

Dwelling on Urban Farmland: Restoring Sustainable Foodways through Local Engagement with an Alternative Agricultural System

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Abstract

The current industrial agricultural food production and consumption system is responsible for much of today's environmental degradation. The unsustainability thereof expresses itself physically, but also socially, as people are increasingly disconnected from their food sources. Yet, alternative agricultural foodway system are emerging in response thereto and attempt to restore more sustainable engagement with food. This thesis constitutes an effort to explore the ways in which the urban agriculture initiative of Koningshof may contribute to a restoration of sustainable foodways. Ethnographic fieldwork was carried out with the intention of finding out how Koningshof facilitates access to sustainable food production methods and how it encourages sustainable food consumption. This was analysed through Marvin Harris' cultural materialism for its important contribution to the anthropology of food and agriculture. The ethnographic fieldwork centred on two main groups: Volunteers supporting the activities of Koningshof and *Tuinders* – people renting allotment gardens at Koningshof. What the research revealed is that participation at Koningshof is motivated by an inherent interest in sustainability, and that much of the restoration process is actualised in participants' attitudes towards food waste. The instances of restoration have very pragmatic and instrumental underpinnings that relate to its impact on their own physical and mental wellbeing, as well as contributing to the emergence of socio-environmental reciprocity between participants and the food crops at Koningshof. Yet challenges to this restoration process give insight into the difficulties for alternative agricultural foodway systems of establishing meaningful forms of resistance to the industrial agricultural paradigm.

Keywords: *urban agriculture; sustainable foodways; cultural materialism; Marvin Harris; allotment gardens; agricultural volunteering; food alienation*

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Though many of my peers struggled with the prevalence of the coronavirus during the entirety of the research period, I was blessed to experience of a sense of normalcy at Koningshof. Participating on the volunteering days and helping the *Tuinders* at Koningshof provided me with a perfect environment to learn more about the realities of urban agriculture, but also agriculture in general. The community of people at Koningshof was always very warm and welcoming, and I wish to thank everyone I encountered for the opportunity to carry out my fieldwork amongst them; In particular the Initiators of the project for welcoming me week after week within the Volunteering initiative, letting my take up a coveted spot on the team for the whole of the three months I got to participate, and today still – though no longer as a researcher. I also want to the Board, and in particular Guus for his heartfelt conversation, and Jake for reaching out and facilitating my integration within Koningshof.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
<i>The State of the Agricultural Sector</i>	2
<i>Academic Relevance</i>	3
<i>Emerging Alternatives</i>	8
<i>Agriculture in the Netherlands</i>	10
<i>The Case of Koningshof</i>	10
<i>Methodology</i>	12
Chapter 1: “Koningshof is its people”	16
<i>An Impression of Koningshof</i>	16
<i>Volunteering in an Agricultural Context</i>	20
<i>Fostering a Sense of Purpose</i>	24
<i>Incentivising Outdoor Life</i>	26
<i>Breaking Monotony and Routine</i>	27
<i>The Tuinders and the Appeal of Openness</i>	28
<i>The Context of the Coronavirus</i>	31
Chapter 2: Koningshof’s Restorative Contribution	32
<i>Indigenous Wisdom as an Analytical Lens</i>	33
<i>The Market at Koningshof</i>	34
<i>The Emotional Evocation in Restoration</i>	38
<i>Respect for Food through the Lens of Waste</i>	42
<i>Knowledge and Community</i>	44
Chapter 3: Challenges to the Restoration of Sustainable Foodways	46
<i>Interplay of agricultural schools of practice</i>	46
<i>Limits to Participants’ Contribution</i>	50
<i>Struggling to Pose as a Viable Alternative</i>	52

Chapter 4: Conclusion and Limitations	55
<i>Concluding Notes</i>	55
<i>Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research</i>	57
Bibliography	59

Introduction

The centrepiece of human societal organisation is food, if only for the simple reason that it provides us with necessary primary sustenance. Its important cultural dimension is evidenced in the role attributed to it in tourism (Giampiccoli and Kalis 2012), its intersection with class and race-based inequalities (Lambert-Pennington and Hicks 2016), and even the role it plays in wars and conflicts (Sidney W Mintz and Du Bois 2002; McClintock 2018). Food also provides a lens through which we experience nature. It is extremely sensorially loaded in its triggering of visual, olfactory, gustatory, touch, and even auditory senses, thereby providing us with gateways to engage with our world and our environment (Sutton 2010). The importance of senses in relation to food extends beyond its consumption, as they are also relevant in different stages of food's utilisation. We need our senses when growing, producing or foraging for it, evaluating the condition of produce, and constantly refer to it when cooking meals (von der Emde and Bleckmann 1998; Cardello 1996; Sutton 2010; Boesveldt et al. 2018). Hence, food presents itself as important vehicle for cultural practices

Despite the centrality of food to the human condition, or perhaps because of it, food has now become one of the main drivers for the threats to our general wellbeing, such as the onset of the climate change crisis. Much like any socio-economic sector, the agricultural practices have undergone many changes under the drive of modernisation (Kansanga et al. 2018; Fortier and Trang 2013). Modernisation, however, is often critiqued for its contribution to the climate crisis, resource exploitation and general environmental degradation (Fremaux and Barry 2019; Isenhour 2016; Grunwald 2018; Horlings and Marsden 2011; Flitner and Heins 2002). The need for this industrialisation of food production methods is closely tied to a dietary paradigm in which animal products are prevalent, but also reflects the concentration of people in cities through urbanisation and the need to feed these populations (P. Berg 2013; Sonnino 2016). Achieving this nutrition is often realised by ways of food produced externally to those urban areas (Horrigan, Lawrence, and Walker 2002). These new demands for food production, however, results in the proliferation of unsustainable food practices through resource-intensive industrial agriculture models (P. Berg 2013; Sonnino 2016).

The State of the Agricultural Sector

The current intensive agricultural industry severely contributes to climate change as it is estimated to make up between 10 and 20 per cent of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (P. Smith et al. 2007; FAO 2020). When agriculture's full lifecycle is included, it becomes apparent that close to a quarter of global GHG emissions originate from our foodways. The impact of conventional industrial agriculture is also noticeable through indicators other than GHG emissions only. Industrial agriculture, in fact, contributes to the encroachment of human activity onto key planetary boundaries. This pertains to (i) nitrogen and phosphorous cycle disruptions that severely damage ecosystems or contribute to biodiversity loss, (ii) atmospheric aerosol loading, and (iii) chemical pollution as a result of agricultural land-grabbing and pesticide use (Rockström et al. 2009; Horrigan, Lawrence, and Walker 2002; Aschemann-Witzel et al. 2015; Steffen et al. 2006). Moreover, it also plays a role in aquifer depletion as a result of freshwater use in irrigation systems (Rockström et al. 2009; Horrigan, Lawrence, and Walker 2002; Aschemann-Witzel et al. 2015). Current industrial agricultural practices, thus, heavily contribute to all forms of environmental degradation needing to be tackled, requiring a revision of this mode of food production.

Yet, industrial agriculture is continuously expanded rather than scaling down (Alston, Babcock, and Parday 2010), and though new sustainability regulations make efforts to limit the damage the industry imposes upon soil, plant and animal life, it cannot manage to do away with it completely (Öhlund, Zurek, and Hammer 2015). Industrial agriculture has imposed itself as a necessary means to sustain an ever-growing global population, with the addition that the development of the Asian and African geographical regions leads to diets worldwide gradually beginning to resemble that of western nations (Carrera-Bastos et al. 2011; Popkin 1994; Drewnowski and Popkin 1997; Périssé, Sizaret, and Francois 1969). The adoption of western diets and the industries necessary to sustain them, however, expedite the negative externalities associated thereto, be they social, medical, or environmental. Moreover, these systems contribute

to an increasing alienation of people from their food sources that discourages critical engagement therewith (Korthals 2019; Kimmerer 2020).

The industrial food production system is engaged in a dialectic relationship reinforcing negative habits pertaining to food in a wider context. It, thus, plays heavily into “radical consumerism” applied to food produce (Korthals 2019, 37), which encourages the forsaking of produce quality in favour of their lower prices. This purely economic approach to food, in turn, warrants the normalisation of the negative, unsustainable, externalities commonly associated to food, such as food waste. This is facilitated by the opacity of information pertaining to the quality, safety, and origins of the produce being hidden in its commercialisation (Unnevehr et al. 2010; Grunert 2005), while simultaneously being devalued as a result of its abundance in supermarkets (Korthals 2019). Looking into the ways in which food is handled within alternative agriculture systems can, then, lend an eye into how different perceptions of food may be encouraged, and what values thrive in those settings.

Academic Relevance

Before exploring the alternatives to current industrial agricultural systems, it is important to address the anthropological lens through which foodways can be evaluated and understood. The field of behavioural anthropology has always been implicitly interested in the role of food in shaping tradition, culture, and its associated practices (Sidney W Mintz and Du Bois 2002). However, a distinct anthropological field solely focused on the study of food has yet to fully emerge and establish itself as an academic paradigm in itself. Nevertheless, food has historically been approached as a lens through which to understand socio-cultural dynamics, the practices pertaining to it serving as manifestations of larger-scale cultural norms, values, and understandings. Presently, globally increasing levels of obesity, food waste and starvation, as well as the aforementioned pollution associated with food production have shed light onto the societal relevance of understanding the dynamics of our foodways (Sidney W Mintz and Du Bois 2002). As the problems of unsustainable foodways have continued to grow, interest in an anthropology of foodways as a standalone discipline has, thus, gained traction.

In their review of the field, Mintz and Du Bois (2002) express that the anthropology of foodways reflects many of the key ontological debates present within the general field of anthropology, such as those on cultural materialism and structuralism. These perspectives are also relevant to address, as they may help provide a broader understanding of how foodways have historically been approached in the anthropological field, and how they may shape a lens through which to interpret modern-day practices. Two key authors are essential for grasping these perspectives, namely the structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963) and the cultural materialist Marvin Harris (1979; 1987). The importance of juxtaposing these two anthropological paradigms lies in the lessons that can be derived from the cultural materialist school of thought which, in turn, built much of its views by contrasting them to its structuralist predecessor. Despite their respective historical relevance, I will supplement them with recent developments in the field they have inspired, which embody responses to modern environmental challenges paired with western industrialised societies' diets' impact. The most prevalent of which include agricultural anthropology and environmental anthropology.

Historically, the anthropological approach to the study of foodways centred on understanding the formation of taboos surrounding the consumption or practices pertaining to specific foods. The study thereof initially gained notoriety with the structuralist anthropological school of thought that first introduced food as vehicles for meaning, spearheaded by Lévi-Strauss' work (1963). His work, thus, addresses the collective imaginations of food and the prejudices surrounding certain types of food, which he understood as being culturally constructed through emic associations (Caplan 2013). Most famously, Lévi-Strauss observed the relationship that food can have with its states of preparation, namely whether it be raw or cooked. These relationships allude to opposing notions that respectively represent rot or purity, which in turn determines the socio-cultural meaning of food and dictates the instances in which certain foods are consumed (1963; Harris 1987; Caplan 2013). In doing so, it also ascribes certain statuses to the consumers of various foods based on these associations. Mary Douglas echoes the notions that are at the core of structuralism in her account that food and eating are "symbolic of a particular social order" and acknowledges the symbolism inherent to foodways by arguing that they "stand for much more than themselves" (Caplan 2013,

2). The structuralist school of thought is, therefore, important to acknowledge, as it reveals the ascription of cultural meaning to food and overarching foodways.

The groundwork laid by structural materialism is, however, not uncontested. In particular, the sole focus on the emic source of this cultural meaning has fomented criticisms thereto. Indeed, the structuralist approach hints at an almost a priori presence of meaning inherent to specific foods and their preparations, which cultural materialists contest. The main grievance voiced by its scholars relates to the structuralist approach failing to account for the socio-historical context in which these norms and values are developed, as well as their potential instrumentality (Caplan 2013). Mintz (1986) and Goody (1982) are two notable scholars in this regard for their embrace of cultural historical particularism in a similar fashion as that later famously advocated by Farmer (2004). This establishes that cultural norms and values are inherently tied to local particular histories and geographies, as well as the underlying power structures permeating production and consumption therein (Mintz 1986).

Hence, cultural materialism emerged in response to the structuralist paradigm, heralded by Harris who defined this new approach as

“the assumption that biopsychological, environmental, demographic, technological, and political-economic factors exert a powerful influence on the foods that can be produced and consumed by any given human population”(1987, 58),

whereby he challenges the seemingly a priori source of meaning being purely socially constructed under structuralist thought. Instead, he offers to see it as echoing tangible forces drawing from geography, (nutritional) biology or technology. This entails that Lévi-Strauss' idea of a dichotomic relationship between cooked and raw foods does not stem from a purely emic understanding about their purity. Rather that their hierarchic and ritualised employment is also symbolic of an etic material instrumentality, such as the increased chance for illness stemming from eating raw foods. Cultural materialism, thus, presupposes that the emic manifestations of foodways exist to sustain the cultural, historical, biological, and material particularism that makes certain foodways correspond better to specific communities.

