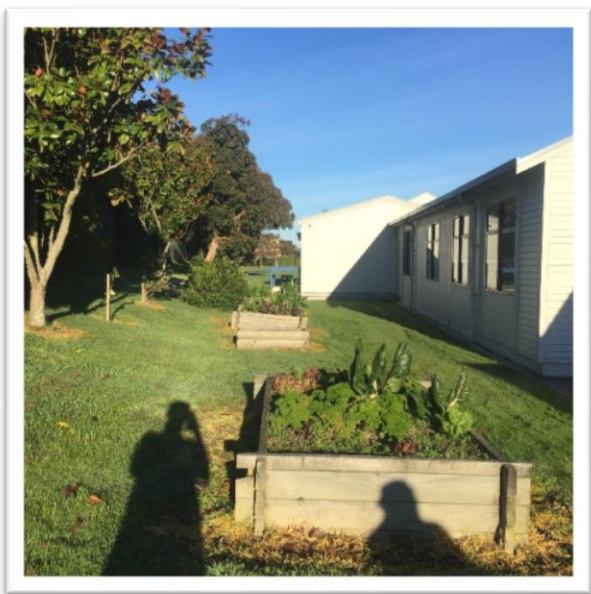
57 - GARDENS CAN BE TUCKED AWAY BEHIND CLASSROOMS

with sesame and ginger sauce that the children could have made in the electric frying pans, but one of the volunteers worried that the children wouldn't necessarily have sesame seeds and sesame oil in their pantries and would therefore not recreate the recipe at home. The desire to link specific vegetables to specific recipes selected on the basis of what ingredients the founders believed children would likely have available at home put fairly strict parameters around the type of recipes offered to the children. I am unclear whether the founders' beliefs about what "ordinary" families" kept in the pantries accurately reflected the types of ingredients available to the children at home, and a search of the literature and government agency websites revealed that there is no objective information available about the range and quantity of store cupboard ingredients kept in New Zealand households.

When I began volunteering with Plant to Plate, almost all the savoury recipes included meat – usually ham or bacon which keeps well. Over time, I noticed that fewer recipes included meat as an ingredient and that recipes began to feature exotic ingredients such as bean sprouts, soy sauce, udon noodles and spring roll wrappers. This appeared to reflect a change in the age of organisers as responsibility for planning menus passed from the retired teachers to the somewhat younger administrator, Marcie, and the cooking coordinator. It also seemed to reflect increased awareness of the changing (or newly acknowledged) ethnic and religious makeup of schools, as well as changes to the breadth of products carried in supermarkets, which have shifted ideas of what we might consider "ordinary".   Nevertheless, recipes were selected on the basis of what the organisers thought was tasty, healthy, achievable, appropriate and normal for children and their families to eat.

The cost of ingredients was also a consideration in selecting recipes. Volunteers expressed concern about the cost of groceries for families on several occasions, and pressure on household food budgets was certainly mentioned as one of the reasons why children and their families might want to grow and prepare their own food, as it was in the other community gardens. It perhaps explained a reluctance to include rarer ingredients as Plant to Plate started

from the premise that families with school-age children were likely to have restricted budgets. Still, Plant to Plate's approach seemed to preclude children having influence over grocery purchasing decisions, or parental willingness to support any interest that children expressed in cooking by bringing new ingredients into the household.
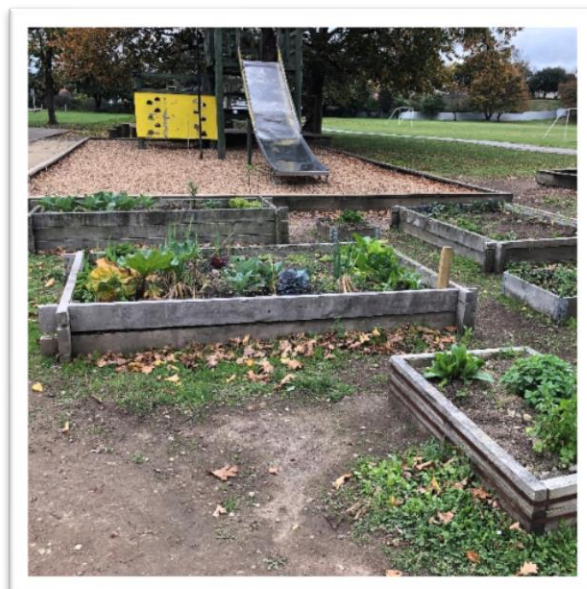
7.6 WORKING IN THE GARDENS

I helped out in the gardening sessions at schools less often than in the cooking sessions. This is partly because the gardening programme required fewer volunteers and partly because I felt I had little to offer the children in the garden. The gardening workshops were not as clearly structured as the cooking workshops, as the volunteers had a greater range of variables to consider. These included the weather, the time of year, the age of the children, the condition of the gardens, whether the school had a composting facility, and what seeds or seedlings the person running the gardening workshop had brought. The gardening coordinator position had not yet been converted into a paid position, and the workshops were usually run by one of the core volunteers such as Sonja, Marcie, or one of Plant to Plate's few male volunteers, a man who had been in and out of paid employment following a bout of ill health and who volunteered for Plant to Plate whenever he was out of work.

It is difficult to describe the school gardens as "looking" a particular way, or evoking a particular feeling, unlike other gardens considered for this research, as each one was unique. At some schools, the garden beds were isolated from the main area of school activity, tucked behind classrooms, at the edge of play areas, or along a perimeter fence but were still bursting with silverbeet, lettuce, parsley and broad beans whenever I visited. Some garden beds were highly visible, located in front of classrooms and adjacent to play areas, but still managed to look neglected, empty and dry. Some had a permanent, established feel to them. One school's garden had brightly painted fences, hand-lettered wooden signs, and rows of succulents in pots being fattened up for a school plant-sale fundraiser. The presence and form of school gardens could also reflect the personal interests of the school staff and the local community.

Wherever the gardens were located, and whatever their condition, the gardens got plenty of attention when Plant to Plate visited. Each of the school visits included two gardening sessions with half the class involved in the first session and half in the second. Because the gardens tended to be quite small for so many hands, the volunteers divided the number of beds available among the number of sessions they would be running at that school over the term, saving beds for the second and subsequent groups to weed, fertilise and plant. To fill in the time, volunteers undertook a range of other activities to introduce children to different

aspects of gardening such as looking at the different seeds and seed pods that Plant to Plate keeps in its van. This gave volunteers an opportunity to discuss plant family groups and how seeds from the same family groups look similar. Marcie had developed a talk and some teaching aids to guide the discussion on seeds. She delivered it engagingly, asking the children lots of questions which they answered willingly. A board member described the children as "rapt" during the presentations and, while this may be a little strong, they almost all seem to be interested whenever I watched her give the presentation. It was the most formal teaching that occurred in any of the community gardens, reflecting its location in schools and the relative ages of the participants. Another activity away from the garden beds involved planting wheat seeds in cups that the children decorated with faces. The children kept the cups in their classrooms and watered them until the faces were topped with a thick thatch of green wheatgrass hair. This was a good activity for rainy days.

58 - GARDENS SHARING PLAY SPACE

 Gardening sessions with children ran throughout the school year, so volunteers planned their sessions around what could reasonably be expected to grow at the time. Sessions that ran early in the spring term often included a potato growing activity. For these, the garden coordinator brought seed potatoes that she had been sprouting for the previous six weeks in a cupboard at her home. The children punched drainage holes into plastic buckets and put a little compost in the bottom. They choose one or two of the seed potatoes, cut them into pieces, each with a sprout or two, and put three of the pieces at even spaces on the compost in their buckets. They covered them with a little more soil and watered the buckets. The children were instructed to keep the buckets outside their classrooms and water them over the coming weeks. As green sprouts came through the soil, they were to cover them with a little more compost. The coordinator explained that the children would be able to take their full buckets home on the last day of school and perhaps harvest the potatoes to eat with their families at Christmas.

