Tastes Political

An interpretive analysis of the foodie lifeworld

in contemporary New Zealand

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Abstract

The aim of my research is to make sense of foodie activity in New Zealand, and locate that activity in the socio-cultural sphere – the foodie 'lifeworld' (Habermas, 1984). This research explores the foodie phenomenon and the ways that foodie activity intersects with lifestyle movements. The lifestyle movement is a contemporary form of social movement based in the kind of day-to-day lived experience that is informed by notions of principled consumption. My approach to the research is based in the interpretive paradigm: I sought to locate and unpack the layered meanings that foodies form about their food activities. I established two questions to guide the research. The first question investigates the underlying a priori purposes to foodie activity. The second investigates the intersection between local foodie practices and political movements.

To begin I explore the literature in three subject areas. The first is food politics and the role of nostalgia in shaping belief about the food lifeworld. The second area of literature is New Zealand's social and cultural history, including the evolution of the New Zealand culinary scene, an examination of utopian impulses in the creation of the country, and a review of the forms of activism that New Zealanders are familiar with and engage in. The third area of literature is social movement and subculture studies and the intersection of the two, which is an emerging area of scholarship. Drawing together these rich fields of scholarship assists in the framing of the foodie lifeworld and begins to answer the research questions. To complement the review of literature and gain an empirical understanding of the foodie lifeworld, I undertake semi-structured interviews with self-identifying foodies and thematically analyse the resulting data.

The most significant of my findings is that foodies are participants in an emerging form of social movement, the 'lifestyle movement', which is located at the intersection of social movement and subcultural phenomena. Food is, for

these foodies, about much more than taste. Rather, food is the site of three realms of behaviour: pleasure, thought, and care, based on their antecedent convictions about food and the responsibility they feel as politically engaged consumers. In contrast to previous research into foodies, the concept of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) is barely present in the foodie lifeworld. Instead, foodies behave in ways that align with their values in relation to food. The foodies enact these values in their day-to-day lives. Furthermore, foodies have a heightened sense of the provenance of food and, in that respect, can be considered "situated eaters" (Leynse, 2006).

In my discussion of the findings I describe foodiness as a quasi-religious meaning system (Brinkerhoff & Jacob, 1999) that features elements of religion, including faith and righteousness, humility, bounded liberty, and opportunities for salvation. And lastly, I draw a comparison between the lifeworld of the New Zealand foodie and the principles of the Arts & Crafts movement of the late 19th–early 20th century, and find that the foundations of each have much in common, including a utopian impulse and disinclination toward industrial processing.

Table of Contents

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Jennie Watts

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Chapter One

Overview

This research is about the 'foodie phenomenon' in New Zealand. More particularly, it is about the intentions behind self-identification as a 'foodie'. The 'foodie phenomenon' is a term that embraces the presence of people who identify as foodies, an identity that came into being around the time the term was first used in publication. For the sake of brevity in this introductory chapter, the 'foodie phenomenon' is an umbrella term for foodie identity, foodie behaviour, and foodie media: the foodie 'zeitgeist' that has gained foothold and become well established in contemporary life since the 1980s (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). It is a term that will be used frequently and without quotation marks from this point onwards in this thesis. I take the foodie phenomenon to be the sum of a range of manifestations of a heightened emphasis on food in Western[1] society today, most significantly the growth and normalisation over the past 20 years of the 'foodie'.

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[1] Particularly British, American, Australian and New Zealand societies, from which comes most of the food media available to New Zealand viewers.

The term 'foodie' was first used by restaurant critic Gael Greene in *New York* magazine in 1980 (Popik, 2009), although it is most often attributed to Barr and Levy after their book *The official Foodie handbook: Be modern – worship food* (1984). The term is contentious; embraced by some (Weston, 2006) but considered a diminutive or, conversely, a snobbish term by others (Ambrozas, 2003; Gim, 2006; Ahern, 2007; Myers, 2011). Literature in the field defines the foodie as something of a contemporary manifestation of the 'gourmet' – a person of discerning taste or a connoisseur of good food (Oxford Online, 2011), though foodies often reject the elitism associated with the term 'gourmet'. De Solier (2010) describes the foodie as "a type of serious and committed amateur" (p. 164) and notes that "gastronomic education" is a goal of the foodie (p. 164).

The research will involve New Zealanders who participate in foodie activity and who, in doing so, may construct a foodie identity in relation to the phenomenon. The specific and unique environment that is New Zealand's 'foodscape' (Johnston & Baumann, 2010) will be explored, providing an essential context for understanding the development of a food 'lifeworld' (Habermas, 1984) and foodie activity in this country.

The research explores the foodie phenomenon as a form of lifestyle movement (Haenfler et al., 2008), a developing concept that sits at the convergence of research into social movements and subculture. Concepts of conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 2008 [1899]) and taste (Bourdieu, 1984) are relevant, and supported by previous research into foodies (Johnston & Baumann, 2010), which suggests that foodies are complex, striving for cultural capital while at the same time finding political fulfilment and much personal pleasure in food (Bell & Valentine, 1997; Belasco & Scranton, 2002).

Furthermore, this research builds upon another compelling theme, which is the intersection of foodie activity and political motivation. I propose that foodies are actively negotiating what I refer to as 'little p politics' within their food lifeworld. Food is not a new site for discussion of politics, but I see the presence

of political issues being, in many cases, central to the motivation of New Zealand foodies in the context of New Zealand's particular social and cultural situation. In addition to exploring what foodie activity means to foodies in New Zealand, the research will also contribute to a wider discussion of consumption, explicating a facet of how it is to *be* in contemporary culture and society where the act of consuming is in conversation with personal ethics and environmental imperative.

Purpose

The purpose of my research, then, is to explicate the socio-political nature of engagement in what I am calling the foodie phenomenon in New Zealand. The research will demonstrate through qualitative methods the integration of *a priori* convictions in lifestyle choices of those who identify as foodies. For the purposes of this study, the politics in the term 'socio-political' are based in grassroots activism and refer to a structure of behaviour that is specific and local. They are the politics of the everyday, located and lived by people in their daily habit. The day-to-day politics are inclusive, in contrast with the elitist and sometimes theatrical politics engaged in by politicians and the news media. If it were governmental, this focus would be expressed in policy, but among 'the polis' it is expressed through agency and, on occasion, activism.

This research will contribute to the body of knowledge about the relationship between societal change, social phenomena, and the form of activism taken by participants in a lifestyle movement (Haenfler et al., 2008). The research will demonstrate that what I am calling the foodie phenomenon is not just about consumption (in both the eating and the consumer senses), but that being a 'foodie' is a politically charged lifestyle of choice. The research will locate the foodie phenomenon in New Zealand's social and cultural context and situate the participants in the context of contemporary lifestyle politics.

The concept of lifeworld (Husserl, 1973 [1939]; Habermas, 1984) is key to the thesis because it usefully frames the research participants' reflexively formed attitudes and locates the political notions I will investigate within communication and the lived experience of people. In this sense, I use the term 'lifeworld' as a useful carry-all that suggests all the scholarship of communicative action in interpretive sociology, but is not overburdened by it. Here I wish to clarify and discuss exactly what I mean by my use of the term 'lifeworld', and the extent to which the body of scholarship that accompanies it is relevant to the purpose of this research.

First, to briefly define lifeworld (lebensvelt, in German), the concept resides in a phenomenological tradition and was first characterised by Husserl (1973 [1939]), who describes it as the ordinary experience of life, before it is consciously interpreted and judged or expressed discursively: "the world in which we are already living and which furnishes the ground for all cognitive performance and all scientific determination" (1973, p. 41). Habermas expands upon Husserl's definition, locating the lifeworld in the context of a wider socio-cultural system which, through social interaction, enables mutual understanding and the creation of shared systems of meaning and patterns of activity (1984). These shared understandings could also be expressed as 'values' in the sense of what is held dear by the group. It is in this sense that I find the term to be most germane, as it encapsulates the internal cognition and the lived experience of foodies. But this is not the only way in which Habermas' extended application of the concept of lifeworld is relevant to this research. Habermas asserts that the values and assumptions of the lifeworld are latent, and that to express them discursively is to extinguish them; that their authority is in their presupposed, "taken-for-granted" nature (1984, p. 335). Moreover, the lifeworld requires reaffirmation; for example, by performing the work that represents a value we reaffirm that value to ourselves and to others. Habermas calls this performance 'communicative action' and writes "communicative action provides the medium for the reproduction of lifeworlds" (1984, p. 337). This

idea, of the reaffirmation of values through communicative action, is both relevant and vexing to this thesis because the foodies who take part in the research primarily live their lifeworld, but in taking part in this research they speak of it (the way they live, their actions, their beliefs and values) in the research interview (Habermas, 1984, p. 107). So it is only through communicative experience that the researcher can access the lifeworlds of the participants, and these have already been filtered by the participants themselves.