The cultural materialist perspective is important to consider when investigating sustainable foodways, as it can shed light onto the reason why we have deviated from sustainable modes of food production and consumption while providing a lens through which to understand the resurgence of foodways responding to these practices. It is important to note that the historical particularism inherent to cultural materialism entails that cultural practices, including foodways, are the product of adaptations over large amounts of time (Harris 1979; 1987). In this, cultural materialism draws on a Darwinian understanding of the evolution of practices (Price 1982; Roosevelt 1987), painting cultural practices as forms of adaptation to cultural groups' natural environment. Tied to this is a special consideration for longer-term environmental sustainability as an important factor in determining the adoption of these practices. Though seemingly implying an innate sustainability of human foodways, it also elucidates many reasons for their opposite nature: namely, that as conditions and circumstances of existing foodways change, a period of adaptation leads to the proliferation of counter-intuitive and harmful foodways (Harris 1987). In Malthusian fashion (Malthus, Winch, and James 1998), Harris sees instances of unoptimized or counter-intuitive foodways as lags in the face of new conditions that will be corrected with their practitioners' environment causing shifts in dietary patterns (1987; Price 1982). Thus, cultural materialism regards environmental circumstances as important factors in the dictation of what particular foodways manifest within communities.

The historical nature of cultural materialism and its structuralist antecedent have, however, tended to lend their focus on the discussion of food taboos in particular (Lévi-Strauss 1963; Caplan 2013; Harris and Ross 1987; Wallace 1980). Modern questions tackled by the anthropology of foodways have extended beyond the question of food taboos and now encompass with the complex, i.e. wicked (Lazarus 2009; Levin et al. 2012), environmental problems they are embedded in. This has led to the proliferation of more specific paradigms tackling specialised issues. The cultural materialist tradition has inspired many an emergent school of thought such as ecological anthropology (Kottak 1999; Orlove 1980; Shoreman and Haenn 2009; Headland 1997), and it is no exception thereto, as is evidenced by the materiality underlying its ideology which Orlove presents as:

“provid[ing] a materialist examination of the range of human activity and thus bears an affinity to other materialistic approaches in the social and biological sciences” (1980, 235).

This entails that ecological anthropology strives to account for the ways in which human cultural practices have impacted the world’s physical ecologies. It, moreover, looks more broadly into the ways that a certain degree of harmony may be restored. Though cultural materialism and ecological anthropology may present a worldview that echoes that of Hardin’s “tragedy of the commons” (2009, 1), it also holds true that the same arguments explaining foodways as arising out of a striving for a natural equilibrium may also explain their deviation therefrom. Harris, for instance, explains obesity and overconsumption as “natural selection favour[ing] individuals who eat to store fat whenever there is an opportunity to do so” to survive periods in which food was less accessible (1987, 94). The onset of the sustainability paradigm, similarly, leads to dietary shifts such as vegetarianism or rising interests in local food consumption as sustainable alternatives (Pimentel and Pimentel 2003; Bianchi and Mortimer 2015). Indeed, these can be seen as instances of an adjustment to the material environmental challenges that existing dietary patters are causing and constitute new cultural values that would partake in restoring sustainable foodways.

As aforementioned, the current state of agricultural systems and the problems and shortcomings ensuing therefrom are leading to the emergence of alternative systems. Yet, their seemingly reactive nature is unlikely to be the sole source of legitimacy they benefit from. This raises the importance of understanding what other factors are leading to their popularisation and what that means for their innovative and disruptive capabilities. The cultural materialist perspective and its attention to the instrumentality of cultural practices, as well as the historical particularism they are embedded in, provides a lens through which to interpret these emergent alternatives and their capabilities to mend existent, detrimental, foodways.

Emerging Alternatives

Before delving into the way my research pertains to explore the innovative and capabilities of such agricultural practices, it is important to take note of what kinds of alternatives have emerged and what the context of this emergence is.

The unsustainability of the current industrial food production paradigm entails that radical change thereto is necessary to ensure its future sustainability (Horton 2017). This cannot, however, be accomplished by looking at the production methods alone. Hence, foodways in their entirety ought to be considered. This also necessitates a revision of consumption practices supporting current agricultural practices, making it necessary to explore the emergent alternatives thereto and their impact on current foodways. Indeed, a number of innovative agricultural approaches have emerged in response to the shortcomings of their industrial counterpart, directly aimed at overcoming those. As aforementioned, the main grievances towards the present-day model are the distance it creates between consumers and their food sources due to their scale and their complexity, as well as its unsustainability. Moreover, the role of cities in food demand is non-negligable and needs to be accounted for. Systems that pertain to address these problems are regenerative forms of agricultural practices, (Rhodes 2012; 2017; LaCanne and Lundgren 2018) community-supported agriculture (CSA) (Endres 2014; Sokolovsky 2011), and urban agricultural practices (Pearson, Pearson, and Pearson 2010; Specht et al. 2013). Alternative agricultural models and associated foodways are, therefore, seen to emerge in response to the challenges of sustainability.

These alternatives inscribe themselves into a rising attention for humankind's place in relation to its natural environment and a general revisit of its dominant, as well as domineering, practices. Global environmental movements have encouraged the revisiting of most of our society's key industries and promote alternative forms of production and consumption centred on sustenance rather than abundance. Thus, movements such as *buen vivir*, ecological swaraj, or degrowth (Kothari, Demaria, and Acosta 2014; Hickel and Kallis 2020; Hickel 2020; Kallis 2011; Escobar 2015a; Tsing 2017) – all three advocating to shift away from a consumerist capitalist and growth oriented paradigm – are gaining increasing traction in popular culture and within the relevant academic fields. These niche paradigms are closely related to approaches to

food production, namely in their advocacy for a re-valorisation of more traditional agricultural systems and redefining sustainable consumption practices. Paired with this is that they often pertain to remedy the consumer's alienation from its food sources – and thereby food itself – that is inherent to conventional industrial agricultural foodways (Korthals 2019). Small-scale, bottom-up, agricultural initiatives that produce healthy, organic, produce are key in this remedying movement. They do this by building connections between the producer and the consumers via farmer's markets in which the personal connections formed also serve to develop trust of the produce sold by these farmers.

Regenerative agricultural practices such as agroforestry and permaculture inscribe themselves herein, as they strive to change the agricultural paradigm from one exploiting and exhausting the resources present in the Earth's soil to one actively rejuvenating it, all the while protecting biodiversity (Lockyer and Veteto 2013; Holmgren 2002; Mollison 1988). It stands in association to CSA and urban agriculture as it incorporates human participation in its system holistically, while its scale allows for its application in smaller city gardens (Haluza-DeLay and Berezan 2013). CSA and urban agriculture, in particular, strive for the integration of consumers into the production process by employing them in farming endeavours in ever-closer proximity to residential areas (Endres 2014). Alternatives to industrial agriculture, therefore, emerge to address the problems of modern food production paradigms and require academic attention to understand how they propose to challenge it.

Throughout the sustainability paradigm, a lot of attention has been dedicated to the power the consumer has in bringing about systemic change (Middlemiss 2008; Evans, Welch, and Swaffield 2017; Moloney, Horne, and Fien 2010). Though there are definite contestations of the degree to which the burden of responsibility should be with consumers, it is definitely true that they hold the power to legitimise alternative modes of production by bringing the economic sustainability producers need to perpetuate their activities. Moreover, consumer practices, moulded by the industrial agricultural production paradigm, have implicitly legitimised the latter's continued existence. This is due to an experienced lack of viable alternatives thereto. Given the relevance of cities in this question, particular attention ought to be paid to the ways in which individuals' foodways adapt to alternative systems when they emerge. It is for this reason that this

thesis will explore an instance of community supported agriculture intersecting with urban agriculture occurring at Koningshof in the city of Utrecht, in the Netherlands.

Agriculture in the Netherlands

This research was carried out in an urban gardening initiative in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The Netherlands is the world's second largest food exporter despite its small geographical land area (Dolman, Jukema, and Ramaekers 2019). This is facilitated by an incredibly innovative agricultural research institute in Wageningen. Yet, despite these innovations and its ecological efficiencies, the intensity of the Dutch agricultural output relies on industrial agricultural initiatives, much of which tends to follow the environmentally harmful nature of such a type of industrial activity (van Grinsven et al. 2019). This is exemplified by the severe nitrogen crisis happening in the Netherlands, which the country has been fighting for years (Stokstad 2019; Ploeg 2020). Understanding the ways in which alternative forms of food production systems emerge in the Netherlands in particular, as well as their impact on the obtention of sustainable foodways is, therefore, extremely relevant.

Indeed, it may propose a solution to the pressing matter of agriculture's environmental impact, and the ways in which consumers can actively be mobilised to mend their alienation from their primary necessity. The urban gardening initiative Koningshof in Utrecht is an interesting example in this context

The Case of Koningshof

During three months of ethnographic fieldwork within its community – which I will further develop on below – it has become apparent that Koningshof's primary motive, from the moment of its inception onwards, has been bringing people closer to their food sources, recognising the unsustainability of present-day foodways. This began by renting out allotment gardens for people that they may grow their own vegetables. The renters thereof are called '*Tuinders*', gardeners. Throughout the years, Koningshof has expanded upon this mission by engaging volunteers on a weekly basis to help Koningshof itself produce vegetables that are, nowadays, sold at a market on Saturdays.

Koningshof is an initiative that has run for about 8 years, and throughout that time its original organisational structure has also shifted (Koningshof 2019). Moreover, outside of the coronavirus restrictions, Koningshof organises multiple events and has a hospitality element in the form of a café on location. The project was initiated by four friends and colleagues working for the same landscape architecture bureau. One of them, Fred, comes from a long line of farmers that owned the land Koningshof is located on. His father, Evert, is still owner of the land, but chose to retire from the agriculture business with the increasing prominence of industrial agriculture driving the prices down to uncompetitive levels. He now assists his son in the daily tasks for Koningshof's own food production, with the aid of the aforementioned volunteers on Saturdays. All four of the initiators have their different interests and expertise that they apply to Koningshof. Thus, Fred primarily tends to the greenhouse and production field for Koningshof's own production and tends the market stall. Lars is the volunteer coordinator whose background as a horticulturalist and particular interest for trees also makes the primary caretaker of all the productive trees on the land. Ben concerns himself with the handy work that needs to take place on the property, while Petra takes charge of the hospitality side of the initiative.

The objective of my research was to explore the ways in which Koningshof, in its striving to present a small-scale, bottom-up, sustainable, and alternative foodway system might help overcome issues of unsustainable foodways. Moreover, this thesis will strive to understand how the cultural materialist perspective can elucidate Koningshof's successes and failures in achieving this. In particular, I have looked into how the communities forming around Koningshof's initiatives contribute to the mending of consumers' alienation from their foodways and overcoming the bio-physical unsustainability of modern-day agriculture. This thesis, thus, pertains to answer the following research question:

How does the cultural materialist behavioural anthropological paradigm explain how Koningshof contributes to the restoration of sustainable foodways amongst its participants?

This research question is divided in three sub-questions that helped guide the answer hereto, namely:

- (i) *Who are the participants at Koningshof and how does it motivate their adhesion to the project?*
- (ii) *How do the activities at Koningshof foment participants' relationship to the food grown there and how does this contribute to their restoration of sustainable foodways?*
- (iii) *How do the challenges Koningshof faces in facilitation this restoration process reveal the complexities of forming a viable alternative to the current industrial foodways?*

The methodology below will address what research approaches I employed to answer these questions.

Methodology

To investigate this, I carried out ethnographic fieldwork within Koningshof's community for three months. During this time, my main informants were a group of volunteers that I integrated into as a volunteer myself, as well as a group of *Tuinders*. These *Tuinders* formed a distinct community amongst themselves; They consisted of a group of women that were in charge of setting up a flower garden on the Koningshof grounds. This ethnographic fieldwork comprised of active participants observation and informal interviews, supplemented by semi-structure interviews. O'Reilly (2012) explains that participation and observation in participant observation ought to balance each other, with the first serving as a way of familiarising the research population to one's presence, thereby supporting the depth of findings of the latter. Over the course of my research, however, special emphasis was laid on the participation part in the extent of my contribution to the activities occurring at Koningshof. It should be noted that the beginning of my research period coincided with the season's opening of Koningshof's volunteering initiative, and that I therefore was able to easily integrate this community as many of the incoming Volunteers at the time were there for the first time. Ethnographic research operates on a principle of informed consent (DeWalt and DeWalt

2011) which was verbally obtained from all participants at any time of involvement in the research.

To ensure that the participants' voices are adequately represented, and to triangulate the findings from the ethnographic fieldwork, informal and semi-structured interviews were used to supplement accounts of participants' experiences of the situations in the research setting (Becker and Geer 1957; O'Reilly 2012; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). Data triangulation also represents an effort to provide objectivity to this study in the face of my positionality throughout the research.