Sessions that ran in the late summer and autumn terms involved weeding and fertilising the gardens and reviving any compost piles begun the previous year. After the long summer break,

59 - Watering a newly planted bed

many of the gardens were overgrown, so the first task was to remove the weeds, although schools often seemed to have sent the class out to the garden the previous day to clear any weeds, removing any evidence of neglect, and the volunteers faced bare plots. If there was weeding to be done, volunteers explained which plants were weeds and why it was important to get the whole root out to prevent the weed regrowing. The volunteers invited the children to look at the soil and decide whether it looked healthy enough to support growing plants. The children learned to approach gardening similarly to the way they approached cooking, seeing the garden as the outcome of mixing specific ingredients in the right proportions. Volunteers described the ingredients as cocoa (compost), icing sugar (lime), sprinkles (coloured grains of fertiliser) and chocolate chips (sheep pellets) which, along with water and sunshine, could be added to the soil to produce a healthy growing environment for vegetables. Once the garden plots were weed-free and fertilised, the children planted seedlings. In the summer term, they might plant basil, lettuce, sugar snap peas, courgettes and lettuces depending on what seedlings have been donated. In the autumn and winter sessions, they were more likely to plant crops such as leeks, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, parsnips and winter lettuce. With ten to fifteen children working in the gardens, these tasks could be completed fairly quickly. Before they went, the children filled up watering cans and watered the plots. A dozen watering cans over each plot created a veritable rainstorm.

The volunteers reminded the children to check on the garden every day and water the plots again if they needed it. Some schools have gardening equipment such as watering cans or hoses available but getting access to them would usually require the children to engage a teacher or the school caretaker because schools protect their tools and equipment by locking them away from casual or unsupervised use and potential theft. The caretaker at one school explained that he kept school equipment locked in a shed that had been reinforced with bars after a spate of thefts; and that he had removed the tops of the outdoor taps so that they couldn't be turned on and left running by children or others. He said that he'd happily provide hoses and keys to turn on the taps if the children wanted to water the gardens between Plant

to Plate visits. The children, when asked if they would ask the caretaker for hoses after we had gone, said "no point 'cause he always says no".

7.7   THE SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school gardens share a set of challenges with other community gardens that affect their productiveness and sustainability. As well as the access and security issues, there is the school calendar, which means that schools are closed over the key summer growing weeks from mid-December until early February. Plant to Plate visits schools for two or three weeks at a time, for one morning each week. After this short period of intensive care, many gardens are left to grow without further intervention. Some schools have teachers and staff who are especially supportive of the project and engage children in caring for the gardens between Plant to Plate visits. Others have individual staff members who make extra-curricular efforts to maintain the gardens.   None of the schools I visited seemed to engage parents or the wider community in caring for the gardens. None seemed to have a mechanism or plan for distributing any garden produce to families, school staff or the wider community; nor were there facilities or staff in most schools to cook with the garden produce when Plant to Plate wasn't there. Any vegetables that came to maturity went to seed or were overtaken by weeds. This frustrated the Plant to Plate organisers who moved motions at their Annual General Meetings (AGM) to accept the latest garden coordinator's report which would include goals such as:

> *to continue encouraging schools to be more self-sufficient in maintaining gardens; to develop a programme for Plant to Plate volunteers, school garden clubs or others to maintain gardens once planted and ensure vegetables are harvested when ready; to continue developing in schools compost heaps and worm farms; and to continue to find Plant to Plate volunteers to be involved in the gardening programme (Minutes, Plate to Plate AGM, 2017).*

As well as the lack of ongoing care for the garden plots, the Board has repeatedly noted that many schools do not have, or fail to use, systems for turning vegetable and food waste into compost. They noted that teachers are time poor and could not be relied upon to follow up on the gardens once they are planted. Sonja regularly reported that inspections of the school gardens revealed varying levels of maintenance, with vegetables not being harvested, and plots not being watered or weeded. To address these issues, the Board made the development of a new programme, dubbed the Green Team, a priority. The Green Team sought to establish gardens in schools that were supported by the wider school community and could, therefore, be sustained after Plant to Plate's involvement has ended. The project was inspired by a similar project at a school in Fielding – a nearby town in the same region – initiated by one of the teachers. She had established a gardening club at the school which

enlisted interested students to maintain and develop the gardens. Marcie has children who attended the school and became involved in the gardening club. When the children moved to a new school, Marcie approached the new school about starting a similar club there. She visited the school once each week during a lunch break and wrote about the club's beginning in a blog post published on the Plant to Plate website:

> *I decided to see if any of the students would be interested in resurrecting the school vegetable gardens. I went along one lunchtime with the Plant to Plate gardening van, unpacked the trowels and gloves and waited to see if anyone would join me. A whole tribe of enthusiastic kids came along and got stuck in! Pretty soon we had the gardens weeded and ready to plant up. There was already a fair amount of produce in the gardens, much of which was not being used, so I ask my posse what they thought about starting a sharing table[23] for the school community. So the school green team share table began (Blog post, 8 August 2018 (archived))*

Marcie reported to the following AGM that a core group of children regularly attended, spanning the ages at the school. She reported that the share table aspect of the project presented some challenges in that families were reluctant to take the vegetables laid on the table because they felt that other families might need them more. She described efforts to change this mindset, encouraging parents to take the food if they want it, because there was always plenty more, and vegetables that were not taken were wasted, which was a disappointment to the children. Other community gardens with sharing tables that I visited reported similar problems.

The general success of the pilot programme convinced board members to extend it to keep some of the Plant to Plate gardens producing year-round. Marcie surveyed the schools that Plate to Plate delivered its regular programme to and received expressions of interest from nine schools. She asked them what obstacles would prevent them running a Green Team or gardening club, and schools responded that "time" and "funding" were the primary obstacles, confirming what Plant to Plate's founders had long suspected. Finding someone to take responsibility for the gardens over the longer term was also an issue. Marcie has developed a plan for a programme that would run for 35 weeks, which is the approximate number of teaching weeks in a primary school year. The Green Team would invite applications from children, setting up a barrier to entry that Marcie hoped would filter out all but the most

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[23] A share table or sharing table is a place for depositing surplus produce. They tend to be established in a public or visible place and others are encouraged to take the produce or leave their own surplus there. They are often a feature of community gardens. Participants in other community food groups proposed encouraging public libraries and workplaces to introduce sharing tables for staff and the public.

enthusiastic and committed children. She would encourage children and the school to invite parents, grandparents or other members of the school community to attend the club sessions, joining in and eventually taking ownership of the garden project in the following years, turning them into community gardens on school grounds.

60 - Basil in flower

Schools offer different degrees of access to the garden plots on their premises, depending on their size and location on the school's grounds, which has implications for the successful development of the Green Team gardens. Some plots are always accessible, and others are secured behind locked gates outside of supervised hours. New Zealand's primary school grounds have historically been open and ungated, their playing fields and play equipment available for others in the community to use when school is not in session, recognising schools' unique role in communities as public institutions.   In schools with vegetable gardens, it has been possible for staff and families to visit outside of school hours to care for the gardens or harvest produce. Recently, however, schools seem to be adding fencing and gates to discourage access to school grounds outside of teaching hours, making the potential involvement of community members in gardening projects more difficult. Over the period covered by my field notes, 2015 – 2018, I noticed additional security measures such as lockable gates and new fencing being installed at three schools that I visited. Plant to Plate volunteers often reported difficulties locating keys for garden gates, sheds and vehicle gates for visits scheduled a year in advance.

Security decisions are made by schools' Boards of Trustees. Primary schools in New Zealand are independent organisations run by trustees who are drawn from the local community – usually, the parent community – and have administrative and ultimate legal responsibility for their schools (Witten, Kearns, Lewis, Coster, & McCreanor, 2003) . The Ministry of Education encourages Boards to ensure schools are secure to minimise vandalism and theft, offering advice and support to Boards on conducting security assessments and creating risk management plans. The Ministry acknowledges that schools are part of the community even if they are not public property and that Boards may wish to keep facilities such as playing fields

accessible outside of school hours. The Ministry also notes that this can encourage community surveillance of school property (Ministry of Education, 2019b). However, physical security measures designed to prevent theft of school equipment or vandalism sometimes prevented access to gardens as well. The gardens themselves could be subject to vandalism and theft. One of the schools visited by Plant to Plate had had its wooden raised bed gardens dismantled over the summer break and the vegetables scattered across the play area. Plant to Plate's volunteers thought the wooden frames had been taken for firewood, or perhaps used as impromptu skateboard ramps, but it was impossible to know.