Furthermore, and taking a step back from the self-conscious reference to the process of research, Habermas' position on the function of communicative action in late modernity is a critical one. He believes that communicative action is being displaced by 'the system'. By system, he refers to the structures of society that steer social processes, particularly in relation to symbols of power such as money and votes. To clarify, rather than communicative action being the founding process for rational decision making, the power dynamics within social systems dominates individual thought. Habermas labels this the 'colonisation' of the lifeworld by systems: in other words, the displacement of communicative forms of social order and the inhibition of the lifeworld. I am interested in this position in relation to the foodie lifeworld, where foodies may be engaging in communicative action in opposition to the powerful food industry which is economically driven, to the detriment, perhaps, of people and the environment.

Lastly, Habermas believed that enlightened reason, where the most reasonable argument should reign, is the best hope for society (Johnson, 2006). This position is arguably a utopian one that returns the power to citizens and undoes the embedded systems that relentlessly shape the progress of society. Again, the utopian vision of a fairer, more just society is one that is relevant to this research; as I argue in later chapters, foodies are acting in opposition to the food system as well as strengthening their own foodie lifeworlds though their values and activities.

The food research context

Social science research into food began to be taken seriously by the academy in the 1980s. In fact Belasco and Scranton (2002) maintain that before this time, the cerebral was more highly prized by academics than anything embodied, and food, by nature, is the epitome of embodiment. It is only in the recent decades that food has become a respected research area of interest, and is often arrived at via other disciplines (Parasecoli, 2008). Indeed, I came to this research area via an initial interest in communication and women's studies, which is explained in the next section.

Food itself is ephemeral in that it is created and then it is consumed. But the production, preparation and presentation of food are repetitive processes and processes can be studied (Macbeth & MacClancy, 2004). Not only that, but the meanings of food for the people who engage in that process can be studied, and those meanings are the realm where this research resides. Anthropologists have made inroads into the issues of food security and environmental concerns in relation to food, but as Macbeth and MacClancy (2004) write, food researchers should "exploit their expertise in order to extend and deepen their participation in relevant public debates" (p. 5). This 'call to arms' encouraged me to pursue this exploration into politicisation of food by foodies, those people who, more than others, place importance on food in their day to day lives.

At its simplest, food is a basic concern that every person relies upon, daily (Messer, 1984). But far from dull, and perhaps because it is such a basic need, food carries enormous social, political and economic significance (Parasecoli, 2008). As Avakian and Haber express it,

> As intimate as the experience of eating may still seem, our relationship to food in a capitalist economy is determined in large part by the food industry, and our relations of race, gender and class are shaped by the social construction of cooking and eating. (2005, p. 27)

Therefore, our attitudes to food are a product of social and cultural experience. This research is about how foodies rationalise their engagement with food, meaningfully, generously, and in the best light.

Evolution of the research concept

My topic of study began as an investigation into the way New Zealand women construct identity via the persona of the 'domestic goddess' derived from Nigella Lawson's book titled *How to be a Domestic Goddess* (Lawson, 2000). The catalyst for this study was an intuitive discomfort with foodie culture because on one hand foodies appear to be embracing a return to domesticity which, to some, is more akin to drudgery. Spending long hours preparing meals is an aspect of contemporary life that so-called 'progress' has enabled us to do without. However, cooking is not the limit of the foodie phenomenon; for example, it is conceivable that a person can be a foodie without ever setting foot in a kitchen. If a foodie is someone who, as Johnston and Baumann (2010) write, sees food as, "a subject for study, aesthetic appreciation and knowledge acquisition" (p. 57), then a foodie need not actually cook at all. So how much of the foodie phenomenon was about identity construction, and how much was about consumption was unclear.

Rich sources of data are available – the media and consumer products that reinforce a 'domestic goddess' persona are many and varied, and I planned to explore the influences that these products have on the way people make decisions about how to *be* via the lens of 'nostalgia'. The concept of the domestic goddess is a multi-layered one. It is clearly nostalgic, in that it reflects fondly upon another time and place where, debatably, life was simpler, women spent more time in the home, their roles were easily defined as wives and mothers, and they were appreciated for the abilities that those roles encompassed. Nostalgia could be articulated as if it is the reason for the behaviours and food related activities that my peers are engaging in, rather than

as a frame of analysis in the style of Bordi (2006) or Mannur (2007), resulting in the dismissal of any more complex motivation.

Initial interviews generated some interesting avenues for further exploration, but one avenue in particular stood out to me, and grew in significance – so much so that I realised I needed to redirect the focus of the research project to do it justice. This new focus is the political aspects of the foodie life on which this thesis is based. Nostalgia remains relevant, however, but is presented in relation to the research participants' own stories, rather than as a critical frame.

Design of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine the ways in which the interwoven layers of the foodie phenomenon intersect with cultural and political action in New Zealand at the beginning of the 21st century. The research will be undertaken from an interpretive standpoint. This means that the lived experience of foodies, recorded through semi-structured interviews, will be explored and interpreted (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Deetz, 1982; Deetz & Kersten, 1983; Gregory, 1983; Mumby, 1988; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Thomas (1993) writes that insights gained through research "draw attention to how pre-existing cultural formations shape behavioural opportunities and life chances" (p. 61), which is relevant here because this research is located at the nexus of modes of identity[2] and values in everyday life.

In order to operationalise this research project, I will use thematic analysis to analyse the interview materials and prioritise the sense-making processes my participants bring as involved agents in the research and in the foodie lifeworld. Initial interviews with research participants employed a broad set of questions, the purpose of which was to explore the sensibilities of the foodie. This helped

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[2] Although this research is not identity research, as I explain in the 'Limitations of the research' section later in this chapter.

me to see which were the most significant areas of foodie motivation, and led to the emergence of the theme that this research is focused on, which is the preceding or concurrent political inclination to be a foodie. The following research questions are central to the research:

Research Question One: Are there underlying *a priori* purposes to foodie engagement with foodie activity?

Research Question Two: In what ways, if any, do local foodie practices intersect with other political movements?

It is an assumption of this research that the foodie phenomenon comprises issues of cultural capital and phenomena such as food events, media and networks. The first question will be answered through the aggregation of the existing literature and analysis of semi-structured interviews with research participants. In addition, in order to answer this question thoroughly, an exploration of the phenomena in the New Zealand context is necessary to set the scene. Question two explores the motivations for foodies to engage in foodie activity and also the effect of external influences on that construction, and is designed to explore the ways in which foodie activity forms a lifestyle movement that is situated in the food lifeworld. The lifeworld is about the shared perceptions and lived experience of the subjects – in this case, foodies in New Zealand. This research is about discovering the actuality of the political nature of the foodie from the foodies' perspective, rather than attempting to further articulate foodie identity, as it has already been well defined in the academy. To answer the research questions I will be recording and analysing the lived experience of the research participants through semi-structured interviews. This method of gathering and interpreting data research sits within the interpretive paradigm of research (Deetz, 1982; Deetz & Kersten, 1983). Thematic analysis, where data are analysed according to defined organising principles, will be used to identify recurrent themes through a coding system of

my own devising (Boyatzis, 1998; Leininger, 1985; Taylor & Bogden, 1984; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

It is a tenet of this project that the satisfactory investigation of such a richly complex concept needs to take place through the gathering and analysis of equally rich, densely stratified data of the sort designated by Geertz's famous phrase "thick description" (1973, p. 6). These sorts of data are composed of "a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another" (Geertz, 1973, p. 10), which the researcher must disentangle in an exhaustive process of sense making (Weick, 1995) in order to achieve understanding of the insiders' views of phenomena and experiences (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Gregory, 1983; Mumby, 1988; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). The theoretical orientation of this research, therefore, is sharply inclined towards an interpretive perspective, in that it does not aim to propose universal laws that predict (and perhaps control) human behaviour across a wide range of eventualities in the foodie lifeworld,[3] but instead will give voice to the research participants and valorise their subjective experience (Littlejohn, 1992) in close accounts of their interactions with the research context, the foodie phenomenon.