My background as an academic student particularly in community engagement with sustainability provides me with an informed perspective into initiatives like Koningshof that engage in community supported sustainable agricultural projects. This is supplemented by my additional background in Industrial Ecology that informs me as to the environmental sustainability thereof, which is reflected in this thesis to inform the extent to which Koningshof is able to restore sustainable foodways amongst its participants. My engagement with the topic inscribes this thesis somewhat in the activist research tradition that seeks to legitimise research in settings the researcher has an existent interest or connection with while seeking to promote the perpetuity thereof (Hale 2006). Hale specifically explains that it entails "affirm[ing] a political alignment with an organised group of people" (2006, 97), wherein the partiality of the research does not have to stand in the way of cultural critique or critical distance and engagement with the object of research. In line with this, however, and to remedy potential biases that could ensue therefrom, I have chosen to lend additional weight to the interviews throughout this thesis to better present the participants' practices as part of this restoration process.

During the participant observation, I explored people's motivations in joining an initiative like Koningshof and the ways that this led to the formation of its existent community. Additionally, understanding the ways their participation contributed to the restoration of sustainable foodways among my research population also entailed looking at the ways in which their participation impacted their practices pertaining to food. This included delving into the ways they related to the food produced at Koningshof, how they integrated sustainable food consumption into their personal lives, and what

the general impact thereof could be. Moreover, I looked into the ways the participants' knowledge and information about foodways in general was gained and shared among them.

All participants gave their informed consent to participate during my ethnographic fieldwork, and all names were anonymised throughout the data collection process. Hence, all names used throughout the thesis refer to pseudonyms chosen for each participant. This was done in such a way as to limit individual participants' recognition of each other, particularly in instances where recognition may harm the participants by contributing to tensions.

Though Koningshof counts some young participants in its midst, these were not included in the research process due to difficulties with obtaining their informed consent. Some participants could be categorised as elderly as a significant amount of people walking around Koningshof are retired. These were, however, all in capacity of giving their informed consent, which they demonstrated in the independence and autonomy of their participation at Koningshof. Moreover, the health risks inherent to the prevalence of the coronavirus over the duration of the research, which particularly concerns older populations, were mitigated by the fact that the majority of activities at Koningshof occurred outside or in a well-aired greenhouse, where participants could easily maintain the 1.5m distance from me and each other mandated by the Dutch government's coronavirus measures (Rijksoverheid n.d.). The importance of the coronavirus in the participation at Koningshof and its restorative endeavour for sustainable foodways will also be highlighted throughout this thesis.

Chapter one of this thesis will provide a general overview and impression of Koningshof, as well as presenting its participant population and its motivation for joining the initiative. It shows that many of the participants use Koningshof to express a pre-existent longing for sustainability and renewing a sense of proximity with nature, one that is compounded by the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Chapter two delves more deeply into the ways Koningshof actualises its striving for the restoration of sustainable foodways among its participants. This is presented through the analytical lens of Indigenous wisdom and its relevance in the cultural materialist paradigm. The chapter will show how the market held every Saturday is a key platform for the actualisation

of this restoration, while sheer participation only lays the groundwork for the benefits reaped from the market. In chapter three, I will shed light onto the shortcomings Koningshof faces, especially in the material expressions of its sustainability and the drawbacks of its organisational and participatory structure. Lastly, chapter four will conclude that Koningshof is an important experiment in emergent alternative agricultural systems and that it, therethrough, does contribute to significant restoration of sustainable foodways within its participants that extends beyond their activates on the land. It will also address the challenges that it faces in actualising this restoration fully, and how these limitations can inspire future academic exploration of the topic.

Chapter 1: “Koningshof is its people”¹

The cultural materialist lens observed throughout this thesis has been employed to great extents in the understanding of food norms, taboos and taste (Harris 1987). It proposes *materialistic*, i.e., tangible and practical, explanations as to their formation and ritualisation. These propositions, however, can also extend beyond the scope of food, and, thus, serve to inform the meaning of the motivations to participate in the endeavours Koningshof provides a space for. In light of this, it was important to acknowledge the arguments that the volunteers offered to explain their, often continued, presence within the volunteering initiative. Moreover, it is of equal relevance to understand what drove the *Tuinders* to join Koningshof and why they remain. To begin exploring this, I deem it necessary to first take the time to paint a picture of the layout of Koningshof, and to provide an impression of the atmosphere that reigns on its land.

An Impression of Koningshof

When entering Koningshof for the first time, Spring had only just begun, but it would be some time before the weather would begin reflecting this. It was still cold and cloudy, and the slightly windy weather generally discouraged being outdoors. Throughout the course of my fieldwork, weather was always of relevance; So much happened in the outdoors, and the plants were reliant on the amounts of sun and water they would naturally receive. Thus, gloomy grey days were succeeded by warm, bright, and sunny ones, to then make place for torrential rains. On some occasions, I even witnessed mid-Spring frosts with a sliver of snow.

Yet, even in the harsher conditions, walking onto Koningshof always felt inviting. It is located on the rim of the city of Utrecht, barely on its outskirts. It just slightly escapes the classic city buzz, yet significant numbers of cars, pedestrians, and bikers pass by it every day. Its entrance is low-profile: there is no gate,

¹ Interview 26/05/2021

just a fenced row of trees separating the land from the neighbours', and a wooden sign made of rough bark reading 'Koningshof'. On the right of the entrance is Evert and his wife's house. Evert is owner of the land and his family historically farmed it professionally. Though these days are over, he still walks around and helps out where he can.

From this entrance runs a path that extends over the whole length of the land. It is along this path that all of Koningshof's activities take place. First is a small shed attached to a larger garage. Part of that garage is Evert's, and the other, the association's. The Saturday market always takes place in front of this small shed. On those days, it fills an otherwise empty spot with a rustic looking market stand, all with red and white checkered cloth covered surfaces. Koningshof's share of the garage holds large fridges, freezers, and stands to store the goods that fill this market: jam, honey, potatoes, flour, sausages, and whatever comes from the (nearby) land. On Saturdays, it is also vibrant with local people and passer-by's shopping for fresh, local, and organic food.

Beyond the small shed lies all of Koningshof's productive agricultural land. A large greenhouse stretching out over the right side of the land is the most striking landmark. It is both a gathering spot for volunteers, Tuinders, and visitors, while being the biggest source of Koningshof's own agricultural production. A decently large kitchen area, with some tables surrounding it, mark the spot for this social element to the greenhouse. Petra traditionally prepares volunteers' lunches here, though the context of the coronavirus had prohibited this tradition to take place while I was there. Koningshof's participant population also gathers here for coffee and tea, the latter often seeped from herbs grown in the greenhouse. The rest of the greenhouse was bare at first but for a few perennial trees, yet, with each succeeding week, small seedlings emerge – at first indiscernible from the surrounding weeds – that, later still, become great green and lush bushes sprawling over paths made of wooden planks. Overlooking the kitchen area, a great skeletal structure of grape vines looms, obscuring their knowledge that, in a few months' time, they would make it impossible to walk under them. At least, not without causing us to brush against countless leaves and bunches of grapes.

Attached to the greenhouse is a small chicken coop. I'd always wondered at the relatively large size of it, despite housing just two chickens, but I eventually found out that predators have their ways on the rims of cities, too. The ones that survived lead a luxurious life; They were often let out in the back of the greenhouse where they weeded the ground better than volunteers ever could. Fred once explained that sprouting weeds were like snack food for them. Their droppings, in turn, were delicacies for the soil's caretaking organisms. When courgettes were planted on the chickens' plot, they would find their territory diminished; Chickens do not, unfortunately, discriminate between weeds and seedlings.

Behind the greenhouse is a simple shed. It houses all the tools used on the land. These tools are shared between all participants, be it Tuinders, Volunteers or the organisation itself. Rakes, spades, shovels, hoes all neatly hang along the wall. It contains storage space of materials, and a wood chopping station. Dead trees are felled and cut to fuel summer barbecues and a pizza oven. This is Ben's domain, and he has his own quarters attached to it. He is the one you go to for access to heavy machinery. This place, too, becomes familiar over the weeks. After one instructive incursion into it to saw some planks to size, Ben leaves us to our own devices for any other project requiring access thereto.

The greenhouse is not the only place where Koningshof produces food; a productive field is laid out beyond this shed. It looked hard and inhospitable, but with minimal weeding and no-dig tilling, it looked surprisingly soft already. Soft enough for onions, garlic, strawberries, and rhubarb to thrive on it over the seasons. Some of the land is also used by a group of Tuinders who are setting up a flower garden. Though it will take quite some time for the soil and the weather to accept these flowers, they inevitably explode into a collection of bright greens and reds and yellows and purples. And speckled over the whole land are rows of Lars' favourite berry bushes, paired with young-though-tall apple, pear, and peach trees.

Most of Koningshof's land is, however, occupied not by its own productive areas, but by the plots rented for Tuinders' potagers. There are three main areas these are located in, each separated by knee-high fences. Inside of them are small patches of damp, dark, healthy soil with the occasional bamboo picketing for climbing tomato or bean plants. The various potagers inside these three areas are no separated from each other at all. The only visible delimitations between the plots come from the formation of the beds onto which multitudes of different crops are planted. During the week, Tuinders' present is sporadic, solitary. They come for an hour to plant, weed, water, and generally tend to their vegetable gardens. During the weekend, there is much more activity. The greenhouse is then always occupied with Tuinders sowing seeds into auspicious perlite soil, and the potagers are full of their squatting caretakers. A peaceful atmosphere of loving attention and convivial community always reigns.

The first impression Koningshof gives is somewhat idyllic, and this is by design. Its atmosphere reflects its mission to renew urbanites' bonds to their food sources. The people participating thereto are essential in conveying this sense of holistic connection with the productive natural world. This was summarised by Guus who explained that "*Koningshof is its people*". In order to understand the contribution Koningshof may have on this restoration process to sustainable foodways, it is, therefore, important to first understand who the participants to Koningshof's initiative are, what drives them to partake, and what this entails for the restoration process. My fieldwork at Koningshof centred on two primary groups who were also the largest body contributing to its activities: The *Tuinders* and the *Volunteers*. The *Tuinders* are those people renting allotment gardens for their potager lots at Koningshof and are most present throughout the week, but they stand somewhat apart from the activities that Koningshof organises itself. Their integration with the volunteering initiative, for instance, is somewhat lacking, which is an important grievance of Guus', who now strives to overcome this distinction between the two groups.

The uptake of the volunteers is in constant flux; There is a large body of returning volunteers but there is also always space for new people to join for a day. Typically, somewhere between eight and ten volunteers will be walking around on Saturdays, with either one or two spots being filled by new volunteers through the NL Cares platform. The NL Cares platform facilitates the linkage of volunteers with volunteering initiatives by providing an overview of available projects that can be sorted and categorised along people's interests. Thus, in the case of Koningshof, it is possible to filter it along one's desired impacted community. Koningshof appears on the platform with two activities that appear at the top of the page when looking under the theme of climate and sustainability in Utrecht (NL Cares n.d.). The first is called 'Sowing and Harvesting at Koningshof' (*Zaaien en Oogsten bij Koningshof*) and the second one 'Chopping and Sawing | Odd Jobs at Koningshof' (*Hakken en Zagen bij Koningshof | Klussen bij Koningshof*). These give a good overview of the various types of activities at Koningshof, particularly shedding light onto their potential degree of physicality. Koningshof, therefore, attracts individuals that have some degree of innate interest in both the arduousness of the work and its sustainable nature.

The transition towards sustainable agricultural production systems, especially decentralised smaller-scales ones, are often reliant on the intervention of volunteers. This is due to a decline in overall willingness to find waged labour for farming activities and, simultaneously, an effort to keep the prices of organic food production low by avoiding the need to integrate labourers' wages therein (Janssen 2013; Terry 2014; Yamamoto and Engelsted 2014). Volunteering then provides a more flexible workforce that is more suited to the seasonality of the agricultural activities while allowing for produce prices to remain affordable. This is particularly important in the food justice debate that encourages seeing food as a right, rather than a mere commodity (Mares and Peña 2011; Valentine Cadieux and Slocum 2015; Lambert-Pennington and Hicks 2016; Davenport and Mishtal 2019). Moreover, the green, ecological, agrarian industry in general is often seen to rely on non-waged as a necessary form of resistance to the increasing encroachment of large-scale, capitalist-minded, industrial agricultural initiatives due the competitive advantage ensuing of their scale (Ekers et al. 2015; Janssen 2013). Moreover, Ekers et al. explain that ecologically oriented farms have a

more pressing urgency for non-waged forms of labour due to the labour intensity of certain tasks that would otherwise be resolved with mechanical and chemical solutions (2015). The benefits of volunteering, however, do not merely flow to the organisation providing the volunteering space, as it is often used to develop personal skills and values, too (Dean 2015; Yamamoto and Engelsted 2014). In the case of the organic agricultural sector, it leads to learning opportunities pertaining to sustainable agricultural techniques, and volunteers often get a sense of reward from their contribution to the realisation of sustainable transitions for farmers (Ekers et al. 2015).