7.8   MOTIVATIONS: WORRY AND ANXIETY

Volunteers gave a variety of reasons for joining Plant to Plate. Some said, "it gets me out of the house"; others mentioned sharing their interests and passions with the children, and some the importance of teaching cooking and gardening to children. Both volunteers and the founding members voiced concern that parents were not teaching children these essential skills in the home. The phrase "lost generation" cropped up repeatedly in discussions about the need to provide instruction in gardening and cooking in schools, and exactly mirrored the concerns expressed by the Community Corrections manager and Julia in the South West garden. One of Plant to Plate's founders described being motivated to expand the programme by her experience at a supermarket when a checkout operator had to ask what various vegetables were so that they could be weighed and priced.

> *It certainly came home to me when a girl of about 20 didn't know what a pumpkin was. And I thought "goodness", and it was the same with a cabbage. We thought that these kids have come through knowing only that a vegetable comes out of a plastic bag at the supermarket. So we thought that we wanted to do something about teaching the little ones because they're going to be the next generation.*

These concerns were not limited to the area in which Plant to Plate operates. Research into the establishment of community gardens in Whanganui, for example, found respondents expressed concern that "young ones, especially, have got no idea where their food comes from, and no idea how to grow it" (Batten, 2008). Batten cites a report in the Taranaki Daily News that a new community garden would "help to educate people and teach them gardening skills which might have been lost in the last few generations" (Palmer, 2008, cited in Batten, 2008, page 310). Other research supports the ubiquity of this view in New Zealand and other countries (Beaumont, 2002; Wake, 2015).

Volunteers occasionally expressed concerns that children needed to learn to grow and prepare food to ensure their health and well-being in an uncertain future. More than one volunteer

said, "if everything falls apart, you need to know how to grow your own food." Volunteers struggled to articulate the precise natures of the social, economic, technological and environmental threats that they perceived, but nonetheless understood them to threaten a diminished quality of life or degradation of opportunity for some children.

7.9   FAULTY PARENTING

Volunteers believed that a lack of gardening and cooking skills meant that many children were not being provided with healthy food at home, which they conceived as stemming from faulty or ignorant parenting. They felt that the Plant to Plate programme could begin to compensate for what was not being taught or provided in the home and could influence domestic practices. The volunteers, particularly the older Pākehā volunteers, had firm views on children's diets. Discussion over tea and biscuits in school staff rooms between workshops revealed a general belief that children are growing up in obesogenic environments with soft drinks widely available and cheaper than bottled water, processed foods and fast foods crowding out home cooking, and no exercise built into children's lives. One of the most regular volunteers is a retired dietician who says she saw diets and lifestyles change dramatically over the 40 years that she practised.   She was firm in her view that children's poor diets were the fault of the parents; that children only ate what they were given.

Volunteers made a number of comments about the cost of the takeaway food that children reported eating. Occasionally they would estimate the cost of the ingredients used in the recipes and compare that to the cost of food purchased from various takeaways. Volunteers, teachers and other school staff were also often disparaging about the quality or nutritional value of the foods that children reported eating at home, especially fast food and packaged snacks. They could also be explicitly critical about foods that families brought into the school for school events, even cultural events where the context suggested that the food was appropriate at that time and in that place or was food prepared only occasionally. The caretaker at one school with a strongly Pasifika roll described the pots of food the children's families brought to their Festival of Cultures event as "disgusting. Cheap cuts of meat just swimming in fat and laden with dumplings." Even when they provided home-cooked food, the apparently hapless parents were clearly not preparing food in the correct fashion.

Volunteers believed that the children lacked the skills necessary to navigate the complex food system to their benefit. Without a grasp of the fundamentals of food cultivation and preparation learned in a home environment, volunteers believed that children were unable to appreciate the difference between home-cooked and pre-prepared food, which is an

increasingly blurred line, or between commercially cultivated and home-grown produce. Volunteers were concerned that children and their parents were likely to accept marketing claims made by manufacturers as to the qualities of processed foods as they had no basis for comparison with fresh, unprocessed food. This echoed The Green Hub manager's concern that consumers were ignorant of production methods used in commercial agriculture and were therefore unable to choose the correct food.

Plant to Plate volunteers also blurred the lines between what they considered an acceptable level of processing, however. In the middle of 2016, Plant to Plate began using a premixed scone base that it bought in 10kg sacks. This meant that the various scone recipes could be made quickly but cut out much of the weighing and measuring of ingredients using scoops, scales and measuring spoons, which the children enjoyed. Reading recipes and measuring was an opportunity to practice essential maths and baking skills and to talk about the properties of active ingredients such as baking powder. Measuring and weighing also kept the children engaged in the process for longer; using a premix meant that the children completed their recipe long before other groups. I asked why the change had been made, and the answer was that the premix was considerably cheaper and gave more consistent results.

Volunteers perceived the point or purpose of the Plant to Plate programme in slightly different ways. One volunteer described the purpose of the gardens as being about sustainability, by which she meant growing one's own food and eating what is available in the garden rather than buying imported or packaged food. She described these practices as being more sustainable from a household budget perspective as well as an environmental perspective. Other volunteers also expressed concerns about a range of environmental issues that gardening could potentially mitigate, from a loss of biodiversity in food crops to the amount of packaging waste produced by processed foods.

Volunteers brought a range of other philosophies and food practices to the programme. At one session, a volunteer had remarked on the egg box sitting on one of the prep tables. "Cage-free" she noted approvingly. The cooking coordinator said that the eggs probably weren't cage-free, that she'd bought eggs in a tray from the supermarket and just reused the box. She herself always bought cage-free eggs she said, but not for Plant to Plate because of the budget constraints. She just bought what was cheapest.

The volunteer said she bought cage-free eggs to cook and eat as whole eggs but bought "any old eggs" for baking. I asked her why she made a distinction, given that she ate the eggs either way, but she said the egg quality didn't matter so much once it was mixed in with other things.

A further conversation with the same volunteer and coordinator on another day involved a can of apple pie filling branded Pam's (the "own brand" of a supermarket chain). The volunteer read the label and exclaimed "Look! Made in China. I'd never buy that." The coordinator said she hadn't even looked at the label and just assumed it was made in New Zealand because it is a New Zealand brand. I recounted that I'd recently bought a one-kilogram bag of frozen spinach at a supermarket and that, while I'm usually a careful label reader, this time I hadn't checked where the spinach came from or what the ingredients were. When I later read the label at home, I discovered that the spinach had come from China, and had been formed into portion-sized balls with a water glaze, meaning that most of the weight I had paid for was water. I said to the volunteers that it must have taken much more energy to process and ship the frozen spinach to New Zealand than was contained in the spinach itself. The volunteer said she was not worried about that so much as about the conditions in which it was grown and processed – both the labour and hygiene conditions and the use of chemicals. We also talked about the plastic bags that the supermarket fruit and vegetables came in and whether we could use paper bags or cotton. She then said that she has become so good at not using plastic shopping bags that she runs out and has to buy more from the supermarket. All-in-all, volunteers expressed a jumble of concerns around environmental sustainability, health and food.

7.10   MORE IS NEEDED OF YOU

Volunteers were highly conscious of the socio-economic profile of the schools in which they ran their programmes and often referred to the schools' decile rankings. Decile ranking was, until recently, the mechanism by which New Zealand's Ministry of Education allocated funding to schools. A school's decile rating reflects the socio-economic status of the school and its community. Decile one schools are the ten per cent of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, and decile ten schools are the ten per cent of schools with the lowest proportion of these students (Ministry of Education, 2014). A decile one rating indicates high levels of disadvantage in the local community with pupils' parents likely to have more limited educational qualifications and years of schooling, low levels of family income, and more crowded homes. Pupils are more likely to arrive at school with health and learning deficits, and to suffer food insecurity at home. Decile one schools attract higher levels of state funding to reflect the higher per-student costs of addressing these issues, the lower levels of social capital and the higher levels of disadvantage that tend to be found

amongst social-economically disadvantaged groups, and the limited capacity of the schools to access funding from their communities (NZPPTA, 2013).