An interpretive perspective on research, then, emphasises understanding over explanation (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Mumby, 1988) in a deliberate shift away from positivist approaches that push the possibility of an objective and empirically verifiable world. This is not to say, however, that an absolute dichotomy exists between the two approaches: rather, it is more the case that positivist research is concerned with what Mumby (1988, p. 128) calls "procedural sublimation" – an over-concern with method – while interpretive research centres on the social actor as the source of meaningful commentary on the social world. It has long been accepted that interpretive perspectives offer much that is useful in achieving understanding of societies (Denzin & Lincoln,

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[3] For full explication of the 'lifeworld', see Habermas (1984); 'Foodie lifeworld' is a term coined for this research project specifically.

2003), but the interpretive paradigm nevertheless has many detractors (see, for example, Hammersley, 1992). Criticisms aimed at interpretive research tend to fall into two groups: first, that in thick description any old thing can be passed off as data, and second, that the approach is riddled with potential for bias and solipsism on the part of the researcher. In a counter argument, Janesick (2003) contends that interpretive research can be redeemed from the potential of the 'anything goes' flaw if a balance is struck between the rich detail of the data on the one hand, and crisp, evidence-based explanation on the other. Clear reports of the modes of operationalisation further bolster the credibility of interpretive research and allow objective evaluation of its validity and reliability (Janesick, 2003). Clearly, Janesick's (2003) response to the 'problems' of establishing research validity can seem more defensive than useful, in that they form a field of instructive 'shoulds'. For instance, the interpretive researcher *should* make the processes of data gathering and analysis transparent; the research *should* be written up in such a way that equilibrium is found between description and explanation. Tactics for dealing with accusations of researcher bias also tend to be robustly admonishing. As Fairclough expresses it:

> The scientific investigation of social matters is perfectly compatible with committed and "opinionated" investigators (there are no others!), and being committed does not excuse you from arguing rationally or producing evidence for your statements. (1989, p. 5)

In other words, no researcher ever comes to a research project entirely free of prior assumptions about the nature of truth and ways of discovering it. The concept of interpretive research underpins the design of this research project and determines, at a meta-level, the way that research participants will be approached, the type of data that will be sought (and the manner in which it will be gathered), and the method by which the data will be analysed.

Limitations of this research

This research is about the ways in which the research participants, who identify as foodies, are politically active in relation to food, and how they make sense of the connection between food practice and foodie politics. The research is not intended to be an exhaustive examination of a foodie subculture or description of an alternative food network, although it goes some way toward being both of those things. Neither is it an attempt to prove the validity or otherwise of political activity in the foodie lifeworld though that might be an avenue for future research. And, emphatically, this is not a health related or body image study.

My occasional use of the term 'identity' in this thesis is limited to the parameters that a conception of self is an identification, but is not intended to refer to the well-travelled annals of identity scholarship; this is not identity research in the tradition of Psychology. The term 'identity' can be misleading because it is used to frame a large range of data (Macbeth & MacClancy, 2004), and can be open to interpretation, or have the researcher's notion of identity imposed upon it. Instead, where appropriate, I will use the phrase 'mode of identification' (Macbeth & MacClancy, 2004) which has a number of advantages. The first is that it allows for the evolution of the person and the presence of multiple, simultaneous modes of identification in the one being. It acknowledges that 'foodie' is just one mode of identification, and that the research participants may also relate to other modes such as, for example, music loving, body-building, or parenthood. The second is that it encourages examination of "the roles, motivations and actions of agents in any identificatory process" (Macbeth & MacClancy, 2004, p. 64) which this research does by exploring the lifeworld of the foodie and treating the self-identification as foodie as a beginning, not an end.

One further limitation of the research is the small sample size, which is appropriate in the context of the qualitative ontological perspective and

interpretive mode of analysis of empirical materials. However, it means that the findings cannot be generalised across the population or across all foodies. For that, a larger study of different design would be required, which is beyond the scope of this project.

Summary & Organisation of the thesis

In this introductory chapter I have provided an overview of the study. I have defined some key terms and discussed how I came to narrow the focus of the research to this specific examination of the lifeworld of the foodie. Furthermore, I have begun to lay out my qualitative ontological approach to the research. In the following three chapters, my intention is to review the relevant scholarship and frame the research by sketching the social and political contexts in which the foodie in New Zealand exists.

The second chapter begins by unpacking the term 'foodie' and the research to date around the concept of a foodie mode of identification. The chapter goes on to further define the sense in which I use the term 'political', and then explore the political nature of food, providing an overview of the ways in which food may be engaged with politically. To conclude chapter two, I examine nostalgia as a *leitmotif* within the foodie phenomenon, which begins to address the first research question regarding *a priori* purposes to foodie engagement.

Chapter three provides background to the research, locating the project in the New Zealand social and cultural contexts. It is first a description of the historical utopianism that underpins the nation creation stories of New Zealand. Next, the chapter provides an exposition of the New Zealand food landscape, both an historical overview and explication of the contemporary foodie phenomenon as it manifests. This section details the unique formation of the food culture of New Zealand. The next section brings together the New Zealand food culture and the research on foodies, with the main focus on the concept of distinction. Finally, the chapter ends with a review of activism in

New Zealand, which serves to frame this project's exploration into politically motivated activity by foodies.

The literature reviewed in chapter four concerns social movements and subcultures. Then I move into contemporary social movements and lifestyle movements, in which I begin to detail the major concerns of the scholars in this field, particularly Haenfler (2004; 2006) whose work to define the lifestyle movement has been pivotal in my understanding and use of the term.

The methodology and method of this research is described in chapter five, in particular my qualitative, interpretive approach to the research, the mechanics of the data gathering stage, and the mode of analysis that I used to analyse the data.

Chapter six presents the interview data which explores the foodie lifeworld and how food and lifestyle merge for the research participants, including aspects of inheritance, nurturing, and other activities which comprise the foodie lifeworld. The political nature of the foodies and the range of political perspectives and motivations that drive them as foodies are explicated, along with the sense of purpose they feel regarding socio-political aspects of food.

The data are discussed in relation to the theoretical perspectives of this research in chapter seven. The key findings are drawn out and presented, and the research questions are answered explicitly through use of examples and interpretation. The last section of chapter seven presents some of the avenues for further research, and some final reflections on this project.

Chapter Two

Foodies, Food Politics & Nostalgia

Introducing the Foodie

The place of food in culture and society is a fast growing area of research, with multiple strands. The strands include agribusiness and the global food industry; issues of distribution, equity, starvation; genetic engineering and its impact on the environment; and food safety, including the use of chemicals and the counter movement towards organic farming (Ashley et al., 2004; Macbeth & MacClancy, 2004; Miller & Deutsch, 2009). In the cultural vein lies research into the relationship between food and ethnicity, diaspora, poverty, geography, and human psychology (Macbeth & MacClancy, 2004; Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008; Parasecoli, 2008).

Given the wider context of research about food and its significance, foodies exist in a situation of relative privilege (Bell & Valentine, 1997; Johnston & Baumann, 2010). Their socio-economic position allows them to make choices about food and consumption that the majority of the world's population cannot (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). I am curious about whether foodies have any knowledge of

their privilege, and if so, whether they reconcile it within the lifeworld, or live with the tension. Indeed, Western life involves the reconciliation of personal habits of consumption with the vast inequalities that exist elsewhere.[4] The exploration of the foodie lifeworld recorded in this research will contribute to the commentary about consumption in Western society.