Dean (2015) expresses warning at the personal instrumentalization of volunteering and its contribution to the loss of its communal characteristics for pure personal gain, and this holds true for agricultural volunteering too. Indeed, agricultural volunteering is often associated to “voluntourism” (Wearing 2001, 7) that links volunteering to tourism and its wider appeal and implications for professional recruitment (McGloin and Georgeou 2015; Dean 2015). Moreover, volunteering and tourism suffer from a legacy of association to postcolonial dynamics in their practices (Noxolo 2016; Pastran 2014; Hall and Tucker 2004). The prevalence of the tourism component of this form of volunteering is evidenced by the importance of the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) platform. This platform links volunteers to organic farming opportunities in exchange for room, board and the occasional financial compensation (Terry 2014; McIntosh and Bonnemann 2008; Kosnik 2018). Participating at Koningshof even introduces or reinforces some volunteers’ desire to take part in a WWOOF initiative in the future; Julian explains that his participation at Koningshof is also a way of getting some experience before engaging therein and Michael and Alice’s own times WWOOFing partially inspired them to join Koningshof afterwards. The colonial considerations to voluntourism are not relevant to case of Koningshof as it takes place in the Netherlands and is supported by people from the community it is embedded in. Nevertheless, the organisation of voluntourism, the reasons for participation and the lessons that can be drawn from these instances can be used to inform an understanding of the practices at Koningshof. McIntosh and Bonnemann (2008) explain that it provides the volunteers with the opportunities to learn about more sustainable modes of food production and the lifestyles supporting it, all the while leading to personal growth in a genuine and earnest environment for the exploration thereof.

These community contributions to the survivability of sustainable agricultural models echoes principles of CSA. Koningshof does not strictly adhere to the categorisations of CSA in the sense that volunteers do not buy themselves into production system, nor receive any *guaranteed* food produce in return for their efforts (Endres 2014). The dynamics of participation, nonetheless, do present similar characteristics thereto. Koningshof actively strives to establish a resilient community of *Tuinders*, Volunteers and consumers at its market, and this results in the longer-term participation of these stakeholders. The Volunteers, in particular, often return on a semi-regular basis throughout the entirety of the season and express grievances at the fact that they can only do so on a single set day in the week. Endres (2014) further lays out that an inherent motivation for participating in CSA is the mere desire to help out local farmers actualise their sustainable endeavours. Moreover, this investment finds reciprocity in participants' ability to purchase and consume fresh, local, foods themselves – when available – in return for their participation, which is also characteristic of CSA (Endres 2014). This is facilitated by the provision of discounts and gifts of food for the Volunteers.

The dynamics between Koningshof and its volunteering community is similar to that of those broadly stressed in the context of agroecological initiatives. This is acknowledged by the project initiators, the association's board, and the volunteers themselves. Guus is the secretary on the board but also works at NL Cares and was paramount in integrating and upscaling the volunteering initiative as a core part of the functioning at Koningshof. He explains that the volunteers are integral to the maintenance, upkeep, and production of the agricultural endeavour at Koningshof, as it now “*runs on volunteers*”². The volunteers embrace their responsibility herein, as Julian explains that “*we do it for free so that the operation can even run*”³ and expresses that this knowledge provides him with a sense of humility.

This reliance on volunteers also extends to the prices Koningshof wishes to offer its produce for. Lars, the volunteer coordinator at Koningshof, explains that he wishes to place the prices at the market “*somewhere between Albert Heijn and Ekoplaza*”⁴, the

² Interview 26/05/2021

³ Interview 29/04/2021

⁴ Interview 26/06/2021

first being the biggest general supermarket franchise in the Netherlands (IRI 2018), and the latter a higher end organic supermarket generally deemed more expensive (Kalfagianni 2018). Volunteers aid place Koningshof in this commercial segment as the work they carry out is quite labour and time intensive, and the number of volunteers walking around on an average Saturday could not be maintained if they needed to receive a wage for their work. In fact, Lars explained that the main source of income keeping Koningshof running does not even come from the farmer's market they hold. Instead, the financial stability of the initiative relies on the organisation renting out the land for events. Thus, volunteers are integral to the affordability of the market and, thereby, its inclusivity for a wider range of customers.

This reliance on volunteers, however, also needs to be met by their continued return. Yet, Koningshof has one of the least strict policies in that regard compared to other, similar, initiatives in the area. It is, therefore, interesting to understand what sets Koningshof apart from similar initiatives and then delve into the ways this is reflected in the motivations Volunteers voice for joining. Eva, one of the volunteers that has been coming to Koningshof longest, explained that she also had experience volunteering at another location which expected a higher degree of commitment:

"You needed to sign up, or at least, everyone was a recurring volunteer for a specific day, so you need to have an intake interview – not that you would be turned down – to discuss what you wanted to get out of it. And then you would be there for a set day in the week – [the organisers] were also there on other days, but yeah, you had certain afternoons or mornings that you would be there. There were some similarities; Just being involved with plants, and diversity in people, but you meet less different people, because you usually work with the same four to six people. So, you build up a bond with them, but it's less novelty every week."⁵

One of the main motivators for the volunteers to engage in volunteering at Koningshof, and why they keep coming back, is the obtention of a certain degree of peace of mind in the course of their contribution. This takes numerous forms, though the most

⁵ Interview 21/05/2021

prominent ones are (i) experiencing a sense of purpose, (ii) seeking a break from their usual routines, and (iii) being outside. Moreover, as Eva indicated, being among different people of different backgrounds is a main motivator for the people to come and to keep coming back. As will be expanded on below, this is particularly the case in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

Fostering a Sense of Purpose

The experience of a sense of purpose is an important motivator for engaging in the volunteering process that is actualised over the course of their participation thereto. Clara and Julian expressed this most vehemently and contrasted this experience to their academic backgrounds.

I had interviewed Clara sometime in April, shortly after cafés were allowed to open up again. It was the first time for both of us in this setting since the coronavirus measures eased, and we were both slightly overwhelmed by the somewhat novel quality to it. It was not busy at first when we got there but as time went by the terrace we were on crowded, and its joviality spread to all tables. During our conversation, we addressed her motivation to join the volunteering initiative at Koningshof and why she keeps on coming back. Clara has been coming for some weeks now, and always finds herself in charge of clearing the compost heap – a relatively arduous and physical task consisting of clearing the top, rough, and undigested layer of garden waste onto an empty location to access the soft and rich compost underneath that has been decomposing for about five years. Despite the physicality and the monotony of it, I have never seen her walking around Koningshof without a smile. She attributes this to the fact that it is like exercise for her, and that she comes specifically for this now. Clara's motivation to volunteer comes from the fact that participation at Koningshof and being in Nature imbues her with a sense of purpose. It provides a space within which she feels like she is contributing through her labour. Most notably, she explains that:

*"it's really nice to get out of just, standard life, which is lovely in itself, but I just quite like having that- almost a getaway where I'm really getting down and dirty and I'm just actually feeling like I'm contributing in some way to society, 'cause I think, especially when you're doing academia – yeah I'm doing research and that research might go somewhere – often you can feel quite stagnant and that you're quite separated, that you haven't got a job necessarily or not kind of integrated in that way. So, with this I actually feel like I'm actually doing something with my life and I'm actually doing something that I really enjoy. And because sitting in front of the computer all the time is a little bit draining."*⁶

A similar argument was also voiced by Julian. Like Clara, he is an oft-returning volunteer – though he has been coming since the previous season – and was working on the compost heap too, the day I met him. He expressed that:

*"Yeah, I it's like a thing for me to really – in general with academia – I'm learning all these things and then what do I do with it, right like? How does it actually transform anything outside of me? I mean, of course you always have to start with yourself, but then I also felt like it's time to really 'spread the ripples in a way right'. And, yeah [...] doing something with my knowledge, and even though I mean, it's not very like applied knowledge, they're more like just "They need a hand" and also learning something myself in doing it."*⁷

The sense of purpose they allude to echoes the notion that agricultural volunteering is tied to a renewal of a certain “sense of drive” leading to transformative social change amongst the volunteers (Terry 2014, 98), and alludes to the personal growth volunteers undergo in the course of their participation (Dean 2015). Such a development and the impact on the volunteers’ norms, values, and even future orientation is somewhat by design. It relates to Ganzevoort and van der Born’s (2020) observation that one of the main motivating factors for volunteering in a natural context in the Netherlands is a desire to contribute to a conservation effort. Guus explains that NL Cares recurrently interviews past participants to see how volunteering has impacted their

⁶ Interview 30/04/2021

⁷ Interview 29/04/2021

personal lives. In the process, he recounted the story of one participant that had been very active over the years but suddenly dropped off their radar. When they contacted him, he expressed that his experience as a volunteer had launched him in a process of self-reflection that culminated in him quitting his current job and reconverting to the social sector to have a more direct impact on people's lives there. Much of the literature on volunteering approaches it as a tool to employ in the pursuit of a 'conventional' high-earning career (K. Smith et al. 2010; Stebbins 1996; Okun and Schultz 2003). Yet, Okun and Schultz present age as a factor reducing this tendency (2003). Guus' anecdotes then indicates that the volunteering environment fomented by NL Cares, under which Koningshof falls, is one of more selfless development, reflected in the importance of the sense of purpose motivating its Volunteers to sign up recurringily.

Incentivising Outdoor Life

Next to this sense purpose, another main driver for the volunteers' adherence to Koningshof is the opportunity it provides for being outside. This motivation has found particular relevance in the context of the coronavirus where people were much more confined to their homes and triggers to leave it were in short supply, resulting in negative consequences for physical and mental health (Adams-Prassl et al. 2020; Kumar and Dwivedi 2020). The outside setting provided an experience of safety for the participants who would then use this as a way of interacting with new people within the confines of government restrictions. Moreover, being outside and interacting with nature can be seen as an effort to counteract the mental health effects of the confinement's isolation due to their positive effect thereon (Barton and Pretty 2010; Bratman, Hamilton, and Daily 2012; Bratman et al. 2019; Cox et al. 2017). Hilde expresses that one of the most important triggers for signing up to volunteer at Koningshof was:

*"There was a sentence [on NL Cares] that was spot on; It was like "have you been longing for being outdoors for a while? Why don't you come over and put some seeds to the ground", you know? And I was like, "Yes, this is exactly what I want to do", like, having been confined for so long."*⁸

⁸ Interview 26/04/2021

McIntosh and Bonnemann (2008) echo the notion that agricultural volunteers actively seek out the outdoors in their consideration for participating to such projects. This is due to its impact on their sense of mindfulness exerted through the physicality of the work carried out and their physical embeddedness in nature. The latter is then seen to foster a renewed sense of presence in it through the sensorial experience of the factors like the weather or the soil (McIntosh and Bonnemann 2008). Thus, agricultural volunteering provides a sense of release that was expressed in the volunteer's experience of calm and zen in the carrying out of the agricultural activities, as well as a renewed appreciation of the outdoors for some. It also ties into the third point, namely, facilitating a break from routine.

Breaking Monotony and Routine

This break from routine is, indeed, often equated to being outdoors, but, more generally, also meant taking a break from the screens on which the majority of their professional and personal lives played out. During my fieldwork, it struck me that the majority of the volunteers present at Koningshof were either students or working in the field of IT. I mentioned this to Eva, who is doing an IT traineeship, and she specified that the breadth of the field in general makes it likely that it would see a strong representation at Koningshof. Nevertheless, it indicates a tendency for people that volunteer at Koningshof to have occupations that are heavily screen-focused, compounded by the coronavirus measures, and that being outside promises a reprise therefrom. Sam, who is a User Experience (UX) manager, explains that

“You have week in which you jump from one task to another, form one meeting to another. But then here, you’re just here. You’re given a job like “here, this is what you’ll do today”, and you stop when that’s done.”⁹

Though some of the tasks may be repetitive, such as weeding for instance, the respite they provide in contrast to the hectic of what Clara called “standard life”¹⁰ is an important motivation for the volunteers to return to Koningshof week after week. Julian

⁹ Interview 03/05/2021

¹⁰ Interview 30/04/2021

and Clara also stress the relevance thereof to the field of academics and the need to forcibly take breaks as a student:

I had just met Julian, and we were working on the compost heap together. We were tackling a pile that would – in the weeks to come – become infamous for the amount of effort it took to empty it; People had put whole tree branches in it, somewhere in the past two years, that were far from decomposing. This made it impossibly difficult to access the more humus-like compost we were after. While I was using a spading fork to lift the intact material, Julian was shovelling whatever soil he had access to into a wheelbarrow so that it could be spread over the production field. Under the first Spring sun and the continued repetition of the physical work, we entered into that mind space where the heat loosens the tongue and foments chit-chat and small talk. We quickly found out that we had a similar academic background and that we could relate to each other's experiences therein; It could be a relatively suffocating environment that somehow discouraged leaving it. Yet, Julian had managed to organize his time there with sufficient activities in town to have incentives to take breaks from the school and its academic pressures. There were some days he wouldn't come to Koningshof when he had deadline approaching, but overall, he always tried to keep his Saturdays free to come volunteer. "It's a nice way to regain energy – not that it's not tiring, but it's a different type of tiring. It's so different from sitting behind a screen inside, and whenever I bring someone with me, they always go 'wow', and don't realise that there are places like this so close".¹¹

The Tuinders and the Appeal of Openness

A significant number of Volunteers expressed that their participation to the activities of Koningshof and the ensuing familiarisation with agriculture has encouraged them to think about integrating food production into their own future lives. Nevertheless, there are also those at Koningshof that are already working on concretising this idea through the rental of an allotment garden at Koningshof to use for organic farming: the *Tuinders*. While the upmake of the volunteer population mostly consists of young

¹¹ Fieldnote 10/04/2021

adults in their twenties, the *Tuinders* are, on average, of an older generation. These are typically adults with young children and retired people. Walking around Koningshof, I regularly saw a few younger couples, but these tended to be a minority.