Plant to Plate visited schools across the decile range with most schools clustered around the middle of the range at decile four, five and six. Volunteers were most likely to refer to the decile ranking of a school when discussing children's eating experiences and food choices. They perceived that children at higher decile schools were more likely to have allergies or intolerances to certain foods, or "allergies" as the volunteer who had been a dietician put it, scooping out quotation marks in the air with her fingers. By this, she meant that the children's parents limited their intake of certain foods or components of foods such as dairy or gluten without there being a medical reason for it. The volunteer dismissed parents' concerns as irrational and faddy. Volunteers and teachers described children in lower decile schools who ate all their food without complaint and came back for second helpings as being hungry, and surmised that they had insufficient food at home. Volunteers sometimes identified children in higher decile schools who exhibited this behaviour as being from a lower decile household, an outlier in an otherwise high decile school.

Volunteers were more likely to perceive children in lower decile schools as inexperienced in matters such as table setting and the use of cutlery, and as having narrower or less omnivorous diets that were higher in take-away and budget foods. Towards the end of each session, before children sat at the table to eat the food they had prepared, the cooking coordinator would ask them how many ate at a table at home and, occasionally, how many knew how to use a knife and fork. Children were encouraged to take the table-laying skills, manners and washing-up skills that they practised at school home with them.

Concern for the eating practices of lower decile families was widespread and was one of the factors that motivated the group's founders. The preponderance of middle and higher-decile schools on the organisation's annual schedule frustrated members of the board. They felt that lower decile schools were less likely to seek out their services, especially the new Green Team gardening clubs, and devoted some time at their 2017 Annual General Meeting to discuss why this might be. One of the founders noted that:

> *When we started as Plant to Plate, one of the things was that we were going to work with the lower decile schools. We were going to teach them how to grow vegetables and then how to cook them. I always have this mind, all the time. I think it is harder, actually to get into a low to medium decile school and it's harder to teach because there are constraints and more is needed of you. And I think that we probably need to push more to get into those schools…I mean we need to get them growing veges.*

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7.11   CONCLUSION

After more than two years of volunteering with Plant to Plate, I cannot say with any confidence that the organisation has shifted a national trend towards purchasing more processed food and food prepared outside the home. Nor can I say with confidence that the organisation's efforts have led to the establishment of new domestic vegetable gardens, although garden organisers were adamant that several children had taken up gardening with their families. At the same time, I found that domestic gardens and cooking skills did not seem to be as rare as many garden organisers feared – I listened to many children describing their families' vegetable gardens, and many more describing diets dominated by home cooking, however that is defined. Several described cooking meals for their families themselves. Organisers' concern that domestic skills were being "lost" because they were not being passed from parent to child seemed overblown.

At the root of the Plant to Plate organisers' anxiety is a worry that children cannot navigate the modern food system from a position of power grounded in 'knowing food' – where it comes from, how it is prepared, and how it should be eaten – because they are unfamiliar with the way food is cultivated and what it looks like in its rawest form. They shared this concern with the garden organisers at Community Corrections and The Green Hub, which had developed laminated information cards for the vegetable beds. While many of the children struggled to name the various vegetables that organisers held up for them to identify, especially the younger ones, this may have reflected the children's age and low levels of involvement in food procurement and preparation at home. It may also have reflected the increasingly blurred line between processed and 'fresh' or raw foods – parents, like Plant to Plate itself, depend on the availability of off-season imported vegetables and pre-made ingredients such as noodles and tortillas to maintain the omnivorous diets we have become used to. As Laudan (2001, p. 43) points out, "culinary Luddism, far from escaping the modern food economy, is parasitic upon it."[24]

Another aspect of organisers' "liquid fear" – Curtis & Curtis's (2015) notion that contemporary capitalism is marked by amorphous fears and anxieties – was their belief that children were

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[24] Laudan (2001) describes people who scorn industrialised food as culinary Luddites after the English textile workers who protested the way mechanised looms were being used to undermine working conditions. Mechanisation threatened the weavers' livelihoods and status as skilled artisans because mechanical looms could be operated by less skilled, and lower paid, machine operators. The Luddites did not object to mechanisation *per se*. Over time, however, the term "Luddite" has come to be applied to anyone who resists industrialisation and new technologies in general, while valorising traditional crafts such as home cooking. The collective nature of the Luddites' resistance to the effects of the emerging

not participating in the civilising practices of family mealtimes and were, therefore, failing to acquire lubricating cultural knowledge such as table manners and the other social rituals associated with dining. Organisers also expressed anxiety about the children's life skills and ability to reflexively manage their conduct in matters of food and eating. They developed the cooking and gardening programme to familiarise the children with food in its rawest form but served it with a helping of social discipline that sought to mobilise the children to enrol their parents in addressing concerns about health, family well-being, domestic competence and self-reliance through the adoption of appropriate food practices. The Plant to Plate programme, like many school-based interventions in family health, mobilises children by positioning them as carriers of health and lifestyle information from the school to home. Children were provided with messages about appropriate food practices along with their printed recipes. They were encouraged to take the recipes home and try them out on their families, and to give gardening a go. While the cooking and gardening sessions were too few and far between for the children to develop any level of skill in either cooking or gardening, the discourses the Plant to Plant employed were echoed in other parts of the school curriculum which gave the sessions the imprint of educational authority.

Regardless of whether the children went home and cooked from the recipes or dug up the lawn to plant a garden, they nevertheless had an opportunity for visceral engagement with food and gardening through the Plant to Plate programme that they might not otherwise have had. The workshops offered a hands-on, tactile encounter with food that required them to touch, taste and smell the food as they planted or prepared it to see *how* it was grown and transformed into muffins, fritters and pizza. Engaging with the "how" of food was a different approach to the "why" of food – why some foods and modes of eating are considered healthy, appropriate or risky, that form the pedagogies of food that students usually deal with in school. Whether or not the founders' ideal of children bringing lunch boxes packed with homemade muffins made with rhubarb from the family garden is ever realised, the programme introduced children to a more tactile way of engaging with food than the chilled, packaged and date-stamped food that increasingly dominates our eating experiences. We incorporate more processed foods into our diets for a range of social, economic and political factors that are as likely to reflect squeezed schedules as parental neglect or ignorance. As

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factory system is often overlooked yet the movement's philosophy can be traced in those parts of the alternative food movement that resist the exploitation of labour and the natural world in industrialised food systems today (Jones, 2013).

noted above, the line between pre-prepared convenience food and home-cooking is increasingly blurred.

Like the South West garden, the Plant to Plate gardens struggled with the material agency of plants and other non-human actors – in this case, the school terms, teachers' time commitments and curriculum priorities, and school security. They hoped that the Green Teams might provide the ongoing labour and care that vegetable gardens require, turning the school gardens into community gardens with ties to the broader community. This plan invites social and political commitment from the school and wider community to Plant to Plate's vision and the very idea of community gardens and competent communities of care.

8   DISCUSSION

61 - SOUTH WEST GARDEN IN PANORAMA

I began this research wondering what community gardeners thought they were doing when they did community gardening. I had imagined them as oppositional activists critiquing an iniquitous capitalist food system, but the people whom I met in community gardens didn't conform to my expectations. They didn't seem to be challenging the ways that urban space is produced and used or mobilising for a right to the city. They weren't experimenting with new forms of collectivity or other forms of do-it-yourself citizenship, and they weren't developing political consciousness in marginalised youth. Indeed, they weren't doing any of the things I imagined they would be doing in the community gardens apart from growing vegetables. What they were doing was worrying – they worried about a decline in cooking skills, people's problematic food choices, and a general loss of domestic competence. They linked a perceived decline in gardening and other domestic skills to social issues such as poor health, obesity, food insecurity and family wholesomeness and saw it as symptomatic of a changing social order.

I focussed my attention on garden organisers. Each of my research sites had a clear demarcation between gardeners and garden organisers which, in itself, reveals that the gardens were less a collective, grassroots response to social challenges than an intervention by people who saw it as their business to intervene. I first came across Hage's work on managerialism and governmental belonging a few months into my research, and I immediately recognised several of the garden organisers and volunteers in his description of people in positions of cultural dominance. He described these people as having a sense of governmental belonging which gave them "the power to have a legitimate view concerning the positioning of others in the nation" (Hage, 1998, p. 46), or a right to worry about how others were conducting their lives and intervene where possible.