As I consider the dissonance created by such inequality, I am mindful that food is imbued with meaning to a great extent (Montanari, 1996). Food signifies celebration and opportunity for socialisation. It also enables engagement with cultures, reflection and leisure time and, significant to this research, food is an outlet for personal expression and taste in terms of choices around how food is sourced, prepared and consumed. For example, choices about the brand of chocolate, or the origin of peanuts, or the decision to not eat meat may reflect a person's world view or personal political standpoint (Bell & Valentine, 1997).[5] Food has cultural significance too; it is associated with celebration of religious holidays, with marriage, and with death ceremonies (Montanari, 1996; Belasco & Scranton, 2002). People maintain their cultural heritage, celebrate their ethnicity and honour their birth place or the birth place of their ancestors by eating particular foods as a marker of cultural identity (Barthes, 1957; Appadurai, 1981; Bell & Valentine, 1997). My contention is that for some New Zealanders, food has become even more fundamentally tied to social being – that their choices about food actually reveal the food culture here in New Zealand, as well as their food lifeworld, personal desires and ambitions (Bourdieu, 1984; Ashley et al., 2004; Johnston & Baumann, 2010). A foodie's ambition for the world may be for a society that is different from the one he or she lives in, perhaps motivated by longing for a less stressful or more luxurious life or, conversely, by aspiration for greater human equality or animal rights. As others have before me (Barthes, 1957; Levi-Strauss, 1966; Garnsey, 1999), I

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[4] See the discussion of what I call 'Big P' and 'little p' politics in the next section of this chapter.

[5] These decisions may have more or less intrinsic political value, just as they have varying degrees of personal value to the individual.

contend that for foodies, food signifies as well as functions in its daily presence, and I am curious about the nature of the signifiers for foodies in New Zealand.

One of the strongest themes that is substantiated in the literature is the notion of the foodie mode of identification, particularly the self-conscious nature of defining oneself as a foodie. Researchers have written that foodies who identify as such are motivated to shape their identity this way because of the cultural capital it brings, such as the air of sophistication and the pleasure of being able to demonstrate a deep knowledge of the subject (Harvey et al., 2004; Pearson & Kothari, 2007; Johnston & Baumann, 2010). Therefore research in this area is likely to be with people who have a sophisticated awareness of their identity in relation to food. As I consider this aspect, I wonder whether there is a relative safety provided by the assumed foodie mode of identification where sensual and sensuous enjoyment of food is allowed, even encouraged. Perhaps when foodies self-declare their identification as a foodie, they feel they have become exempt (at least partially) from the ever-present instruction and advice about what is healthy and moderate.

Bourdieu (1984) suggests that judgements of taste are related to social standing and socio-economic status, and it is widely regarded that the way people think about and use food can be markers of 'culinary cultural capital' (Bell, 2000). Identifying oneself as a foodie is a marker of this cultural capital (Johnston & Baumann, 2010) or of "culinary cosmopolitanism" (Pearson & Kothari, 2007, p. 49). Much of the research in this field is from outside New Zealand, but expression of taste through food is a concept that has application to foodies here due to the close connectedness of local consumers with consumers overseas via media sources and international corporations that work across markets (Bell & Valentine, 1997; Ashley et al., 2004; Harvey et al., 2004). For example, New Zealand shares food media products and food brands, and trades food with other countries, so it is reasonable to assume that food sensibilities may be shared too. However, this research is focused on the food sensibilities of foodies living in

New Zealand so that more may be understood about the particular 'Kiwi' context of their foodie lifeworlds.

Foodies are attuned to the tastes of others, particularly of food celebrities such as, for example, Jamie Oliver[6] or Peter Gordon[7] or Annabel Langbein.[8] It can be argued that foodies are admirers of "signature style" (Elsbach, 2009, p. 1062) which these food celebrities sell, along with the revenue-generating cookbooks and DVDs. The foodie mode of identification is a cultivated one, but may signify more than an enjoyment of food and a desire for knowledge. The relationship between the choice foodies make about food and their consciousness of foodie culture is complex, as is their consciousness of the affect their behaviour has on the environment and on society. Given these factors, it is axiomatic that their beliefs drive their actions while their actions underwrite the foodie beliefs that this research sets out to explore. As expressed by the research questions, this research is situated where the foodie mode of identification becomes politicised, which I see as being both notable across foodie culture and intrinsic to some foodies' lifeworld.

Political food & Food politics

Food is inherently political when examined in the social context of its production and distribution. The political perspective is a useful frame through which to view food because it helps to explain what is happening at the societal and, by extrapolation, at the individual level. The contemporary academic framing of food considers aspects such as scarcity and unequal distribution, environmental impact, impact on local communities, and the treatment of food by popular media today. There has been a surge of interest in food research, from a range of disciplinary fields, in the past thirty years. However, as Belasco

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[6] Chef, restauranteur, multi-platform writer and producer, and high profile campaigner for a range of food issues.

[7] Chef and restauranteur, television presenter from New Zealand, based in London.

[8] Television cook and publisher, from New Zealand, recently gaining popularity in offshore markets.

and Scranton identify (2002), the majority of food scholarship is weighed down by a high proportion of research where food is considered problematic – in the case of disordered eating for example, which is where the eating of food, too much or too little, perhaps – is understood as a symptom of a mental illness. This is in line with the general "disdain for something as mundane, corporeal, indeed animalistic as eating" (Belasco & Scranton, 2002, p. 7), where the enjoyment of food and what that reveals about people was, until the cultural turn of the late 1990s, largely absent from research into food.[9]

An example of the cultural turn in research is Ashley et al. (2004) *Food and Cultural Studies* which applies Johnson's 'circuit of culture' (Johnson, 1986; Du Gay et al., 1997) to food and unearths rich layers of meaning in food. The circuit specifies that any cultural phenomenon "be understood in relation to five major cultural processes: production, regulation, representation, identity and consumption" (Ashley et al., 2004, p.vii). The political layer explored by them is both 'Big P Politics', meaning that it deals with regulatory processes by governments; and 'little p politics' in the same sense that 'the personal is political';[10] meaning the individual choices made by engaged citizens are expressive of particular world views.

I am aware that the 'personal is political' assertion is, itself, a political point of view and an old one, having been in common use for approximately sixty years. Furthermore, the phrase is vulnerable to multiple interpretations (both historically and contemporarily), and should not be used uncritically, so I wish to briefly discuss the relevance and application of this point of view to my study. Marcuse (1972) recognised that youth in countercultural America were engaging in politics in ways that highlighted the intersection of "personal and

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[9] Four seminal titles were published in 1997, a particularly productive year for food-culture texts. See Bell & Valentine, 1997; Beardworth & Keil, 1997; Warde, 1997; Counihan & Esterik, 1997.

[10] 'The personal is political' is a phrase and philosophy usually tied to the 'second wave' feminist movement. In fact the phrase or, for radical feminists, method or claim (Heberle, 2015) was present in numerous movements that emerged from the counterculture of the 1960s, including the civil rights movement. However, it was the feminist movement that brought it into popular lexicon.

political rebellion, *private liberation and social revolution* [emphasis added]" (p. 48). This is a collocation of terms that usefully reflects the latter of my research questions, which enquires about the intersection of foodie practices with wider social movements. Portwood-Stacer (2013) notes that this intersection is common among radicals who have long been "making connections between their political ideologies and their habits of everyday life" (p. 5) for the reason that repressive social or political environments tend to force radical activity into the private sphere. However the phrase has been the subject of intense criticism, not least by feminists themselves, who have used its fluctuating meaning and mutability as the basis of a self-critique of the fundamental aspects of feminist sensibilities (Heberle, 2015).

'The personal is political' no longer resonates in the way it did during the height of the civil rights and feminist movements. It cannot express today the same radical urge that it did when those tumultuous changes began and profoundly altered systems of oppression. Moreover, it may be that the assertion is now a hegemonic assumption which, supported by the state and the market, places responsibility for social and environmental problems on the shoulders of the individual citizen (Rose, 1999; Portwood-Stacer, 2013). The phrase itself may have lost potency, but the contention is relevant to this research where there is the recognition that the personal is "never untouched by the meaning and significance of what is recognizable […] in the public/political spaces we inhabit" (Heberle, 2015, p. 607). It is this relationship that I refer to in the context of 'Big P' and 'little p' politics.