This difference in age, occupation and engagement stage with farming were also reflected in their motivations for joining Koningshof. That is not to say, however, that there is no overlap; The *Tuinders* also value the incentive to be outside that their agricultural endeavour provides, as well as the break from their daily routines. It is interesting, however, to note that this expressed itself quite differently. Overwhelmingly, the main motivation that the *Tuinders* expressed is, simply, to have a plot of land they can garden on and, thereby, produce some of their own food. Similarly to the Volunteers, however, the incentivisation for being outside and the associated health benefits play a part in their desire to tend a potager. One main example is the obtention of access to nutritional produce of their own care. Indeed, a large body of literature acknowledges that allotment gardening is seen to improve physical and mental health among its practitioners as it fosters physical activity, access to better quality food, and the outdoors and social elements help overcome sentiments of isolation (A. E. van den Berg et al. 2010; Wood, Pretty, and Griffin 2016; Hawkins et al. 2013; DeSilvey 2017; Lee and Matarrita-Cascante 2019; Kingsley, Foenander, and Bailey 2019). Moreover, the *Tuinders* typically regard their yearly 300 euro renting fees as small enough for it to be economically profitable to grow their own foods. Their choice to do so at Koningshof, specifically, however, revolves less around the production side. Instead, it hinges on one of the factors that differentiate Koningshof from other, similar, allotment gardens, namely its openness and the people that it attracts.

Guus explained that this distinction is one purposefully designed through the absence of fences between the different potager lots, setting up a space of shared tool use in the public shed, and organising season's opening and harvest festivals in times where circumstances permit it. This sets Koningshof apart from other allotment gardens and, thereby, contributes to mending one of the main grievances Guus and the Initiators have regarding standard allotment gardens:

"It must clearly not become an allotment garden, in the sense that, where classic allotment gardens have people putting high fencing all around their garden and

throwing a shed on top, right. There, you don't need to be seen. But the idea [here] is that there is an educational aspect to it, where you can learn from each other and, in a way, do it all together, including sharing your means, like sharing seeds”¹²

This philosophy leads to the encouragement of Koningshof's Board and Initiators to rent an allotment garden as a group, or to at least include multiple people therein. This is done to extend the benefits of the allotment garden to as many people as possible while growing a larger community that helps each other out in terms of knowledge exchange – which will be expanded upon later – and when absent for holidays, for instance. Hence, the majority of gardening lots rented out are not worked by individuals but by groups. These groups are often couples, but sometimes also groups of friends or a combination of the two. Marleen and Annabel are two friends on different garden lots that take part in the flower garden project. The two knew each other as colleagues long before they integrated Koningshof. Marleen explains that when she first joined Koningshof, she deemed it too much to garden a whole lot by herself and, therefore, asked a friend to share the lot with, effectively splitting it up in two. The garden lots at Koningshof are quite small compared to conventional allotment gardens – measuring between 12-20m² while the latter can sometimes reach 100m² – which, however, does not preclude it from necessitating a significant amount of continued labour to take care of the soil and the plants on it. Since this first garden, Marleen has now moved on to a whole one which she tends with her husband. Prior thereto, however, Marleen introduced Annabel to Koningshof, who effectively helped out on her lot for some time, before joining another friendly couple to tend a share of *their* plot.

Marleen had recently retired and, with more time on her hands, now wanted to dedicate some of it to her interest in gardening and producing some food for herself. She came from a background in which her parents always had a potager that she would help tend. Though she did not necessarily have too much affinity with this at the time, as she grew older, she became increasingly interested therein. When Marleen and Annabel worked together at the same school, they collectively tended a small vegetable patch reminiscent of an allotment garden close to the school they worked at.

¹² Interview 26/05/2021

Friends integrating Koningshof through friends is far from uncommon at Koningshof. Anna, who also works on the flower garden project, similarly integrated a patch tended by friends for a while and just recently got allocated a new plot. She had been relatively inexperienced in this domain before joining Koningshof, but as she learned more, she felt like she needed some more space for herself. She now works on half of a large field. Koningshof facilitates this dynamic; Once anyone is integrated as a *Tuinder* and someone else leaves, this gives existent *Tuinders* the opportunity first to change plots if they so desire and allows people that previously worked in a larger group to take on some more work and responsibility for themselves. In a similar fashion, Volunteers are often prioritised when allocating new plots, making this yet another incentive for volunteering.

The Context of the Coronavirus

Guus and Lars explained on multiple occasions that the presence of the coronavirus and the lockdowns ensuing from it have caused an important rise in interest in healthy activities, a renewed interest in the outdoors, and a search for incentives to step away from screens, which has translated in an enormous uptake in applications for their allotment gardens; So much so, in fact, that they had to close their waitlist, now amounting to fifty applications. This is significant given that only a handful of Koningshof's fifty lots ever free up in a year. Similarly, the volunteering days have been seeing more applications and a larger body of returning volunteers. In this regard, the motivations of *Tuinders* and Volunteers are seen to be heavily influenced by the socio-epidemiological context the participants are embedded in, as well as having instrumental characteristics. Indeed, the (mental) health impact of participation is recurringly stressed and evidenced by the literature, linking desires for gardening, reconnecting with nature and the care for plants to the cultural materialism thereof. These motivations, additionally, hint at the efforts of restoring sustainable foodways permeating the activities at Koningshof. They, however, do not provide enough inherent insight therein. The next chapter will, therefore, look more in depth at what practices occur at Koningshof that pertain to fostering such a restorative process and how this impacts its participants.

Chapter 2: Koningshof's Restorative Contribution

“People often ask me what one thing I would recommend to restore relationship between land and people. My answer is almost always, “Plant a garden.” It’s good for the health of the earth, and it’s good for the health of people. A garden is a nursery for nurturing connection, the soil for cultivation of practical reverence.” (Kimmerer 2020, 126)

The presence of agricultural initiatives in close proximity to human living spaces are important in fostering human well-being (Auer, Maceira, and Nahuelhual 2017; Pérez-Ramírez et al. 2021). Moreover, the literature on allotment gardens is often centred on its potential physical ecosystem services (Drescher, Holmer, and Iaquinta 2006; Speak, Mizgajski, and Borysiak 2015; Breuste and Artmann 2014). Yet, fostering a restoration of sustainable foodways also entails actively combating people's alienation from their food sources, while respecting the need for sustainability in its production processes. These two points tend to go hand in hand, as the move to more ecologically oriented farming initiatives tend to rely more on non-professional, external, help that is found in their surrounding communities (Janssen 2013; Endres 2014; Ekers et al. 2015). The previous chapter showed that volunteers are an important part of this communal organisation, particularly in the case of Koningshof. This consumer involvement with the production process of foods they, then, often consume themselves echoes the concept of (arch)prosumerism (Kosnik 2018; Kotler 1986). This alludes to individuals that actively engage in the production of the goods and services they consume, thereby changing their consumption habits and overcoming this problematic distance significantly. In this chapter, I will lay out the ways in which Koningshof, too, actively participates in this restoration movement. I will begin by explaining how Koningshof alludes to ideal types of sustainable foodways, specifically drawing on the ethics of food production and consumption in Indigenous practices. I will then explain the role of the Saturday market in the pursuit of more sustainable foodways and how the sensorial and emotional elicitation of the activities at Koningshof culminates in the renewal of more sustainable engagements with food. Lastly, I will lay out the role of the community at Koningshof in fostering and sustaining this restorative process.

Indigenous practices pertaining to land stewardship and their foodways are generally deemed to be crucial sources of information in the effort to limit western industrialised countries' impact on the environment (Bracho 1995; Bosire 2006; Johnson et al. 2015; Walsh 2015; Whyte 2017a; 2017b). They, therefore, provide an important lens through which to view activities pertaining to address this question. It is important to note that this is not a comparison of the learnings occurring at Koningshof with Indigenous knowledge, nor that Koningshof pertains to imbue Indigenous knowledge in its practices. Instead, I wish to employ the literature on Indigenous practices to understand why these learnings can be understood as leading to the restoration of more sustainable foodways.

Indigenous Wisdom as an Analytical Lens

The importance of Indigenous practices in the sustainability paradigm hails from the sustainable land stewardship and conservation efforts they are typically associated with ways in which to live more harmoniously with one's environment. I wish to, first, acknowledge that my own background as a native European means that this lens is based purely on the literature recounting Indigenous practices and the values associated with it. Kimmerer's work (2020), reconciling qualitative ecological science with her Potawatomi identity, alludes to the importance of intimate knowledge of one's environment and the symbiotic relationships that exist between humankind and Nature. Her book called "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants" served as the main source of insight in the crafting of this lens (Kimmerer 2020). This is due to its comprehensive account of Indigenous relationships with food and the inherent cultural materialist socio-biological underpinnings of the symbiotic environmental practices associated thereto (Coté 2016). Throughout the book, reciprocity is an important recurring theme that serves as the foundation of a sustainable relationship between humans and our environment. This reciprocity also applies to foodways as seen in the observance of the "Honourable Harvest" (Kimmerer 2020, 175), whose principles outline that food ought to be seen as a gift. Yet, these gifts, Kimmerer explains, come with the responsibility of care for the plants providing us with food. This forms the basis of a sustainable reciprocal relationship between people and their sources of food; On the one hand, it requires a respectful attitude towards

the crops figuratively ‘handing over’ their food that translates in the taking thereof within the limits of one’s needs. On the other hand, it also necessitates a form of dutiful care towards the plants and their supportive systems so that it may thrive in the future.

Kimmerer advocates for the redefinition of the world as one of surplus, opposing the economic principles of scarcity, in which to respect sufficiency. These notions echo that of degrowth, its critique of overconsumption, and its redefinition of affluence around necessities rather than materialistic ideals (Kallis 2011; Kothari, Demaria, and Acosta 2014; Escobar 2015b; Lockyer 2017; Hickel and Kallis 2020). These developments gained popularity in the face of rising awareness of humanity’s encroachment on key planetary boundaries (Rockström et al. 2009), which the philosophy underpinning Indigenous practices strives to remedy (Fine-Dare 2021). The ecological and conservationist practices of Indigenous people can, thus, be understood as deeply culturally materialistic in the sense that they are reflections of environmentally holistic and restorative practices; Hence, traditions of picking sweetgrass foster the plants’ growth, ritual anthropogenic burnings are linked to improved states of environmental conservation, and cultural narratives underpinning agricultural practices foment regenerative dynamics (Kimmerer 2020; Welch et al. 2013; Dewalt 1994). Kimmerer’s interweaving of scientific knowledge with Indigenous cultural norms, values, and practices reveals the underlying links between traditions, moralities, and practices with the instrumental and material effects thereof. In the case of Koningshof, it is, thus, important to look at the arenas of expression of its cultural norms and values to understand how they may contribute to restorative tendencies within its participants.

The Market at Koningshof

Saturdays mark the day that a market is held on the land at Koningshof. During my fieldwork, I always participated in setting up the market stall early in the morning and got to witness the interactions between Koningshof and its customers:

The market sells numerous products from local, organic, producers such as meats, juices, jams, honey, or bread. It is also stocked with fruits and vegetables from local, organic farmers. Yet, its main objective is selling the produce grown

at Koningshof itself. Koningshof needs the local products to compensate for its smaller scale and its stronger dependence on the seasonality of food crops – more so at least than neighbouring producers; the greenhouse is not equipped with any form of a heating system and can, therefore, not extend the growing season too far into the colder days. Yet, that does not mean Koningshof fails to produce sufficient amounts of food; Towards the end of Spring and the beginning of Summer, Gijs, Fred, and I often needed to actively puzzle the market together in such a way as to accommodate the space for all the different crops that needed to be sold. The result was always a lush and colourful looking market stall.

The Koningshof market attracts a wide array of locals, though some people come from further. Some passers-by discover it for the first time on their way to or back from a walk in the nearby forest of Amelisweerd, but the largest part of the customer base is made up of loyal people coming back on a weekly basis. Fred explained on my first day that, when the market closed at the end of the season last year, many of the locals were distraught at the thought that they would be missing it during the winter months. And sure enough, those very people who said this were amongst some of the first customers that day.¹³ Guus would later explain that “they come for more than just their groceries”, which proved to be true. The earliest customers often had the most to speak about; Where they had been on holiday, what state their health was in, one man had given Fred a bag of home-made pickles and inquired about their taste. More than a few customers congratulated Fred on his wedding of their own accord when he got married towards the end of my fieldwork. They were, indeed, after more than just fresh produce¹⁴.