Over the following months, I came to realise that the garden organisers were not alone in worrying about people's food practices or health, or in problematising domestic skills. Specific pedagogies about household management, food and eating are a feature of policy initiatives in

areas such as school health curricula, prisoner rehabilitation and migrant settlement programs which makes the organisers' community garden initiatives seem congruent and promising. All the gardens explored for this research link gardening to cooking and eating practices to some degree and encouraged individuals to acquire the knowledge necessary to make appropriate choices about what to cook; how, where and with whom to eat. In Foucauldian terms garden organisers, like the teachers and Corrections supervisors, drew on health promotion discourse to make choosing, self-regulating subjects out of the gardeners.

I found that Hage and Foucault's work articulated well in the context of the community gardens, especially in the context of New Zealand's neoliberal state. As described in the literature review, several scholars have described community gardens as sites of neoliberal governmentality, and others have linked neoliberalism to rising existential anxiety or worry. Wrenn (2014), for example, argues that the role of culture is to provide a coherent and consistent world view. When that world view is threatened through the social upheaval wrought by neoliberalism, then shared anxieties rise. Even though my three research sites were all very different from one another, a pervasive thread of anxiety and worry ran through each of them. This manifested most clearly in garden organisers' concerns that their target gardeners were at risk of experiencing food insecurity or social alienation through their inability to participate or compete in the market economy. Garden organisers focussed on food security and domestic competence – the ability to make do and mend – to the exclusion of almost all other aspects of the community gardening oeuvre which shaped relations between gardeners, garden organisers and the gardens' funders and supporters.

8.1 CHARITABLE GIVING

Both the Eastern and South West gardens donated surplus produce to charitable food providers and the local free food store, Just Zilch. This brought an ethos of charitable giving to the gardens, the importance of which I hadn't anticipated at the time that I began the research. Coupled with the framing of gardening skills and community gardens as remedies for food insecurity, the discourses and practices of charitable giving aligned with a number of the themes that emerged in the literature. These included the way in which community gardens and charitable food provision facilitate processes of neoliberalisation such as the roll-back of the state welfare net and the construction of citizens in receipt of welfare or charity as the architects of their need.

The gardens donated produce for different reasons. As described in the section on the Eastern community garden, the charitable donation of food became a part of its purpose and reflected

its relationship with the church-linked Community Trust. The South West garden was largely cultivated by offenders serving community sentences who were not permitted take any fruit or vegetables from the garden for their own use so donating to charitable food providers was a necessary outlet for the garden's produce. As the Community Corrections manager noted, donating also provided a "feel-good" reward for offenders and staff and, as many knew people who got food from Just Zilch or took food themselves, donation linked offenders to the community – they really were giving something back as restitution, even if the unwashed leeks and cabbages weren't universally appreciated

Over the course of my research, Steve, the coordinator of the Eastern community garden, began to express reservations about donating to Just Zilch, and Julia, the manager (and embodiment) of The Green Hub stopped donating entirely. Steve redirected his donations towards a food bank that screened applicants for need and required them to accept various support services such as budgeting advice in return for food. Julia stopped donating because she felt that recipients didn't appreciate the vegetables or value them because they didn't make any payment for them. These two organisers embodied the many and often conflicting views of the merits and place of charitable food.

The question of whether food should be given without payment or some other qualifying criteria reflects a long-standing ambivalence about "deservingness" that permeates public and policy debates about welfare and poverty (Gerrard, 2019). Garden organisers favoured channels of distribution that either required recipients to acknowledge the labour that went into producing the food, or its intrinsic value, through making a small payment; or by demonstrating a willingness to reform the practices that led them to seek food aid in the first place. The practices that charitable food recipients are encouraged to reform include inefficient use of whatever income they have; addiction; and a lack of domestic skills such as cooking and budget management (Garthwaite, 2016; Leslie, 1996).

Conditions placed on recipients of charity reflect a deepening of personal responsibility whereby citizens are simultaneously seen as being in need of empowerment while also being actively responsibilised for their need (Garthwaite, 2016). This tension reflects the shifting discourses that underpin New Zealand's welfare state, some of which has been devolved to charitable providers such as food banks. Like many similar economies, New Zealand has changed its model of welfare provision from one that is rights-based and insurance-based to one that is residualist. A residualist model expects individuals, their families, and charities to meet their needs in the open marketplace and provides assistance only in cases of hardship and only if the need can be tested (Leslie, 1996). Welfare thus comes with enhanced

surveillance and evaluation and is typical of states that have pursued neoliberal agendas. Ambivalence about the merits of donating produce without requiring some form of payment, corrective action or screening for hardship reflects the growing convergence of the discursive framing of state and charitable welfare-providers, and community organisations such as gardens (May, Williams, Cloke, & Cherry, 2019). This was a dominant theme in the literature that could clearly be traced in my research sites.

Even within the gardens, gardeners were subject to surveillance. The gardens were places where the private domestic practice of gardening was conducted in a public space and thus became subject to the scrutiny of garden organisers. The tobacco growers, for example, were on the receiving end of garden organisers' disapproval. They began to lose parts of their extensive plots which were reallocated to more compliant gardeners. Surveillance and coercion in each of the sites was exercised through the repetition of discourses shaped by expert knowledge and truths about the importance of diet, exercise, charity and family relations.

8.2   FAMILIES AND DOMESTICITY

The responsibilisation of need suggests that gardeners lack the know-how or aptitude to feed themselves correctly. Garden organisers, especially those in the South West and Plant to Plate gardens, often made reference to "lost generations" of people who had failed to learn appropriate food practices from their parents, who may also never have learned them, as evidence of the weakness of social and cultural structures centred on the domestic sphere (Coveney et al., 2012). This perception underpins general anxiety about ominous if undefined forces of social and economic change which organisers felt that some of the gardeners lacked the skills to navigate successfully. Coveney et al. (2012) argue that eating habits and cooking skills attract the most concern when they are thought to be declining, found wanting, or inadequate. Gardening and cooking programmes are, therefore, most likely to emerge as policy responses at times of moral panic about the state of basic human survival skills.

I found that garden organisers started their garden projects to resist these ominous forces. They used their sense of governmental belonging to stake out positions of expertise and authority in matters of the home and self-management, drawing on a well of cultural tradition and national identity that prioritises self-reliance and thriftiness, especially in matters of food. Garden organisers saw the ability to conjure one's own food from the soil as the gold standard

of self-reliance, with the ability to prepare a meal from the food growing in one's kitchen garden the ultimate signifier of domestic competence.

Like others, garden organisers imbued discourses around healthy food and family practices with an element of morality. Moralising food practices in this way established a binary of competent organisers on the one hand and deficient, morally lax gardeners on the other. The binary was not as keenly demarcated in all the gardens – it was sharpest in the South West Garden where offenders worked – offenders having been judged morally lax by the ultimate arbiter of state power, the judiciary; in the Plant to Plate garden, the children's parents were more like to be conceived of as lacking as the children were too young to be seen as fully formed agents; in the Eastern garden, where migrant gardeners' food practices were beyond reproach, the concern coalesced around their willingness to share and contribute to the collective – to integrate.

8.3   Unruly bodies

Seen from the perspective of moral panic and anxiety about the future, it is not surprising that community gardens have enjoyed a renaissance in developed economies over the past two or three decades. Body weights, a visual clue that significant changes are afoot, have risen substantially in affluent countries over this time, especially in affluent English-speaking countries, and this correlates with poor health and social outcomes (Offer, Pechey, & Ulijaszek, 2010). Rising obesity is not a reflection of the spoken language, but of Anglophone countries' adoption of neoliberal policies which deregulate markets and have led to a rise in income inequality, competition, uncertainty and stress. Those on the downside of deepening inequality are more likely to have diets dominated by cheap, processed foods that are nutritionally compromised, while those on the upside have gained better access to healthful foods such as fresh produce, which Otero et al. (2015) characterise as "luxury" foods.

Wealth and income inequality is described as having reached a crisis point in New Zealand (Graham, Hodgetts, Stolte, & Chamberlain, 2018; Otero, 2016; Reynolds, 2016) and, while the links between diet, obesity, health and wealth are complex and contested, garden organisers have proffered school and community gardens as a means of ameliorating the effects of low incomes, poor diets and poor access to nutritious foods. Garden organisers have had limited success in restoring fruit and vegetables to their position of basic, staple foods rather than the

luxuries that they have become for many, however. Only Eastern community garden, whose gardeners already ate vegetables, was able to produce a regular supply.