In this research, 'Big P' politics are of indirect interest, predominantly for the manner by which they inform 'little p' politics which manifest on the personal level. However, the reflexive two-way direction of influence may mean that 'little p' politics inform 'Big P' politics, which this research does seek to illuminate. The food that is placed on the family dinner table is marinated in ethical, societal and cultural meaning for individuals who make decisions about their own (and their families') food behaviour. For instance, 'little p' politics

involve ethical decisions about purchasing, such as the push back observed in supermarkets and media after a revelatory story in May 2009 about the use of sow crates in pig farms across New Zealand (TVNZ, 2009). Consumers and politicians were disgusted by the poor treatment of pigs at some farms, and the demand for cruelty-free pork and bacon was unprecedented in the months that followed (Bishop, 2013). And more recently, at a societal level, consumers are listening to popular diet and nutrition advice (such as Jamie Oliver's 2015 documentary *Sugar Rush*) and turning from sugar because they are concerned about the trend towards an increasingly obese, diabetic population. As can be seen from this example, the 'Big P' politics inform 'little p' politics, and this must be consciously negotiated by anyone who engages intellectually with food.

Identity research is a valid path to take and one that is powerful and strongly represented in psychology and sociology. But, as Parasecoli writes, the political frame ensures food research remains meaningful at the systemic level and "reveals the gap at the heart of the cultural dimension which the quest for identity tries to conceal" (2008, p. 144); just as people are products of their genetic inheritance, they are products of the systemic social and cultural environment. Therefore, the ways that people engage politically with something so 'mundane' and 'corporeal' as food is revealing of their 'situated-ness' as eaters (Leynse, 2006).

Some vast cultural and social factors are at play when it comes to the overlap between food and politics. Each is a complex and deeply embedded situation with multiple motivations or causes, and significantly, so great is their reach that no one person or body or country could have foreseen or prevented them. These are situations such as colonialism, industrialisation, or the emphasis on production of meat over plant crops. Bell and Valentine (1997) include capitalist consumerism and corporate greed in this list, and note that the presence of all these phenomena creates the unequal "parallel situations of overabundance and life threatening scarcity" (p. 195). For example, many Western countries have easy access to high-calorie foods, so much so that

type 2 diabetes is increasingly common and, along with other obesity related health problems, potentially a great strain upon nation's health budgets in the near future. Whether the main culprit is fat or sugar or neither (an argument currently playing out among health professionals and in the media), it is clear that the over-abundance of food causes wide-spread societal issues.

In contrast there are countries that do not have easy access to volumes of food for a number of climatic and political reasons, where people starve. The political reasons include the effects of civil war and political upheaval, but also the effects of globalisation, which has led to monopolisation of land and water resources for agriculture by a few companies. Most of the hungry are rural and dependent on small-scale independent farmers for food, or on exploitative large companies for wages which do not cover their needs. As De Schutter and Cordes (2011) write,

> too little attention has been paid both to the imbalances of power in the food systems and to the failure of the international economic environment to support efforts aimed at improving the ability of small-scale farmers in developing countries to feed themselves, their families and their communities. (p. 7)

The hunger referred to here is closely tied to political and economic factors in which governments play a major role. Another kind of hunger occurred in the Soviet Union in the early – mid 1900s, after the revolution of 1917. As the result of the pursuit of a communist society, politicians flip-flopped between the notions of food as a right for all, and food as a privilege to be awarded to the deserving (and therefore, one to be withdrawn via deliberate policy of famine if it suited the ruler's purposes) (Borrero, 2002). Their failed redistribution of food resources motivated by a flawed utopian dream demonstrates that there is no simple resolution to the problem of hunger. More recently, politicians have shown they are not above the exchange of foodstuffs for the promise of votes in Bolivia, as described by Messer (2004) where there is pressing need for

supplementary food. It is clear that governments play a key role in making policy that affects food access and distribution but this is more complex than simply a matter of securing supply.

A further way that food is political is the through appropriation of culture that took place in colonialism and continues today in the "touristic quality" of consumption (Bell & Valentine, 1997, p. 191). This is the plucking of the choicest, most easily accessed aspects of culture – often the food – by those who have the means to shop for the exotic or unusual to increase their cultural capital (Lash & Urry, 1994; Pearson & Kothari, 2007; Smart 1994). This appropriation of techniques, ingredients and flavours is about distinction and a middle class form of consumption that assists in identifying the consumer as having discerning taste (Avakian & Haber, 2005; Johnston & Baumann, 2010). Conversely, ethnic food can be empowering for ethnic minorities when the interest in their food spills over into an interest in their culture and as people. Additionally and pragmatically, making and selling food can be financially beneficial for ethnic minorities who may rely on this form of exchange for employment (Belasco & Scranton, 2002), exchanging something of their national cuisine for tolerance and citizenship.[11]

Suburbanisation too, is a politically-charged phenomenon which affects the food landscape. Ashley et al. (2004) write that the simultaneous flight of people from the city to suburbs and the reoccupation of cities by different populations has meant an increase in stylish urban markets which attract diverse customers. They do note, however, that urban markets "may be more accessible to middle-class gentrifiers than to the relatively impoverished populations trapped in place" (Ashley et al., 2004, p. 113) such as elderly and ethnic minorities. These 'trendy' markets sell more than merely delicious food; rather, they sell authentic food. In other words, they offer the valuable commodities of

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[11] The demarcation of a 'national cuisine' supports national branding and helps to carve out identity space for citizens. But it is useful to consider who is profiting from the identification of a national cuisine. Belasco and Scranton (2002) suggest it is "politicians, food marketers, and other food professionals" (p. 12).

authenticity and distinction, which have high currency in the middle class quest for self-actualisation.

The desire for authenticity and distinction coexists with the fashion for 'green cuisine' and has done since the counterculture movement of the 1960s–70s. The 'green' aspect seems to be a fluid descriptor and has multiple meanings. Some use it to mean ethically sourced food products, others mean a plant-based diet which has smaller impact on the environment than a meat-inclusive one, still others mean a diet of unprocessed food devoid of additives. From counterculture onwards there has been a turn toward alternative food consumption practices that are "globally aware" (Belasco & Scranton, 2002; Bell & Valentine, 1997). Indeed, the push for ethical, green, or environmentally friendly food has increased and consumers are using their purchasing power to support brands which meet their expectations. Groups of this kind of consumer can be considered a loose community which coheres around a desire to address environmental impact and issues of cruelty in the food chain.

The 'Slow Food' movement, begun by Carlo Petrini in 1986, strives to preserve traditional food culture and local food sourcing for the benefit of the participants and the immediate ecosystem. Its original tenet was to enjoy good food in good company, with connotations of "authenticity, nostalgia, and cultural heritage that stubbornly insist on being part of who we are" (Parasecoli, 2008, p. 151). But Slow Food, like vegetarianism[12] and veganism, has become intensely politicised around sustainability, social justice and economics as these subjects have moved into the daily experience of people who are interested in food (Chrzan, 2004; Andrews, 2008; Parasecoli, 2008; Amey, 2014).

As for the structure of the food chain, regulatory systems are political in the sense that the policies are set by regulatory bodies which are obliged to work within laws and agreements of trade set between countries. Regulatory systems

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[12] Although the categorisation of vegetarianism as a 'movement' is disputed (Maurer, 2002).

may be in place to manage food safety, distribution, or even to assert state control and delineate geographical boundaries such as in the case of the Appélation d'Origine Controlée (AOC) system for wine production in France (Guy, 2002).

And finally, food is political as identified by the women's movement which aims to disrupt patriarchal assumptions of dominance and privilege. Women have traditionally been the preparers, cooks and servers of food for the family. The women's movement defines this activity as labour, and works to acknowledge it as such, if not relieve women of the burden of this responsibility (Barndt, 1999; Avakian & Haber, 2005). Thinking about food in terms of labour, equality and oppression is a political act in the feminist tradition.

In summing up all these ways that food is political, it is clear there is near limitless imbrication of overlapping concepts and renegotiation of personal convictions which are informed by teachings and beliefs at the societal level. It is unclear just how much impact consumption choices really have on social and political spheres, but it seems that consumers frame their decisions as if this impact were significant. And because food is vitally linked to survival, food is a nodal point around which politics and the administration of social life revolves.