The strength of the market is in connecting locals to sustainable food produce that is grown locally and allows them to witness the process. Every week, on multiple occasions, customers would ask whether these vegetables laid out were, indeed, all grown on the property, to which Fred – who typically manned the stall – would answer:

¹³ Fieldnote 27/03/2021

¹⁴ Fieldnote 12/06/2021

“Yes, most of this is grown in the greenhouse you see a bit further, and some on the land beyond. You’re more than welcome to take a look”.

Occasionally, he would also explain that under normal situations, without the presence of the coronavirus, that customers could also harvest their own vegetables. Some trusted and recurring customers were privilege enough to be granted exception from the coronavirus measures taken and could harvest their produce themselves. This occurred particularly often when the customers had children with them. This practice fosters engagement with the source of one’s food, and echoes Korthals’ remark that “food needs to come from an identifiable place that can be visited, preferably somewhere nearby” (Korthals 2019, 290). This reflects Reid and Rout’s account of Indigenous food “provenancing” and its effort to bring consumers in contact with the physical sources of their food (2016, 427), and alludes to a search for social embeddedness in one’s foodways system (Feagan and Morris 2009). This entails that it is important to witness the source of the produce we end up consuming along with the labour and processes that go into it. Saturdays also being the days on which Volunteers joined to help, as well as it being a day on which many *Tuinders* tended their potagers, the customer’s act of harvesting also meant a confrontation with the buzz of activities that surround farming; The greenhouse would typically house a foursome of volunteers weeding different rows of crops, while *Tuinders* stood along the seeding table, preparing their plants for the outdoors. This confrontation helps customers, and consumers in general, understand the reality of the organic agricultural endeavour Koningshof stands for:

In the morning, when Gijs was assigning tasks for the day, Cassandra and I were put in charge of processing a few kilos of various tomatoes that couldn’t be sold at the stall anymore and which we were going to make a sauce out of it. This was time-intensive, and Cassandra had to leave early in the afternoon, leaving me in charge of monitoring the thickening of the sauce. Once, when standing over the pot, a couple walked in; They had just shopped at the market and wanted to see all that was occurring on the land. The man helped himself to some coffee and asked about the source of all the activity in the greenhouse and on the land. I explained that some people walking around were Tuinders tending to their potagers, and that others were Volunteers, helping out with all

processes related to Koningshof's production. He was amazed and awed at this, mostly at the possibilities of doing something of this scale, and the number of people that would participate in it. As we spoke, it dawned on him what motivations people may have to spend their free days helping weed in a greenhouse; He acknowledged the peace and quiet that reigned on the property, and the wonder of being surrounded by plants. He was very intrigued at the potential of having one's own allotment garden so close to the city. He walked on after a bit to see the rest of the land: the production field beyond the shed and the Tuinders' gardens. Later, when I was yet again stirring through the tomato sauce, I saw him walking with Fred towards some of the crops – I believe they were cucumbers – and Fred handed him a peeling knife to harvest it himself. Him and his wife grinned¹⁵.

The disconnect between the foods we eat and the plants they come from is particularly visible in the lack of knowledge on harvesting crops. The ever presence of all staple foods in the supermarket, regardless of seasons, leads to a loss of knowledge of when carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, or courgettes are planted and ripe for the picking. Offering the opportunity for people to experience the act thereof and witness plants' seasonality is important in the renewal of a relationship with food so as to restore more respectful and sustainable practices in our shopping, cooking, and consumption thereof.

Though the market is invariably catered towards outside customers, it is important to note that the Volunteers are also a main group of actors purchasing from it. This is fostered by Koningshof, as it represents a form of reciprocity on behalf of Koningshof for the labour the volunteers carry out. Indeed, Koningshof provides discounts to both *Tuinders* and Volunteers in order to encourage a sense of inclusion within this part of the initiative. Nevertheless, Volunteers enjoy more benefits in this regard. These benefits are that (i) produce from Koningshof itself that is unsold at the end of the day is usually given away for free to the Volunteers, and (ii) the products from other local organic producers sold at the market are usually given to the Volunteers for retail prices. The incentive for the consumption of the produce originating from Koningshof

¹⁵ Fieldnote 05/06/2021

– the literal fruits of the Volunteers’ labour – further sheds light into the ways participation in the food production process contributes to the restoration of sustainable foodways.

Additionally, the fact that the Volunteers’ gifts of food occurred at the end of the day plays an important role in how this affects their relationship to this food. During my fieldwork, Volunteers typically stayed at Koningshof until 15h00, though sometimes beyond. Some would leave earlier, as the flexibility of the Volunteering structure does not impose any strict schedule. By the time most volunteers stop, however, the market is nearing its closing time at 16:00, meaning the majority of the food has been sold out. Yet, many of the volunteers make the effort to do some of their groceries at the market, and with each passing week, recurring volunteers come to rely more heavily on the food at the market. This means that they encounter the precarity in the availability of certain foods and learn to adapt to it, exploring new products they are not accustomed to cook with.

The Emotional Evocation in Restoration

The market’s role within Koningshof is to manifest the restorative process in material form through the food it produces. This provides a much-needed opportunity for urbanites to “exercise reciprocity through how they spend their money” (Kimmerer 2020, 195). These can, thereby, undertake the process of overcoming their alienation from their food sources. This manifestation lends an eye into the other forms through which participation at Koningshof contributes to a restorative process. Chapter one already alluded to the fact that both *Tuinders* and Volunteers’ motivation to participate in Koningshof is informed by a desire to be outside. This desire to be outside is also at the source of one of the more direct ways in which more sustainable foodways emerge within the participating individuals. During my ethnographic fieldwork and the interviews I held, the theme of witnessing plant growth was always an important one. Kimmerer speaks of the learnings that arise when paying attention to plants and their processes (2020), which Korthals (2019) echoes in saying that participants to agroecological projects learn of their own embeddedness in nature through the witnessing of natural cycles they are, invariably, also subjected to. This reinvokes the importance of

acknowledging a certain reciprocity between humans and the plants sustaining them, beyond mere nutrition. It also alludes to Reid and Rout's account of the relevance of animism in understanding the foundation of the expression of this reciprocity (2016). Indeed, they propose "provenancing" (427), complemented by Māori animist tradition, as a way of addressing the alienation people experience relating to their foodways by connecting them with the sources and processes contributing to the growth of the foods they consume. It expresses itself in interest in, and demand for access to local, visible, food systems in one's food provision practices, all the while developing a sense of reciprocity with the plants and processes. Animism entails that constructive relationships between human people and non-human entities are built through their interacting with one another, which, in turn, establishes bonds of reciprocity that inform the behaviours of both (Reid and Rout 2016). This has been bastardised to symbolise a universal anthropomorphising of the plants that produce the foods we consume. The authors explain:

"The animist does not believe that all nonhuman entities are the same as humans but is founded on a more sophisticated, if inherently obvious, premise: that the relationships humans have with the nonhuman entities are reciprocal and contextual rather than unidirectional and abstract, and that as these relationships progress each entity shapes the other in meaningful ways [authors' emphasis]. Animists do not believe that every animal or natural phenomena has personhood—the opposite is true, only those with which they have a relationship with have personhood" (Reid and Rout 2016, 429)

At Koningshof, the evidence of an onset and emergence of more reciprocal relationships towards food and the natural world sustaining its growth is evidenced by the evocations of emotional relations arising from the confrontation thereto. Hilde expressed that her motivation to volunteer related to a desire to put her hands to the earth and contribute to the growth of productive plant life, yet she had not anticipated the gratification and fulfilment that would come with the physical and sensorial aspect thereof. Weeding, hoeing, and squatting over the ground, fulfilled a longing for it she did not necessarily know she had been experiencing:

*"I'm just like, it's ridiculous, the feeling of, like, dirt. I like being around dirt and I don't obviously, like, touch too much of it. But yeah. Sometimes... I think that I was craving it. I was craving it very badly I think."*¹⁶

Physical and sensorial engagement with soil is an important educational process in the restoration of sustainable foodways in its evocative instructive capabilities (Kátai, Juhász, and Adorjáni 2008; Kimmerer 2012), as it concretises cognitive knowledge through experience. This reflects the educational drive inherent to Koningshof's philosophy. This emotional elicitation is also indicative of the learning processes that Koningshof integrated into its philosophy. Instances of awe at the witnessing of natural processes expressed previously embody this. Clara, for instance, mentions her "shock" at observing the successive stages of grape vine leafy and fruit growth, or her amazement at discovering new Dutch indigenous crops and their flavours.

The emotional learnings occurring through the Volunteer and Tuinder activities also instil the participants with another feeling, one that is maybe more performative, namely duty. In the spirit of restoring respectful relationships with Nature and the living world, food provides a lens through which to witness reciprocity and begin engaging with it. It, then, follows that this experience of reciprocity leads to a novel approach to how one views food. Clara mentioned the idea of duty explicitly, but most of the volunteers mention some form of engagement with food that is reminiscent thereof. This expression of duty, interestingly, is particularly represented in relation to waste, and efforts to avoid it. The volunteers' relation to the plants and the work they accomplish in sustaining their work is motivated by more than the consumption of the fruits they bear: it alludes to a sense of respect for the growth process underlying it all. Thus, Clara explains that:

"There's almost like a duty to the food, like "I will save you from the bin, we're friends, I know you, you know me" sort of thing. So maybe, the best way to describe it would be as familiarity."

This was echoed by Julian:

¹⁶ Interview 30/04/2021

*"In relation with the food. I think once they start like giving, selling more of the local product actually, and also giving it at the end of the day for free – because for now I think it's mainly stuff bought from other places. Yeah, I'll have a bit more of a connection with the product. Because that was really nice last year just to kind of take some stuff home and then know, "OK, this grew where I worked in a way. But yeah, I don't do it so much for like getting the food out of it or something, no. I don't know, in a way it's kind of like a service from me to the food."*¹⁷

Hilde expressed a similar attitude towards food, though it differed in terms of its emotional weight somewhat. I had asked her about her background with food and what role it played in her life, to which she explained that a family member of hers has anorexia, which changed the role of food in her household. Most notably, it led to an awareness of the role that food plays in people's lives and how much this varies between people. In terms of her own relationship to food, she explained that:

*"I think I respect food so much more. Yeah, I think before like food is always – I've never been a person to care too much about what they eat or that it has to be like an amazing meal. I've always been very functional. You know, I eat what's on the table and that's about it. But I think that as a result of that, or like in liaison with that, I guess it was a lot more – like understanding that food is so much more – like this, respect of like wanting to eat healthy or like wanting to eat things to actually, you know fill my body. And that food is not a weapon. You know. It's not something that should be used. And I think maybe that's also why mass production like that annoys me, you know, and that it's used for something to like kill the planet when it should be used for something to help people or to sustain someone's health."*¹⁸

These accounts are telling of the impact that Koningshof has on its participants' relationship towards food, as well as the opportunities it provides to contest the established industrial agriculture system. It indicates that Koningshof succeeds in imbuing

¹⁷ Interview 29/04/2021

¹⁸ Interview 26/04/2021

a sense of awareness for the life cycle demands of the food its participants consume, and therethrough, alludes to an emergence of provenancing in their foodways. This respect then exerts itself in practice, as is evidenced by the participants' accounts of the ways they consume the food hailing from Koningshof and, in particular, to their approach to wasting it.