8.4   UNSETTLING CATEGORIES

While anxiety was a dominant theme in my research, others emerged as well. These included the continuing cultural dominance of the garden organising classes. Much of the literature on community gardens describe their potential to unsettle social categories and encourage cross-cultural understanding. I found that organisers' dominant position and fixed focus prevented the disruption of community power relations – the gardens reproduced the social hierarchies extant in the wider community. Putting the word "community" in front of "garden" was not enough to overcome the social distance that the word aims to disguise.

The tendency to reproduce social hierarchies was not the case for all the community gardens I visited over the years, even if it was a feature of my research sites. Some really were grassroots initiatives that challenged the social and economic order. While Julia lamented the paucity of funding and council support available and argued that gardens couldn't succeed without it, the gardeners at another site in the neighbouring town of Fielding decided not to seek any funding at all. They felt that the process of securing the funding required unsustainable bursts of mental energy and was fundamentally corrupting in that applicants framed their aims and practices as being whatever would get their application approved. Funding invited scrutiny and audit as well, which was another distraction. Far better, they argued, to lead by example and make do with what they had; they wanted to prove that gardening could be done cheaply and demonstrate what was possible if people shared what they had.

8.5   AGENTS OF THE RESISTANCE

It is easy to see my research sites simply as local examples of neoliberalism in action, as the literature suggests. However, it is also possible to see them as sites of resistance. Organisers in all of my research sites drew on neoliberal tropes of self-responsibilisation to encourage the gardeners' to adopt attitudes of resourcefulness and self-reliance. They did this, not necessarily because they aimed to remake gardeners into competitive economic units, but because they recognised the futility of the attempt. The Plant to Plate organisers expressed this sense of futility as "if everything falls apart, they'll need to be able to grow their own food". This reflected a general worry amongst the organisers and volunteers that ominous social, economic, technological and environmental threats loom on the horizon; threats that they struggled to articulate but that nonetheless seem to threaten a diminished quality of life

or degradation of opportunity that might be able to be mitigated by growing vegetables. McClintock (2014) argues that community gardens can exemplify both actually existing neo-liberalism and a simultaneous counter-movement arising in dialectical tension. I argue here that the garden organisers both support processes of neoliberalisation and depoliticisation by equipping gardeners with the skills to fend for themselves and simultaneously seek to reproduce the attitudes and practices of a time before the ill-defined threats emerged.

I argue that garden organisers use gardening as a way to shore up a particular national identity, which is not the same as using technologies of power and the self to mould responsible, reflexive subjects. The language of neoliberal discourse is not dissimilar to the language used to describe New Zealand identity, but there are important differences in meaning, even if the words are the same. The description of New Zealanders as a nation of robust, can-do, number-eight wire benders predates neoliberal thought by decades. Vegetable gardening emerges as a panacea for generalised anxiety arising from a perceived fraying of the social order because it is emblematic of New Zealand's past social stability, not because of its disciplining potential in the present. Community gardening is an appeal to nostalgia for secure housing, high rates of homeownership, a comprehensive welfare state, cultural homogeneity among the dominant group, and low levels of income inequality. These are the very attributes of New Zealand society that neoliberal governmentality has undone.

8.6   WOMEN'S WORK

Theorising community gardens as sites of social discipline and managerialism changed the way I understood community gardens. However, the aspect of my research that most shifted my perspective on the potential of community gardens to challenge hegemonic capitalist food systems was cultivating my own plot in the Eastern community garden. While it was possible to see my research sites as conservative outliers in an otherwise radical alternative food movement, my experience of working in the garden revealed the limitations of small scale food production as a way of providing for my family or shifting the balance of what we ate away from commercially grown or processed food. The burden of mundane daily work required to keep everyone in my household fed was not lightened by the addition of gardening tasks. There were several aspects of my gardening experience that were challenging. Firstly, the garden was a few kilometres from my house, which meant that I had to add it to my regular shopping or food procuring rounds. As I usually do these on foot, this meant adding in

a trip by car or bicycle. As was the case with the South West garden, there was no public transport available, other than taxis.

Secondly, my garden did not produce vegetables in a predictable fashion which meant that I had to visit the garden to see what was available before planning the rest of our household's meals and making shopping lists. Eventually, I could be confident that silverbeet would always be available because that was all that survived, but we couldn't eat all that the garden produced unless we ate it every day – a level of dietary monotony that none of us could face. In the beginning, I cultivated a wider range of crops, but they seemed to mature agonisingly slowly. Produce from the shared garden beds couldn't be relied on as there were too many pickers for too few plants. I was fortunate not to have to rely on my garden to feed my family and could watch with detached interest as the plants matured.

When I began to harvest vegetables from the South West garden, I had the opposite problem, which I have described in an earlier chapter as a problem of abundance. This required me to develop complex, labour-intensive practices to store and preserve the food I gleaned from the garden. It also required me to adapt my shopping practices to respond to the garden's abundance. I gathered, cleaned and stored the produce then decided how we would eat it during the week, which was about as long as the highly perishable produce would last. I would then gather all the ingredients we needed to prepare the vegetables. Any unforeseen invitation to dinner out or an evening event that precluded us from following the plan usually led to waste at the end of the week.

I've called this section women's work because women, overwhelmingly, take responsibility for food provisioning in New Zealand households with children as I do in mine (Smith et al., 2013). I felt the addition of gardening responsibilities as a burden, even though it was part of my research "work" – my day job. Acknowledging the gendered aspects of food work is important when considering the framing of home and community gardens as a solution to food insecurity, poor food choices and related health outcomes. Not only are women most likely to take responsibility for food work in their homes, women and households with children are also over-represented in poverty statistics. The costs involved in establishing a garden, the long time horizons, the unpredictability and perishability of garden produce, the risk of theft, and the problems of accessibility and transport make gardening a uniquely unsuitable response to food insecurity arising from poverty or a lack of access to domestic garden space.

The gender implications of gardening as a solution to food insecurity weren't always so clearly demarcated. Garden organisers' memories of domestic food production involved a dad who

dug the garden and a mum who cooked the food. They recalled a time when work was plentiful; a single wage was enough to support a family; there was nothing to do at the weekends and shopping was a mundane chore rather than a leisure activity. Above all, they recalled a time when ontological security – the resources needed to materially and socially reproduce their standard of living – was widely held. This is no longer the case – many people in New Zealand can now be considered to be ontologically insecure (Wrenn, 2014). Garden organisers, who experience more ontological security than the gardeners, feel anxiety and worry because the social order that supports their security now appears fragile. The deprivation and marginalisation experienced by the insecure threatens to manifest as social unrest. Community gardens thus work to reinforce the idea that gardeners are the architects of their marginalisation – they themselves are the source of their insecurity, not the wider socio-economic context in which both garden organisers and the gardeners live.

Vegetable gardening and cooking also offered a panacea for other perceived social ills such as a breakdown in family units and rising levels of obesity and diet-related diseases such as diabetes – social ills that are made visible in human bodies. Vegetable gardening and home cooking represent the antidote to the evils of modern food systems which have, it is often argued, led to the degradation of human bodies and domestic competencies by promoting convenient food and casual eating over 'quality' food and structured mealtimes. The importance of families as core units of social organisation means that concern about a lack of skills and knowledge often focusses on risks to family life and cohesiveness, or broader social change. As well as providing quality food, vegetable gardening provides a way to pass on the skills and knowledge deemed necessary to do food and eating correctly and resist the siren calls of convenience. Vegetable gardening and cooking can address many of the other modern sources of anxiety such as food waste, excess packaging, labour exploitation, animal welfare, environmental degradation, and pesticide use. Community gardens offer a remedy to most of the ills of modern life, it seems, no matter the reasons for concern and worry.