Nostalgia in the food lifeworld

The term 'nostalgia' is frequently employed in the vernacular but is not commonly analysed or unpacked. Indeed, until the later twentieth century, it was largely ignored except as a marker of certain low-end trends in popular culture (Bonnett, 2016). The most rudimentary observations of the foodie phenomenon, however, show repeated use of deliberately nostalgic images, phrases and ideas in the foodie lifeworld. The idealised past is often represented within the foodie phenomenon, and explicating nostalgia provides another angle from which to examine the foodie lifeworld. There are many definitions of nostalgia but they cohere around a set of common themes. The most obvious of

these is the formulation by individuals or groups of an idealised place, distant spatially and temporally from the mundane or otherwise disappointing quotidian reality. Such formulations are criticised as being false, sanitised and invented (DaSilva & Faught, 1982; Swislocki, 2009), as if they were a wilfully colourised, deliberate (re)construction of memory. Similarly, since nostalgia is commonly understood to be triggered by and implicated in the senses, it can be simultaneously experienced by co-present individuals (as conversing with family members can trigger shared remembrance of a childhood holiday for example) and therefore becomes a shared yet intensely personal experience (Robertson, 1990). Nostalgias are, then, perhaps best understood as the combination of memories embellished by imaginative acts that enable recapturing and recasting experience. For Janover (2000), nostalgias

> aim to recapture the paradisiacal sense of experiences reshaped –
> sweetened, intensified, enriched in the imaginative crucible of memory.
> (p. 126)

Some writers dismiss nostalgia as being simply homesickness because the assertions of the home that is longed for represent yearnings for a home that does not (or did not) exist; rather, the longing is for a constructed and idealised place or time, perhaps even a reconstruction of history, exempt from the troubles and tensions of contemporary reality (Trigg, 2006). The homesickness referred to here is often for a simpler life, something where temporal distance has edited out the day-to-day complexity of the real lived experience. This is not a new idea: as Trigg (2006) notes, Kant wrote that homesickness is "the result of a longing that is aroused by the recollection of a carefree life and neighbourly company […], a longing for places where they enjoyed the very simple pleasures of life" (p. 54).

Grainge (2002) argues that nostalgia should have two definitions: nostalgia as mood and nostalgia as mode. Grainge's assertion is that mood nostalgia refers to "a social-cultural response to forms of discontinuity, claiming a vision of

stability and authenticity in some conceptual 'golden age'" (2002, p. 36), while as a mode, nostalgia is a postmodern distancing of our understanding of the past; that we are unable to distinguish between the real and the pastiche, and we experience both equally (Turner, 2008, p. 184). Both have utility in this field of enquiry, and I propose that a synthesis of 'mood' and 'mode' is appropriate in this research because of the current instability of food security and the ease with which a sanitised view of the past is conjured.

In terms of cultural practice and performativity, the construction of nostalgia in everyday artefacts such as film and television texts results in repeated "homogenised extractions, in which events and relationships are drained of their meaning" (DaSilva & Faught, 1982, p. 54). These extractions are, by their very nature, incomplete fragments of the original, but are accepted as a genuine representation of time or place. Further, as such extractions are increasingly used, any links to the original become less tangible as they fade and dilute. This means nostalgia is constructed in the present as the positionality of those deploying the nostalgic artefacts within popular culture do so with reference to their contemporary reality (Mannur, 2007, p. 14). This can lead to a cultural mind-set where 'nostalgic' is derogatorily conflated with 'dated'. However, in the individual-oriented popular culture of the 1980s and beyond, the nostalgic moment has begun to be employed as a positive marker within the promotion of certain consumer products. Hutcheon (2000) posits that this speaks to an obsession for the nostalgic, and notes that the return of the fountain pen "as an object of consumer luxury in the age of the computer" (p. 192) signals the pervasiveness of this fascination.

As a result of globalisation, where intercultural communication and change occur with increasing ease and regularity, it is tempting to fondly recall a past when geographic boundaries were meaningful and the distinction between cultures was clear. Whether or not that recollection is accurate, the temptation to believe it is accurate likely stems from the discomfort that globalisation causes to some. Thus, as Robertson (1990) suggests, "globalisation has been a

primary root of the rise of wilful nostalgia" (p. 50) and that we are currently experiencing "a new phase of accelerated nostalgia-producing globalisation" (p. 53). Nostalgia, wilful or otherwise, is considered to be a powerful force, not least because of its sensory triggers. As in the example of Proust's madeleine (1924), nostalgia seems to allow for the creation of highly emotive 'sense-memories' (Hutcheon, 2000). Boym (2001) describes nostalgia as a defence mechanism against relentless change or upheaval. The lack of control that this brings may be a catalyst for nostalgic feeling toward and even veneration and a desire for the preservation of the past. Some of this nostalgic practice is considered a link to lived realities of 'authenticity' in a time where reproduction and simulacra are widespread. An example is the proliferation of Mexican food stalls in Mexico City, as explained by Bordi (2006). Bordi attributes the increase in number of women selling tortillas on city streets to the middle and upper classes' desire to experience 'authentic' Mexican food, rather than the westernised fast food or hybridised flavours and ingredients that are readily available in present day Mexico.

Ironically perhaps, nostalgia can operate to mobilise a future-orientation, which develops optimism rather than pessimism. For example, in Cashman's rural Northern Ireland case study, some community members especially value and venerate times when subsequently divided communities found common ground; a time when, despite religious divide, neighbours helped each other out of necessity or moral obligation. Their focus on these times appears to have strengthened relations between Catholic and Protestant groups during more recent conflict, helping to ensure against serious breakdown in relations in the future. Such people are thus "satisfied that nostalgia can be of service in the present when marshalled as an appeal for a better future" (Cashman, 2006, pp. 14-5). And as Mannur argues,

> to consume culture in all its various forms, or to be nostalgic for cultural artefacts, is as much about imagining an inclusive future, as it is about commemorating nostalgic memories of the past. (Mannur, 2007, p. 22)

So it seems that in some situations nostalgia can be put to critical, reflective use, in that it provides the opportunity to problematise social change, and thereby allow people to acquire agency in their future. From this perspective, nostalgia is less an avoidance of critical interpretation of the present and more a useful tool with which to crystallise and sort the fragments of the past (Janover, 2000). The past is 'worked out' in the present with the (explicit or implicit) aim of leading into the future. One food-related example of this is the recent popularity of Cultural Revolution-themed restaurants in China, where people who had been sent to labour in the countryside in their youth sit and reminisce over plain 'rustic' food. Swislocki shows how this nostalgic experience has been a valuable framework for reflection on those idealistic times and the fact that contemporary China does not feature the utopian life that was promised by the Cultural Revolution (2009, p. 5). This "nostalgic defensive retreat" is not uncommon or unusual when societies are grappling with shifts in hegemonic power and changing ideologies (Hutcheon, 2000, p. 201).

Nevertheless, the dominant tone of scholarship regarding nostalgia is critical. Some argue that nostalgia is essentially untruthful, in that it denies the reality of past brutality or discomfort. Here, the salient point is that the nostalgic moment suppresses variety in the recollection of the past and means that fewer, yet more sanitised, interpretations are retained (Cashman, 2006, p. 4). Further, it can be argued that, under some circumstances, "nostalgia constitutes an evasion of the present and comes at the expense of the society's future growth and development" (Cashman, 2006, p. 4). This has been a potent message in politics, and one clearly visible in the rhetoric of the 'third way' exemplified by Tony Blair's British New Labour party, when it announced that the future of Britain should be modern and vibrant, "for countries wrapped in nostalgia cannot build a strong future" (Behlmer, 2000).

Such contexts provide my research with a profitable basis. Another iterative step in an interpretive examination of the socio-cultural and political dimensions of the foodie phenomenon, these dimensions position the foodie as a

reflexive being, drawing on a nostalgic past to inform a utopian future. Presenting these concepts here is, in effect, an attempt to move past contradictions by synthesising a relentlessly middle class, sanitised past and the nebulous idealistic future. From this exploration of nostalgia, the next chapter makes the link between the nostalgic past and utopian ideals prominent in New Zealand's heritage which, I argue, is another element that underwrites the local foodie lifeworld and informs foodie activity. The chapter also sets out the culinary heritage which informs contemporary foodie activity, and, lastly, the chapter will describe the activist scene in New Zealand, which contributes to the context in which foodies engage with the politics of food.