Respect for Food through the Lens of Waste

The concept of waste and its place in the current industrial food production system is significant as it is one of the main contributors to the environmental unsustainability of the industry (Aschermann-Witzel et al. 2015). Aschermann-Witzel et al. explain that most of this waste occurs at produce's end-of-life stage (2015). Though this does not solely include consumers, it does put much of the burden of tackling it onto them. Approaching foodways through waste sheds light onto the attitudes of the participants towards food and how this varies in relation to the food that they purchase at the Koningshof market. Kimmerer's principle of the honourable harvest instructs sufficiency as a necessary practice to uphold the conservation of the organisms that sustain us (Kimmerer 2020; Krech 2005). Waste, in fact, is often associated to the needless consumption of edible plants and animals over more nutritiously effective sources (Harris 1987). The relevance hereof is further compounded by the fact that higher quality food, which Koningshof strives to produce, tend to require more agricultural input and, therefore, represent a higher negative environmental impact when wasted (Conrad et al. 2018). Yet, Mintz and du Bois's overview of the field of the anthropology of food notoriously lacks attention to the concept of food waste (2002), which is, nevertheless an embodiment of the alienation that has set in between consumers and their food sources. Indeed, radical consumerism strips food of more holistic attributes and actively encourages the foresaking of quality in the interest of lower prices, which in turn authorises waste without it burdening one's conscience (Korthals 2019). It is, thus, important to acknowledge the impact that participation at Koningshof has on practices pertaining to waste. Sam, for instance, explains how he treats the food he purchases at Koningshof differently than that which he buys from supermarkets:

*"I do always finish it, which doesn't sound very strange, but I tend to sometimes buy too much [from supermarkets] and then it lays in the fridge for too long and I need to throw it away. That's something that, with the stuff I bought at Koningshof, I've been stricter with until now. I always finish the bread, though I sometimes still leave fruit out for too long. That kind of stuff. Mint I'm also very bad with actually because I'm in the habit of forgetting that I have it, but yeah. Then when I want tea, I just get a teabag from the cupboard and when it's in, I think "s*****, I have mint laying around". So, I need to get used to it, but so far, it's been going okay."*¹⁹

The development of an aversion to waste does not solely stem from the participants' engagement with plant life at Koningshof, but also with some of the practices encouraged by its initiators:

*The beginning of June marked the time to begin harvesting many of the root vegetables, most notably the beetroots, kohlrabi, and fennel crops. Carrots took a bit longer and were still a week or two away from being ready. Last Saturday had been one of the first full harvests, and the prevalent heat and sunshine over the week meant that it was now quite urgent to harvest the last remaining ones, before they went to seed. Fred and Evert, however, announced an unpleasant surprise: Rats had enjoyed somewhat of a feast. When rats eat crops, they never eat the whole thing, but they simply nibble away for a bit, and then move on to the next plant. As a result, we are left with dozens of beetroots and kohlrabies with small bites taken out that cannot be sold at the market anymore. It was decided that these needed to be thrown away on the compost heap, but before the first wheelbarrow full of leafy bulbs was carried away, Lars stepped in to offer an alternative; What if we just let the better ones on the seeding table for Tuinders and Volunteers to take home with them. After all, all that was needed to make them edible again was to cut around the bites before cooking with them.*²⁰

However much Koningshof wishes to promote more sustainable engagements with food, it is still subjected to consumers' standards to some degree. Its organics farmer's

¹⁹ Interview 03/05/2021

²⁰ Fieldnote 15/05/2021

market tackles the problem of produce's visual imperfections that supermarkets tend to discard (Aschemann-Witzel et al. 2015), yet prejudices surrounding the safety of food are more difficult to overcome (Grunert 2005). By offering the affected food to the *Tuinders* and Volunteers, Koningshof initiates a challenge of standardised perceptions of food within its participants, who then take these lessons with them to inform their practices at home. Indeed, by the end of the day, not a single beetroot or kohlrabi was left on the seeding table.

Knowledge and Community

The contribution to the restoration of sustainable foodways facilitated by the activities at Koningshof is nothing without the constant interaction of its participants. The anthropologies of foodways highlight all practices and traditions associated thereto as inherently socially sustained (Harris 1987; Khanna 2009; Giampiccoli and Kalis 2012; Ohna, Kaarhus, and Kinabo 2012). This highlights the importance of community therein. Koningshof is no exception and this expresses itself particularly in its role in fostering an exchange of information concerning foodways. This applies to the preparation of soil, the caring for plants, the use of waste material, and new ways of cooking. Knowledge and information are important in restoring sustainable foodways as they enable consumers to make informed decisions that reflect their personal values, morals, and ethics (Aschemann-Witzel et al. 2015; Korthals 2019). This is, however, rendered difficult in industrialised food systems due to the opacity of their production.

Creating a resilient community is a direct objective of Koningshof that Guus is constantly busy promoting. Their recent integration of the 'Spond' app is the latest effort in creating an independent platform for the *Tuinders* to exchange information on. Guus, however, hopes to include Volunteers herein, so as to form a tighter community. He also wants to promote volunteering among the *Tuinders* as many are often intrigued by the initiative on Saturdays but are not fully aware that they are allowed to participate, too. Indeed, Guus believes that both groups can learn from one another, as much as members learn within their respective groups. During my fieldwork, I observed that the topics of discussion are quite distinct among the different groups. On the one hand, *Tuinders* typically addressed questions that related more to plant care,

physical soil preparation, and sources of knowledge on such matters. On one occasion, when we were splitting dahlia bulbs for the flower garden, Marleen took lead of the session on the basis of her having watched a YouTube video on the question, only to come back the next week explaining that we had done it wrong, though the bulbs survived. A certain informality reigned within the group that encourages any form of knowledge to be shared and experimented with to observe its consequences. On the other hand, discussions amongst Volunteers revolve around more around cooking and the various creative ways to incorporate waste products from food into new recipes.

Knowledge at Koningshof is not just exchanged, it is also produced within the community. This applies, in particular, to this exploration of novel ways to use the by-products of the food crops, and formulations of recipes. Two recurring topics concerned the varieties of pesto's that could be made from different greens, and the uses of grape vine leaves. The first occurred in the period of harvest of rucola and carrots. Again, this invariably relates back to waste and the insight it provides into individual foodways. Indeed, there was a tendency for rucola to be left over at the end of the day, which could not be kept for another week, nor another day. This rucola was, then, handed out with insistence to all Volunteers, which led to everyone receiving more than they would ever eat in their usual diets. Fleur – another recurring Volunteer, however, knew that rucola was often used as a substitute for basil in pesto's, and recommended everyone attempt to process their share in this way. Similarly, carrot foliage that is typically cut off and thrown away can also be used to a similar end. Rebecca encouraged the *Tuinders* and Volunteers walking around to take some with them as they left and put a basket full of them at the market stall for customers to take with them for free²¹. Political-economic and cultural factors can play a very active role in the dynamics underpinning taste and dietary patterns (Harris 1987). The exchange of various forms of knowledge facilitated by the creation of a resilient community is an example thereof in promoting restorative practices pertaining to participants' foodways in a sustainable manner.

²¹ Fieldnote 19/06/2021

Chapter 3: Challenges to the Restoration of Sustainable Foodways

The previous chapters indicate that Koningshof does, indeed, play an important role in facilitating the restoration of sustainable foodways in its participating populations. The cultural materialist lens through which the analysis of these foodways is approached sheds light onto the inherent instrumentality in the dynamics of the reme-dying of people's relationship to food. This restoration is profound in its areas of relevance; Participants' relationship to waste – one of the more direct expressions of their foodways' sustainability – is radically impacted through an acknowledgment of the care required in the growing process, as well as food's seasonality and its day-to-day availability. Moreover, engagement with agricultural processes fosters a bond of reciprocity between the participants and the non-human entities they interact with. Nevertheless, there are shortcomings in the extent to which Koningshof enables the restoration of sustainable foodways. Restoration processes are just that, *processes*, entailing that, in its striving thereto, Koningshof's contribution to actualising sustainable foodways within its participant population is not necessarily complete. These typically concern the physical aspects relevant to the sustainability of foodways, such as agricultural techniques employed, as well as the extent of involvement of the Volunteers in all aspects of their application. This brings into question the role of Koningshof as an alternative to the industrial agricultural system.

The challenges to the restoration of sustainable foodways are expressed through an awkwardness in the soft-political structure of Koningshof, and a certain shortfall in expectations of support in the process. As expressed in the previous chapters, Koningshof strives to encourage an inclusive, and resilient community for individuals with an interest in engaging with sustainable foodways, so as to inform the restoration of their own. Nevertheless, certain hierarchical structures within the organisation foment awkwardness and irritations that result in the experience of a small degree of strife in some participants. This is indicative of its shortcomings in the restoration process.

Interplay of agricultural schools of practice

The arena in which these tensions are expressed concern the implementation of various agricultural techniques. The current industrial agricultural model is a highly unsustainable one and Koningshof strives to offer an alternative thereto (P. Smith et al. 2007; FAO 2020). This is done in the shape of *Tuinders*' ability to provide for their own, organically grown, food and local inhabitants' access to its market. Yet, the organisational model of Koningshof limits it somewhat in realising a fully regenerative system which would actualise participants' aforementioned appreciation to be a part of an environmentally reciprocal system. In conversation with Lars, he explained that the potential for implementation of regenerative forms of agriculture such as permaculture is relatively limited, as of right now, due to the labour intensity necessary to set it up. He referred back to the fact that the Initiators can only be present at Koningshof once a week to facilitate the volunteering initiative as they all have full-time jobs on the side. This limited timeslot would be insufficient to realise a permaculture system for Koningshof's own production. Guus had expressed that, in the future, he would like to see someone being present more often during the week to facilitate more volunteering opportunities than just the Saturday. This would translate into the ability to realise more ambitious projects and allow for more social day activities for people with a handicap or psychiatric baggage (*dagbesteding*), which Guus wants to encourage.

Tuinders have more freedom to engage in regenerative forms of agriculture, and the exchange of information pertaining to this approach to farming is encouraged by the Koningshof Board and Initiators. Nevertheless, its application is quite limited on the land, and this has to do with numerous reasons. First and foremost, though many *Tuinders* are, in fact, around retirement age, this does not signify that they are able to spend the necessary time to incept such projects as regenerative agriculture on their potagers. Moreover, the potagers' size further discourages the time investment as the returns therefore would not guarantee self-sufficiency or semi-self-sufficiency, which these systems are often established for (Moloney, Horne, and Fien 2010; Hawkins et al. 2013; Kansanga et al. 2018). Related to this is also the fact that many *Tuinders* view their potagers as a hobby, and not necessarily very instrumentally for their food provision. Instead, the food grown comes as more of a by-product of their effort, rather than it being the sole objective of their engagement. Haluza-DeLay and Berezan express that "any food growing is good growing" (2013, 134), yet the systems used to

support this growth is important. In Koningshof, this is seen in its prohibition on non-organic chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Additionally, the added complexity in the design of regenerative systems also requires specific knowledge that is often incomplete in Koningshof's *Tuinders*, despite Koningshof's encouragement of sharing knowledge within the community. Lastly, and most importantly, those *Tuinders* that do attempt experimenting with regenerative forms of agriculture often suffer from an experience of resistance from Koningshof's organising members.

This resistance takes the shape of a small degree of tension. It expresses itself in a challenge to their sense of ownership over the methods of agricultural practice they choose for their potager at Koningshof. This is the result of (i) an experience of lack-lustre support for choices of regenerative agricultural techniques on Koningshof when *Tuinders* wish to engage in it, and (ii) a lack of involvement in the actualisation thereof. My first, and thereafter repeating, encounter of such challenge to a sense of ownership at Koningshof occurred on my first day already:

"Evert – the owner of the land – took part in a discussion about how to prepare the soil on that plot of land. Evert is an older man and seems to be partial to his own habits and experience as a farmer, as he advocated for milling the soil, while Roos suggested to plough the land in a kindlier fashion. The argument in favour of the former is that it provides air for the soil, which is beneficial for root development, while the latter preserves the structure of the ground layers and thus preserves the life in it. Evert, however, was not a part of today's activities and Roos, therefore, chose the manual and kinder ploughing method. Tied to this conversation was that of whether or not to put cardboard on the tilled soil. This argument follows the same line as that of the ploughing method; Roos advocated for the use of carboard to layer on top of the soil as a method of softening it in the wait for the right moment to plant the flowers in the prepared beds. This thinking stems from permaculture and would ideally have been done at the beginning of winter already, which would have given the carboard time to disintegrate and become compost. This is food safe as long as there is no ink on the cardboard. It was, however, already useful in the shorter term that the method was used in now. Roos used this on her private potager plot and saw amazing

results with a very soft and healthy topsoil layer that is ideal for planting crops.²²

Weeks later, after more instances of resistance to the application of cardboard to the soil that were wilfully ignored, we took off the cardboard to find the soil soft, healthy, and devoid of weeds. It was now time to plant the flower seedlings. The soft soil also housed an incredible number of worms, and it was some of the strongest smelling earth I had yet encountered at Koningshof. Planting the seedlings was a question of digging a small hole to put them in. Though we mainly used a trowel to dig these holes, it was just as easy to do so with our bare hands; Everyone was astonished at the impact that using cardboard had accomplished.²³

One day, I mentioned that it was funny witnessing the politics of Koningshof, but Roos, half joking, expressed that she did not think it was funny. What she meant, she explained, is that the Tuinders rent their lots. Outside of some rules, they are quite free to use approach the growing of food on their potager in whatever way they wish. The only rules concern the inability to build a shed on the plot, the prohibition to use non-organic chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and the imposition of a height limit to trees planted on the allotment gardens. The Tuinders are, therefore, at freedom of using the agricultural techniques they desire, and to plant the crops they want. Yet, that does not keep them from experiencing a sense of resistance from the Initiators as well as Evert who, according to Roos, adhere strongly to more traditional agricultural methods. This, then, sometimes stands at odds with Tuinders' exploration of more regenerative approaches thereto and affects their willingness to do so. Roos explained that the source of the tensions resides in the experience of a denigrating attitude from some Initiators towards the adoption of these regenerative approaches.²⁴

Guus and Lars respectively expressed that they wish to encourage *Tuinders* exploring techniques that stem from the permaculture movement, but that they are themselves

²² Fieldnote 26/03/2021

²³ Fieldnote 14/05/2021

²⁴ Fieldnote 02/04/2021

inexperienced therein and can, therefore, not be of assistance in this process. The reticence *Tuinders* experience partly derives therefrom. Simultaneously, it also echoes the irregularities addressed by Harris' cultural materialist understanding of foodways (1987), namely that practices do not always align coherently with optimal socio-economic and environmental circumstances. Here, human capacity, paired with Initiator time investment and knowledge, limit the ability to support *Tuinders* interested in regenerative agriculture, making the organisation fall back onto the skills they are familiar with. Hence, Evert and the Initiators' reticence to acknowledge the capacities of regenerative agriculture are informative of the challenges of adaptation to more restorative foodways, and the slight tensions ensuing therefrom are expressions thereof.