There is nothing especially contemporary about the current panic, however. Beaumont (2002) describes changes made to the New Zealand school curriculum in 1910 to include practical horticulture and apiculture in the hope that rural children would remain on farms at a time of rapid urbanisation, where physical and mental health was more robust than in the cities. Later policy changes in New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom sought to promote "a strong race through exercise and exposure to fresh air" (Beaumont, 2002, p. 13; Wake, 2015) as well as improvements in the nutrition and public health of the community as children transferred the skills they learned in school gardens to their home environments. These policy

objectives are echoed in the ambitions of Plant to Plate Aotearoa and similar programmes operating in schools today. The same objectives were also expressed by the Community Corrections manager who hoped that offenders would carry some of the gardening skills and food knowledge they learned in the South West garden into their home environments as a roundabout way of bringing stability to their chaotic lives.

8.7 PLANTS AS ACTORS

The most unanticipated finding of my research was the role played by the non-human actors in the garden, such as the plants, insects, microbes, soil, weather, paths and planter boxes that make up what we recognise as a garden. These non-humans largely determined whether the gardens succeeded in terms of producing food season after season. This finding was unanticipated because the role of the natural world is not widely canvassed in the literature which, like my pre-research self, largely treats it as a benign backdrop to the human business of social reproduction. When I began to despair of finding any trace of radical alterity in the human gardeners with whom I worked, I realised that it was the natural world that provided a material critique of global food systems, urban design and social fragmentation by shaping relations in communities beyond what was intended or imagined by garden organisers and their supporters. While garden organisers worked to shape the lives of the gardeners, the gardens revealed the limits of organisers' cultural dominance and power.

Gardens make visible the full cycle of fresh fruit and vegetable production from planting to harvest, with seasonal cycles and the work that takes place on the perimeter – the composting, weeding, fallowing and rotations – being revealed over months and years. This is no small matter given that the origins of much of our food are hidden beyond remote global trading relationships, industrial processes, regulatory intervention and concentrated distribution networks. Community gardens add another level of immediacy to the revival of local food networks such as farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture and organic box delivery schemes. Unlike these alternative sites of transaction, community gardens are located at the nexus of public, private and community life and confront prevailing expectations and assumptions about the availability and form of food. As sites of food production, community gardens' unreliability and uneven rates of production foster a critical understanding of the complexities of producing food on a sustainable basis.

8.8 VEGETABLE MATERIALITY

As quasi-public spaces, the gardens offer encounters for gardeners and recipients of surplus produce. People working in the garden engage with the produce in a sensory way, having to

use their senses to evaluate the ripeness of produce or the damage wrought by insects and moulds. The usual mediators between plant and mouth – labels, use-by dates, processing, cooking, assembling – are missing in the garden, so gardeners enter a visceral realm that is unfamiliar to many. Garden organisers in each of my sites made reference to gardeners' inability to recognise and name particular fruit and vegetables. Gardening is thus a way of knowing food that sits outside of the dynamics of food safety regulation and expectation of aesthetic perfection. Gardening involves cultivating embodied discernment of food via the senses, the sort of common-sense skills often problematised as declining and leading to unnecessary food waste (Coveney et al., 2012).

Gardens resist a number of assumptions that are prevalent in the mainstream food system, such as those about the value of aesthetics in food and gardens, rather than their capacity to nourish and provide. Giles (2015) argues that the tendency of produce to ripen, bruise and rot – its "material agency" – amounts to a corrupting trajectory that renders food as waste, underwriting the value of food whose aesthetic qualities maintain its value in the market. Food grown in community gardens has no commercial value, and its material agency thus sends it on an alternative trajectory – lost potential, or last chance, or compost. It shifts decisions about what it is and is not good to eat back onto gardeners, cooks and neighbours. Community gardens, in making visible the processes of food production, also render the politics of representation and knowledge production visible.

8.9   THE PLANETARY GARDEN

The theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two describes Clément's concept of the planetary garden, which dispenses with the idea that some plants are native and others introduced, some appropriate and others not; gardeners must respond to what they encounter and what emerges without judgement. His concept highlights the importance of the relationship between humans and non-humans in gardens. The neglect of this relationship in the South West and Plant to Plate gardens undermined relationships between humans in the garden communities and meant the gardens struggled as sites of food production and community development. Garden organisers at these sites didn't display the degree of responsiveness that Clément suggests is necessary to manage the diverse social and natural forces in the gardens. They took a rather high-handed approach to nature, seeing it as something that could be managed with the right knowledge and directed effort, much like the gardeners. They brought a set of expectations about how the gardens would look, and gardeners would interact with the gardens and each other. Their expectations were drawn from their own experiences and their aspirations for particular outcomes without inviting

participation from other users. Organisers failed to accommodate the needs of the garden by taking summers off, visiting at irregular intervals, and planting what they thought poor people might eat rather than what was suited to the site, for example. For their part, the plants and other elements of nature acted with utter disregard for social processes, categorisations or aesthetic order. The gardens took no account of human timetables such as summer holidays and classroom schedules, or their designated role as primary producers of food by producing weeds, bugs and mould instead. Community gardens are human projects, designed for social outcomes such as providing sources of food and places of recreation that meet human needs but are often thwarted by unruly plants.

Plants bring nuance to community gardens in that they produce effects not specified in funding proposals and public relations materials. The needs of the gardens discipline garden organisers, just as organisers discipline others. The need for constant care and interaction, for example, prompted the school garden organisers to set up school gardening clubs and invite other members of the community to participate in order to keep the gardens going. Schools already invite participation from parents and others to support sports and cultural activities and must include parents on their boards of governance, but Plant to Plate aimed to establish links between pupils and community members who were not necessarily connected with the school and without the school acting as mediator. Because the gardens are on school grounds, this meant that the schools could become a site of community activity beyond the formal curriculum.

In the Eastern community garden, organisers had to relinquish their aspirations to bring gardeners together on Saturday mornings to work together in assembled communities. They let go of their ideas about running cooking workshops and community meals, and their rules about the use of hoses and other permitted gardening methods. The Eastern garden was a success, in the sense that it is still going albeit in a different location, is tended year-round and survived a move from one location to another. It is so successful because the gardeners have been free to develop their own relationship with their plots and each other, to use resources as they need them. The shared garden beds, the produce of which is destined for a food bank or the free food store which none of the gardeners uses, remain a source of anxiety and resentment for the garden organisers who need to prompt others to contribute labour as the price of access to the garden as a whole and discourage the sharing of communal vegetables along private networks, regardless of need.

The one garden which failed in the sense of growing and engaging gardeners over time was the South West garden which rejected the involvement of anyone other than its mandated

community of offenders and staff. The Department of Corrections could not accept the involvement of another group, even when those other gardeners used the garden at different times and on different days, essentially leaving Corrections to use the garden as it needed when it needed. Corrections' failure to engage with a wider community meant that there was no-one to tend to the garden over the Department's summer holidays and that any offenders who developed an interest in gardening were unable to follow through and continue to participate. In closing out The Green Hub, Corrections also closed out the gardening knowledge and experience held by The Green Hub volunteers, as well as their extensive networks that brought in seedlings, donations of plants and equipment, and the interest of the city council and Mayor, who reportedly saw potential in The Green Hub's proposal to link the nearby cycle paths, river walkways and other recreational facilities to the garden. In closing the garden to the wider community, Corrections relied on its own staff to develop a long-term vision and management plan for the garden that took account of crop rotation, pest management and composting and developing a Clément-ian relationship with the site. However, Corrections deployed staff to different projects depending on demand, and there was no continuity of management in the gardens and no relationship with the natural world. The nature of community service sentencing meant that offenders were only required to serve a fixed number of hours across the range of community projects; they were not sentenced to work in the garden.

Corrections staff are employed to oversee offenders' community work, not to produce food for charitable organisations, cultivate an aesthetically pleasing space for relaxation, or observe and respond to the needs of the various species that emerged in the parts of the garden that were left uncultivated. The garden became a secure site where staff and offenders could serve their time, rather than a garden serving the needs of a wider community. The tasks that offenders were assigned were gardening tasks, such as weeding, mowing, fetching and digging in manure, and planting seedlings, but the purpose of the activity was to keep offenders occupied for the time that they were in the garden, not to produce an attractive environment, a surplus of food or a habitat for wildlife. The disconnection between the needs of the garden and the needs of the Department quickly became evident once The Green Hub was excluded. The flowers, herbs and walking onions in the centre of the driveway turning circle disappeared and were replaced with frequently-mowed grass. The pumpkin patch was left to the wild grasses, and the long raised beds had so much horse manure dug into them that they ceased to be suitable for growing. The Green Hub manager described them as "poisoned",

complaining that Corrections dug the horse manure in because it was a time-consuming task that kept offenders busy, not because the soil needed it.