Chapter Three

The New Zealand Context

This chapter sets the scene for the research, specifically, the social, cultural and historical frame in which foodies exist in New Zealand. Three aspects of New Zealand heritage will be explored here: first, nation creation and utopian impulses, then the culinary inheritance that foreshadows the contemporary foodie lifeworld, and last the activist scene, which illustrates the drive for social improvement in New Zealanders. These three aspects locate the research in the New Zealand context and prepare the way for discussion of contemporary lifestyle activism in the following chapter.

Utopian themes

This section describes utopian themes in the post-colonial creation myth of New Zealand and intentional communities of New Zealand. My intention is to locate

utopianism in the character of New Zealanders which I will refer to again in discussion of the data later in this thesis.

Utopia is a conception of an improved reality, perhaps one that exists elsewhere, or elsewhen, or can be realised in a future which contrasts with the flawed present. So there is a temporal element in addition to the otherworldliness of utopian dreaming. New Zealand's development as a nation has some interesting utopic elements which underwrite the nation it has become. The history of the settlement of New Zealand by Polynesian (Pasifika) people remains a contested subject (Simmons, 1976; Howe, 2008) and it would be artificial to apply to it the western concept of utopia. Settlement by Europeans in the 18th and 19th centuries, however, has overt utopian elements. There is plenty of documentation that records European settlement and the way New Zealand was marketed as a destination which offered a better life and opportunity to flourish. Many writers at the time described New Zealand in both fiction and non-fiction as, variously, Eden, the promised land, a 'better Britain' (Phillips, 2012), Arcadia, and 'God's Own' (Godzone as it has become) (Sargent, 2001). Perhaps the most significant legacy of the literary kind is Samuel Butler's *Erawhon* (1872), a satirical novel that describes a kind of utopia set in a fictional country, which was inspired by the time Butler spent on a New Zealand sheep farm as a young man.

Despite being the most remote of the possible destinations, New Zealand was an attractive option for those looking to leave Britain. As Alessio writes,

> Unlike the United States of America which had developed to many Old World problems, Canada which was too cold and French, South Africa which was black and Boer, and Australia which had begun as a dystopian penal settlement, New Zealand still had utopian potential. (Alessio, 2008, p. 25)

The settlers who braved the long trip by ship came because they hoped for a better life than they had known in Britain. They saw, thanks to the literature

made available to them, the prospect of becoming land owners which was an impossibility at home. Life was hard as a settler in the new land, but there was a sense of being able to gain freedom from the rigid class system which kept them in poverty in Britain. For some immigrants, New Zealand did provide the bounty that was promised as illustrated in these letters home: "we are all fat as pigs" (Brocklesby, in Sargent, 2001, p. 6) and "The peaches are as big as a good sized apple, and grown by tons" (Lynn, in Sargent, 2001, p. 6). The food that grew abundantly here must have been a marked contrast to what was available to them in Britain. Meat was often mentioned in letters home as being readily available: "We think nothing of having a roast leg of mutton for our suppers at night" (Brocklesby, in Sargent, 2001, p. 6). However, the facilities for preparing this bounty were not so winningly written home about, because only very rudimentary ovens or a basic hearth was available on which to build a fire (Sargent, 2001).

Later in New Zealand's history, and on a smaller scale, there have been numerous attempts to create utopian communities in this land. These take the form of religious, environmental and cooperative communities that isolate themselves (sometimes geographically, often philosophically and by way of life) from wider society to live according to their values. Significantly, New Zealand appears to have a higher number of these 'intentional communities' (Sargisson and Sargent, 2004) than other countries in proportion to land mass and population. Sargisson and Sargent suggest that this may be because of the aspirational roots, the "impulse to utopia" (2004, p. 30) that the country is built upon. The intentional communities are sites of utopia-in-practice. The environmentalist communities range in purpose: for instance, the eco-village type where people strive to live sustainably and sensitively. This might include using alternative sources of energy, self-composting toilets, and low impact building materials. Another form of environmentalist community is the communal organic farm, where the members are employed in producing food using organic methods such as crop rotation, natural pest resistance, and

composting (Sargisson & Sargent, 2004). Some organic communities are vegetarian, which aligns with organic principles because the energy and resources, such as pasture, required to produce organic livestock is significantly greater than it is to produce plant foods. These two kinds of intentional community have much in common, not least the experimental nature of their undertaking.

Another form of utopian experiment with food as a central concern occurred in New Zealand and Australia in the form of the Rochdale Consumer Co-operatives (Balnave & Patmore, 2008).[13] These were a way of retaining and increasing wealth in a local community by local investment in local business, and members took a proportional dividend pay-out based on the profits of the co-operative. A key principle of these co-operatives was that food should be of high quality and unprocessed for the maximum benefit to the community. The co-operatives were not enormously successful – they could not withstand the strains of the depression or WWII. However, they were motivated by a shared vision of a better, fairer standard of living.

The utopian aim of producing enough food to feed the world appears in an interesting way in New Zealand. Since this country began exporting food to Britain, an export destination whose hunger for the dairy and meat products seemed inexhaustible, there has been strong productivist encouragement of farmers and growers by successive governments. Productivism is based on the simple supply and demand dichotomy and, in the context of food crises such as hunger, has the function of pushing for increased production with little concern for the detrimental side-effects. For logical capitalist reasons, productivity has been rewarded by the state in the form of tax benefits and export concessions, notwithstanding the profit made by selling larger volumes. Rosin's (2013) discussion of the application of productivism in New Zealand reveals the way

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[13] Rochdale Consumer Co-operatives are based on a movement in Rochdale, England, in the mid-1800s, when weavers began to work co-operatively to improve their working and living conditions, and quality of food.

that a utopian vision of high productivity has harmed its land and its clean, green image. The utopian vision which this productivist focus is founded on, Rosin writes, is the wrong utopia. He proposes that a reconceptualisation is required, one that is concerned with sustainable production practices and increased food security in which all the world is fed through fair distribution (Rosin, 2013, p. 57).

While there were disagreements about what form utopia should take,[14] and whether New Zealand is this or that form, there seems to be general assent that 'the New Zealand experiment' was a success, and utopia is a central trope in the nation's cultural foundations (Sargent, 2001; Alessio, 2008). People living in the small scale intentional communities within this country reflect the pioneering spirit of those early settlers in their determination to live a different kind of lifestyle. Particularly relevant to this research is the way that members of these communities form a collective vision that they attempt to realise in the present. They believe that exploring alternative ways of life is worth the hardship (Sargisson & Sargent, 2004). However, utopian experiments are not without elements of dystopia, dissent, and internal tension. One frequent focus of tension is between the aspiration for a better life for the individual, and the desire for a better life for wider society. Oftentimes these two ideals are at odds with each other, but not always. Uniquely, in New Zealand those two desires have historically coincided successfully, and created opportunities for significant change and progress. In terms of this research project, I am drawn to speculate that New Zealand's activist history and the utopian foundations of the country combine to affect the contemporary foodie lifeworld. My conjecture is that foodies may be working toward the creation of a utopian, food-centred place which happens to be a combination of the two desires referred to above: a better life for the individual and a healthier society overall.

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[14] See Sargent (2001) for a comparative analysis of the utopias of other late-settled nations and dissent within the utopian image.

The next section develops the context of the cultural history and food environment in which New Zealand foodies live. New Zealand's history of colonisation, immigration and emerging identity provides a unique setting for the study of food habits in social change. Viewed as a text, the social history including the food history of this country is expressive of the increasingly diverse culture, as well as the underlying beliefs and values of the people. In order to properly interpret the lifeworld of a contemporary New Zealand foodie, an understanding of the inherited food history is necessary. Leynse uses the term "situated eaters" to describe people with a heightened engagement with food that is informed by the place they live (Leynse, 2006) and explains that situated eaters are:

> well informed consumers whose eating experience is anchored in a culturally specific locale, and its associated identities, via rich multi-sensory experiences. (2006, p. 130)

Some foodies in this definition are likely to be fervent advocates of organic farming and agriculture, choosing to eat organic food when possible for the benefit of the planet, of the animals, or of themselves and their families. This suggests that foodies do not engage with food in these ways purely for the sensuous benefits. Foodies, then, are people who can comfortably discuss their identity in relation to food, and whose interest in food (the sourcing, preparation and consumption of food) is much greater than simply a means of fuelling the body. As part of the 'situatedness' of foodie eating, being a foodie frequently involves an interest in the source and quality of ingredients, in the nuances of taste and texture, in the balanced combination of flavours, but also a more holistic philosophical awareness of the role food plays in society. It seems, therefore, a natural construction to apply the phrase 'situated eaters' to foodies and this research will explore the cultural specifics of the 'situatedness' of New Zealand foodies.