Limits to Participants' Contribution

The difficulty of fully contributing to the restoration of sustainable foodways among Koningshof's participants also extends beyond the ability to use regenerative agriculture; It is also reflected in the extent of participation available to Volunteers and the ensuing limits to their embeddedness in the system they care for. In previous chapters, I addressed the notion of Kosnik's' (2018) archprosumerism and its contribution to the restorative potential of specific communities in reimagining their relationship to the production of the food they consume. Archprosumerism deals with consumer ownership over the means of production employed with an emphasis on notions of (self-) sufficiency and sustainability. Moreover, the Indigenous lens lends an eye into the sustainability of its land stewardship as influenced by communities' intimate knowledge and relationship with their environment (Walsh 2015; Whyte 2017b; Kimmerer 2020). Archprosumerism and the relevance of Indigenous wisdoms in the restoration process highlight the importance of participants' sense of contribution and ownership over the processes they engage in pertaining to food growth; This facilitates the actualisation of their experience of connectivity which, in turn, lays the ground for respectful food consumption practices. Though this sense of contribution is significant at Koningshof, it does not imply that it is complete in both participants' ability to contribute to all parts of the production processes, nor that it is, thereby, able to fully restore sustainable foodways amongst participating populations.

The previous chapter showed that there is, indeed, a renewal of a more respectful relationship towards food issuing from participating at Koningshof. Yet, this accomplishment in the restoration process is somewhat overcast by the limited extent to which they can veritably participate. This comes forth from the fact that the activities that volunteers carry out tend to omit an important aspect of conscious engagement with foodways, namely the involvement in design choices. Numerous volunteers voiced this drawback when approaching the topic of their relationship to the food grown at Koningshof. Sam expressed it very clearly, saying:

“Well, you obviously contribute a little bit, I mean, it’s mostly the four [initiators] which do that the four of them, that put the most time and energy into it. So, I definitely don’t want to steal the spotlight away from them. But in a way it is fun, indeed, the thought that you, you know, this vegetable there I have at some point plucked. I don’t know, it’s a small thing. I haven’t been involved long enough to really say like “I’ve put my stamp on this” or “I’ve contributed to this.””²⁵

Similarly, Eva expresses that the allegiance she experiences pertaining to the food she consumes from Koningshof lies more with Koningshof itself, rather than with her own contribution to the growing process. This translates into her struggling to bring her learnings and appreciation of food into her personal life;

“It does not have a very impact [on my perception of food], I think. Maybe I am more aware of the differences between what you see at the supermarket and how it looks on the land [...]. But I don’t think that that has made me handle it differently, or see it much differently”²⁶

This shortcoming reveals the limitations of Koningshof’s potential to contribute to participants’ relation to the food they are involved in growing, and that this hinders them in extending restorative practices into their personal lives. In line with this, it is also important to acknowledge Koningshof’s limits in performing as a significant alternative to the present-day, industrial, foodway system.

²⁵ Interview 03/05/2021

²⁶ Interview 21/05/2021

Struggling to Pose as a Viable Alternative

The restoration of sustainable foodways also necessitates providing a viable disruptive alternative to the existent and dominant industrial agricultural method. Yet, Koningshof's scale and organisational structure hinders it in physically forming a threat to the established system. Guus had said that he wished for Koningshof to be a place for "microscale sustainable food supply in the city". He had, however, also explained that a lot of the people that, for instance, shop at the market, typically come around lunchtime to buy "a little extra for their lunch or their coffee", be it a local loaf of bread or some last-minute fresh tomatoes or fruits. Few people actively do their grocery shopping at the Koningshof market. Amongst those that do, it is evident that Koningshof is not designed to fulfil this particular role just yet; Clara, who has actively adapted her shopping patterns to the Koningshof market, explains that:

"I try to do at least; I'd say like at least like 60% or 50% [of my shopping at Koningshof]. I think it's useful, so I think by the end of the day as well, like we kind of get what's left over, unless you want to just live off potatoes and onions for the rest of your life, so yeah. I think on a good day, I could really actually supplement my diet with food from them for five out of seven days. Maybe with additions of like pasta or rice. And then the other days I might have to pop into the Albert Heijn or my local shop to like, get other bits and pieces, that sort of thing."²⁷

In expressing this, it becomes evident that Koningshof's market (i) does not suffice in provisioning oneself with local sustainable foods for the duration of a full week, nor (ii) that it can reliably provide variety within the bounds of product availability and its end-of-day scarcity, and that (iii) participants' diets are adapted to the constant availability of grain and carbohydrate-intensive products that Koningshof does not sell. Moreover, some participants' dietary constrictions further require them to do their grocery shopping elsewhere for special products.

²⁷ Interview 30/04/2021

Yet, many of the participants at Koningshof express that the majority of their grocery shopping still occurs at supermarkets. This is indicative of the work remaining to be done in the restoration of their own sustainable foodways: As Julian, Eva, Sam, and others, repeatedly mention, the biggest hurdle to their doing most of their shopping at Koningshof is that they are used to going on a daily basis, rarely planning meals too far in advance. Bawa and Ghosh's model of household shopping behaviour sheds light onto these practices (1999). Indeed, the city setting and the associated proximity of shops, the income precarity of students and starters, as well as house storage capacity, all play an important role in determining the frequency of grocery shopping trips. These all contribute to a habit of planning meals in the short term for many of the Volunteers and some of the *Tuinders*. The frequency of occurrence of the Koningshof market, therefore, does not lend itself to these practices, meaning they continue to resort to less sustainable alternatives.

Additionally, the very restorative process Koningshof promotes, and partly succeeds in, is contributing to the discouragement to carry out larger quantities of shopping at Koningshof. As seen in chapter two, the increased attention for food waste and, in particular, the emotional attachment to the food coming from Koningshof, means that the participants will tend to only buy those products they are sure to wholly consume. It results in a dichotomic tension in the restoration process. On the one hand, the reciprocity between the food and its caretakers results in an abjection for the wasting thereof. On the other hand, this limits the shopping and acquisition of these very foods that come from trusted, local, participative, and sustainable food source, which also marks a basis for their restoration of sustainable foodways.

The cultural materialist lens sheds light onto the seemingly counter-intuitive dynamics occurring within cultural practices. It proposes that factors influencing norms, values and habits do not simply reflect infrastructural or socio-economic and political institutionalisations (Harris 1987). Instead, the historical as well as present-day context inform deviations from 'logical' practices. Though sustainable foodways concern both reciprocity and respect towards food, as well as the sustainable provisioning of food for sustenance, some initial irreconcilability of the two promotes the ultimate valorisation of the prior at the expense of the latter. It also indicates that ensuring food

provision trumps the intention for restoring one's sustainable foodways, which can be explained by the crucial role it plays in our very sustenance.

Chapter 4: Conclusion and Limitations

Concluding Notes

The state of modern foodways under the industrial agricultural model warrants a revision thereof in the interest of addressing its detrimental environmental impact. It is, herein, crucial to understand how its contribution to the alienation of consumers from their food sources can be remedied to facilitate a restoration of more sustainable foodways. To accomplish this, it is important to acknowledge how emergent alternative systems thereto contribute to such a restoration process. The purpose of this thesis, therefore, consisted in understanding how participation within an urban agriculture initiative like Koningshof brings about a restoration of sustainable foodways. The cultural materialist lens as advocated by Marvin Harris (1979; 1987) was used to shed light onto the dynamics underlying this restoration process; Its approach to understand cultural practices as ensuing from socio-economic and environmental optimisations reveals the pragmatic and instrumental, material, dynamics underpinning Koningshof's restorative ambition.

This restoration is, indeed, nothing without Koningshof's ability to attract participants. Its Volunteer and *Tuinder* allotment garden initiatives engage a resilient community that sustains its restorative dynamics. The participants' adherence thereto is multifaceted; Volunteers' participation is motivated by a desire to contribute in a meaningful way to the economic sustainability of the alternative agricultural and consumption model promoted by Koningshof, all the while benefitting the Volunteers (Janssen 2013; Terry 2014; Yamamoto and Engelsted 2014). Indeed, the volunteering method serves as a way of gaining information pertaining to agricultural practice in a way that denies them most of the burden of responsibility (McIntosh and Bonnemann 2008). It also fosters an environment of holistic engagement with nature that incentivises going outdoors and breaking the monotony and routine of participants everyday lives. The latter point is of special relevance to the context of the coronavirus pandemic affecting mental and physical health through confinement measures (Adams-Prassl et al. 2020; Kumar and Dwivedi 2020). Similarly, Koningshof provides a space in which *Tuinders* may explore an underlying desire to explore sustainable foodways

through self-provision and engagement with their food sources in an urban setting. This practice is, however, highly instrumental in its physical and mental health benefits, along with the economic and interest therein. Moreover, allotment gardens serve as important green spaces in cities that are presented in their roles as ecosystem services (Drescher, Holmer, and Iaquinta 2006; Speak, Mizgajski, and Borysiak 2015; Breuste and Artmann 2014). Yet, this instrumentality can also be found in the experiential aspect of participants' contribution to Koningshof.

Indigenous wisdom provides a lens deeply anchored in cultural materialist understandings that reveals the restoration process occurring in the emotional instruction occurring through the confrontation with productive plants' growing process (Kátai, Juhász, and Adorjáni 2008; Kimmerer 2012; 2020; Reid and Rout 2016; Korthals 2019). This goes beyond the foods' nutritional services and is sustained by the engagement of the senses in this process. The restoration process of sustainable foodways is manifested through participants practices pertaining to waste which the Koningshof community sustains by inspiring each other. The market held on a weekly basis at Koningshof is seen as the manifestation of these learnings, as it provides the platform through which participants integrate the foods they help grow into their personal lives.

Yet, Koningshof is not perfect. Cultural materialist foodways shed light onto the existence of seemingly sub-optimal practices related thereto, as indicating a necessary time-lag in changing one's foodways to adjust to changing circumstances (Harris 1987). Its environmental sustainability potential is hindered by its traditional agricultural legacy, which is manifested in slight tensions experienced by those wanting to be more adventurous with regenerative forms thereof. This mainly applies to the response *Tuinders* receive in their efforts to employ techniques inspired by permaculture. Additionally, Koningshof's current organisational structure and scale mean that Volunteers' immersion into the restoration process is limited by their access opportunities being restricted to once a week, restricting their possible extent of involvement with the food production process and their sense of contribution thereto. This is an issue of organisational capacity stemming from the Initiators' possible time dedicated to Koningshof seeing as they have full-time jobs during the week. The question of Koningshof's scale also challenges its ability to pose as a real alternative to the dominant industrial agricultural foodway system, meaning that participants cannot reliably

depend upon its market for the provision of their food for weekly sustenance. Additionally, the care that is developed as part of the restoration process sometimes paradoxically hinders the restoration effort as their fear to waste the food grown at Koningshof rebounds into them choosing not to take it home for consumption. This leads to a sustained reliance of unsustainable production systems.

Nevertheless, this incompleteness is not a failure, but highlights the complexity of the question, and the importance of experimental locations such as Koningshof for the overall restoration of sustainable foodways on a larger scale. Koningshof's market is still in its infancy, meaning that its ambition to support "*microscale food provision for the city*"²⁸ is still developing. It, therefore, remains an important factor in the effort to tackle the unsustainability of the current industrial agricultural foodways system and the alienation problem ensuing from it.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Some of the shortcomings in the endeavour to restore sustainable foodways revealed during the research may also be the result of the relatively short duration of the ethnographic fieldwork. Participant observation is recommended for at least a year in order to obtain a more complete sense of a community's culture and practices (O'Reilly 2012), yet this is especially relevant in the context of food. This is due to the importance of seasons for the production and consumption of food. The three-month ethnographic fieldwork predominantly took part in Spring, making it important for future research to witness the ways Koningshof and the *Tuinders* ready themselves for the colder Winter months, too. Moreover, the volunteering initiative does not continue during that time period, which raises the question of how the restoration of sustainable foodways is pursued then.

The presence of the coronavirus and its impact on participation and the restoration process also warrants investigating what broader impact socio-epidemiological crises have on sustainable restoration movements more broadly. Simultaneously, it provided for a unique context of research at Koningshof, entailing that future ethnographic

²⁸ Interview 26/05/2021

fieldwork within the community ought to investigate how this restoration process is realised in ‘normal’ times. Additionally, this thesis focused on the human experience of sustainable foodways amongst the two main participant groups at Koningshof. Yet, the market revealed that other local actors are also involved in similar initiatives. Future research should, therefore, pay attention to the role of local sustainable networks in resisting the industrial foodways paradigm and contribute to restoration of more sustainable forms thereof.

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