Both the garden and these wider social effects suffered when Community Corrections asserted its control over the garden and reduced it to a site of human-centred activity, relegating the natural world of the garden to the wings. This outcome ran counter to Corrections' stated objectives of delivering softer rehabilitation objectives which they described as giving offenders a sense of achievement and self-respect. It also made it much more difficult for Corrections to help offenders gain the basic life skills and experiences that many offenders are seen to lack, such as being able to grow vegetables or even to be able to identify them, taste them and add them to their diets which, the Corrections manager assured me, were often bereft of fresh produce. The Department's inability to share space with other community groups could reflect the poor communication between the Department The Green Hub, or the complex history between the Department, The Green Hub and city council officers. It could also reflect the power of institutional narratives about risk and responsibility – the Department was unwilling to take a community-engaged approach to building relationships, partnerships with other groups and co-operative, collaborative ways of working with others and with the garden to improve its rehabilitative potential for fear of exposing itself to criticism or others to harm.

Similarly, The Green Hub's inability to perceive the radical potential of the garden meant that they saw offenders as brawn, stripped of agency by the justice system and there to be bossed about. Rather than seeing offenders and the Department as a potential resource and ally, The Green Hub manager deployed her sense of governmental belonging to position offenders as garden implements without any intrinsic disposition towards nature, gardening or charitable good works. In one respect, this seems to be a wasted opportunity to enrol the garden in community development and offender rehabilitation. From another perspective, neither organisation approached the garden as a partner in their enterprises and instead used their knowledge, or ability to control access, to limit the other partner's influence, obsessing over human power relations to the detriment of the garden and its extended community.

8.10   DO COMMUNITY GARDENS WORK, AND WHAT WORK DO THEY DO?

The question of whether gardens do what their gardeners think they are doing, or want them to do is not easy to answer. The boundaries of garden projects are vague and fluid even as gardening programmes – their location, timetables and participants – are fixed. The gardens

'work' in various ways and their strength, their enduring popularity, may be that they are adaptable, flexible and responsive.

Gardens are co-created by gardeners and nature. The gardens' care and cultivation determine whether an established garden will be successful in the long term. The garden, therefore, constitutes its community, inviting care and engagement from its gardeners. If gardens are to be maintained, some level of organisation and division of responsibility are needed, which means that the community must commit to the garden. In the garden projects where the commitment was compelled rather than engendered, like the school and Community Corrections garden, the garden as a technology of community development began to break down. The gardens failed to inspire communities of care, so the weeds grew, seeds blew around and sprouted in unexpected places, the soil dried out, and the gardens lost their form as gardens – all of these failures follow the first which is the failure of a community to materialise as a caring, responsible body (De Laet & Mol, 2000).

8.11   THE LIMITS OF MANAGERIALISM

My research and that of others find community gardens can do the things that garden organisers want them to do, which is improve people's levels of skill in the garden and possibly the kitchen, produce surpluses for charity and improve people's diets, health and well-being. They can build community networks and encourage people to experiment with new forms of organisation. But it is never a certainty that these outcomes will be realised. In the gardens considered for this research, the involvement of garden organisers was the very thing that hampered gardens' success. Their insistence on promoting specific practices or outcomes related to food, eating and health, or categorising plants and practices as good or bad, created tension amongst gardeners and organisers, as in the case of the tobacco growers, for example. The failure to recognise the garden and its needs as a partner in projects led to it being discounted as a player or taken for granted, such as in the war between Corrections and The Green Hub. The needs of the South West garden overwhelmed Community Corrections, just as it would have overwhelmed The Green Hub's tiny band of volunteers who would have been unable to continue to garden on such as scale without Corrections' help. In the school gardens, organisers' insistence on growing vegetables in raised beds and making a specific link between gardening and food, rather than promoting gardening as an activity, placed an impossible burden on schools to maintain the vegetable gardens. Garden organisers' efforts to build a community around the garden focussed just on the gardening and left the cooking to one side, but even then, they struggled to build a community of care to maintain the gardens. The Eastern community garden organisers quickly abandoned their aspirations to host community

cooking events and promote "homegrown lunchboxes", which they never defined, in favour of supporting the garden as a place of cultivation and recreation.

Lorusso et al. (2014) observe that quality of life is closely linked to the ability of a community to self-determine its conditions of everyday life. The greater the self-organisational ability, the wider the possibilities of producing social capital; and the higher the level of involvement, the greater the perceived responsibility towards those spaces. The garden that best worked in this way was the Eastern community garden, whose organisers had relinquished any firm views on how gardeners should organise or practice their gardening. Instead, they functioned as advocates for the garden, drawing on their resources as leaders of a Community Trust to secure new land for the garden when it had to relocate. They mustered the funds to support a part-time co-ordinator who facilitated access to compost, kept paths gravelled and constructed new raised beds to meet the ever-growing demand, enabling those who did have the power or financial resources to arrange these inputs to keep caring for the garden. Steve, the garden coordinator, did have clear views on garden practices, but he lacked the presence or authority to influence the direction set by other actors. Steve's role was to mediate the plurality of their interests for the general good of the garden.

Seeing gardens as co-created by gardeners and local ecosystems makes it easier see why each garden is a unique expression of alterity rather than part of a comprehensive movement to reform food systems, domestic practices or urban living. Connelly (2018) notes that food provides diverse opportunities and motivations for people to get involved, to contribute to change of various kinds and to access funding and resources. At the same time, the diverse range of motivations, and the ability of gardens to assemble a troupe of gardeners make collaboration between gardens challenging. Like other elements of the alternative food and urban ecology movements, garden communities are assembled from volunteers and are often resource-poor. Connelly finds that the many stories of local food projects successfully doing food differently in their own areas have no need or capacity to make a meaningful impact elsewhere – it's enough for gardeners and communities to develop a relationship with their own community gardens. This doesn't mean that gardens can't revitalise alternative food networks, but it does mean that they can't be co-opted as an instrument of transformation, rolled out across the nation to address systemic problems with food, parenting, self-management or health.

This research has drawn links to the international literature on community gardens through Foucault's conception of governmentality and the uneven social impact of neoliberalisation in similar economies. It has also described the distancing effect of policies and practices that

depoliticise issues such as hunger, poverty and access to housing in neoliberal systems of government. Hage's conception of governmental belonging has provided insight into the lingering effects of the politics of settler societies such as Australia and New Zealand on the ways in which food politics, and domestic practices such as vegetable gardening especially, play out. Linking New Zealand's cultural identity to our enthusiasm for gardening as a solution to a range of social ills is a new perspective on community gardens and highlights how similar the language of neoliberalism is to the language of self-reliance in a settler societies – they are so similar, in fact, that it took many months of careful observation to disentangle the concerns in community gardens literature about the role of gardens in advancing the neoliberal project from my observations and experiences in the gardens, and many pages to describe it. This work highlights the risks of assuming that arguments made in international literature can be uncritically applied to the New Zealand context.

Drawing on the work of gardener-philosopher Clément re-centred plants and the natural world in the discussion of community gardens, not just in the sense of acknowledging them but exploring the discipline that the needs of gardens place on gardeners. The material aspects of community gardens – the materiality of vegetables both in the ground and post-harvest, the disciplining imperatives of the natural world and the corrupting trajectory of fresh produce – are rarely explored in the literature. Issues with the distribution and sharing of garden produce is also largely unexplored, and as is the demands of processing fresh produce at home. The participant observation and autoethnography used in this research has enable me to insert some of the politics of domestic labour into the community gardens literature.

What do garden organisers think they're doing when they do community gardening? As this project ended, I felt that beneath their concerns, garden organisers were attempting to pass on some of the pleasure and satisfaction they experienced when gardening; and to capture some of the security and social prosperity that home gardens represent. My abiding memories of the gardens are of butterflies and fat bees hovering over the plants, the rustle of the wind and the warm golden sunflowers. For all the worries and fears of human gardeners, the quiet determination of the natural world to reproduce year after year is a source of comfort and joy.

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