The New Zealand culinary context

New Zealand's culinary history is a chronicle of 'boom and bust' against a backdrop of a sometimes flourishing economy, but always at the mercy of waves of immigration, export arrangements and global politics. From the time of the first Maori settlers it was necessary to adapt to a new climate and growing conditions. European settlers had to do the same, relinquishing the familiar methods and ingredients of home in favour of what could be sourced here, either by experimenting with imported crops or by adopting the cooking methods of their grandparents until new technologies could be imported. This section in the chapter describes the evolution of the New Zealand 'culinary tradition' (Simpson, 2008; Burton, 2009; Leach, 2010) and the emergent pride in classic dishes and produce alongside the emergence of the 'Kiwi' national identity. These proceedings are intimately tied to worldwide events including two World Wars, The Great Depression, the social revolutions of the post-World War Two era and the emergence of the culture industries (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1977). Out of this historical overview can be seen the beginnings of the foodie phenomenon and the great emphasis placed upon food in New Zealand culture today.

Maori had a well-established culinary tradition by the time Pakeha (European) settlers arrived. This was the product of much trial and error, but still resembled the diet of their ancestors in East Polynesia (Leach, 2010). The key principle of kai (carbohydrate rich foods such as kumara, taro, and yams) for the bulk of the meal, balanced by kinaki (protein rich foods such as fish and shellfish) remained, and although their imported crops suffered in the cooler climate and some were lost altogether, enough did survive to make it possible to stay permanently in these islands. In addition, Maori settlers extracted compounds from the plant material they found here to accompany the crops they cultivated. Their way of life "encouraged the accumulation of supplies of preserved food, and forward planning" (Leach, 2010, p. 29), which became advantageous, particularly through periods of bad weather and as they explored

and settled further south. When Pakeha settlers arrived, Maori retained traditional cooking methods but also adopted new technologies such as the camp oven (a heavy iron pot with a lid), and this enabled new dishes to be experimented with. In return, Pakeha settlers began to adopt foods grown by Maori such as purple-fleshed potatoes and pumpkins. Maori were entrepreneurial in supplying food to Pakeha up until the mid-1800s but the newly arrived Chinese market gardeners quickly took over and European links to Maori food-ways began to diminish (Leach, 2010, p. 41).

There was bounteous supply of food during the 1870s as the overseas market for meat and dairy was barely developing (Burton, 2009), and, as sheep numbers had grown during the previous two decades, sheep meat was particularly cheap. For the settlers, this surplus of food must have entirely justified the move to this country and away from the stagnant class system of their home. But this abundance gave way in the 1880s to slimmer pickings caused by an economic depression, and the home vegetable garden again became essential to a household's day to day living. Pakeha lacked the recipes for the local foods grown by Maori, and this, alongside being reduced to much more primitive cooking technologies than they were used to, led the settlers to take an interest in the emerging food-ways of other colonists around the world, particularly those of America and Australia (Leach, 2010, p. 32). More British immigrants arrived in New Zealand in the 1890s, and the vernacular cuisine was heavily influenced by these British roots. However, other cuisines were readily adopted, particularly New World cuisines with similar climates and similarly colonial circumstances. Indeed, cookbooks and the recipes published in newspapers often drew on American and Australian sources such as *Godey's Magazine* from the mid-19th century and *Miss Parloa's New Cookbook* published in New York in 1882 (Leach, 2010, p. 44).

The phrase 'culinary tradition', then, is not as reliable as it first appears in the widest context of New Zealand's history. New Zealand's earliest settlers drew on their own backgrounds, but also faced significant challenges in adapting and

experimenting with the resources and conditions in their adopted islands. European settlers attempted to recreate the dishes they knew from home, but faced challenges of supply and technology that necessitated the adoption of culinary knowledge from similarly emergent cultures (although relatively more established). Meanwhile, any reference to a Maori culinary tradition had all but disappeared, although Leach argues that it was not to exclude Maori but an assumption that Maori cooked the same things Pakeha did:

> No case can be made for assimilation and disappearance of Maori food-ways under the blanket of dominant Pakeha culture. Instead, the evidence points to assimilation of Pakeha ingredients and technology into the Maori culinary tradition. (Leach, 2010, p. 52-3)

Against this backdrop, the culinary traditions of New Zealand, emerging from this land, are barely traditions at all and more examples of trial and error, adaptation, and demonstration of a colonial knack for survival. Perhaps it is the knack for survival that is the tradition, more than the food and foodways themselves.

The nature of New Zealand's food continued to evolve through the twentieth century. By the time New Zealand ceased to be a colony and moved toward a greater separation by becoming a Dominion in 1907, eating habits had grown to be quite different from their British roots (Burton, 2009). The evening meal had become the main meal of the day for the middle class, and there was strong emphasis on home baking and afternoon teas. The Edmonds *Sure to Rise* cookbook is an example of the kind of commercially-produced cookbooks typical of the time, although this one became so embedded in the culture that multiple revisions and reprints were delivered, the most recent being the centenary edition in 2008. Cookbook publication in New Zealand became more frequent as people sought new ways to prepare the locally produced and abundant sheep meat. During World War One, agricultural production actually increased, despite labour shortages, and Britain imported as much as New Zealand could

produce (Burton, 2009, p. 57). When the Great Depression hit in the late 1920s, a great deal of the British colonial heritage remained, but New Zealand's own identity appeared to be emerging. For instance, the archetypically Kiwi 'Aunt Daisy'[15] was an influential radio personality in her time, one who frequently and confidently crossed the line between commercial sponsorship and providing a public service to homemakers by sharing household tips and advice. She produced a number of cookbooks which were a compendium of recipes and general advice that aided the housewife in her daily tasks. These helpful digests were particularly appreciated by women during tough economic times and leading into wartime when food supplies again became scarce as large volumes of food were sent to the troops offshore. Wartime cookbooks contained advice about protecting food values in the cooking process and limiting waste. Books produced during these times often contained information on nutrition too, ensuring that families were extracting as much goodness from food as possible, such as eating potatoes with skins on rather than peeling them because peeling incurred significant wastage and loss of vitamins. Nutrition advice peaked in cookbooks during the 1940s (Leach, 2010, p. 107) and declined again in the post-war period as food restrictions ended and entertaining began again in earnest. The concern for nutrition and then, in times of plenty, the reintroduction of afternoon tea as a socially-important occasion appears to be fundamental to New Zealand's food heritage. It is interesting to consider in this research whether these things are brought to bear on the lifeworld of a New Zealand foodie through memory, tradition, and nostalgia.

By the 1950s, New Zealand home cooks were keen to expand their repertoire and demonstrate their connectedness to the wider world through cooking. The servicemen who returned from overseas had often had some experience of eating local dishes in the countries in which they served. Combined with the sharp increase in immigration to New Zealand from European countries, there was a cautious interest in new flavours and ingredients that had not been

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[15] Maud Ruby "Aunt Daisy" Basham, MBE (1879-1963)

available before the war. But despite the growing enthusiasm for new and seemingly novel, and therefore 'exotic' dishes such as chow mein and pasta carbonara, few restaurants were able to survive solely on exotic fare and the traditional Kiwi grill, or steak and chips, remained popular when people went out to eat (Burton, 2009). However, Greek, Chinese and Italian immigrants often held food growing or catering roles and slowly these cuisines became familiar to New Zealanders, so much so that recipes began appearing under the 'international' section in locally produced cookbooks. Authentic or not, the presence of these recipes in the cookbooks illustrates the growing inclusiveness felt by New Zealanders towards cuisines of cultures other than the British culture of their forebears.

These changes in New Zealand's food culture were noteworthy in themselves, but the 1960s saw what has been termed a 'revolution' (Symons, 2006) in regard to social influences on day to day food activity. There were labour-saving devices arriving from Britain which, for the middle classes, reduced time spent in the kitchen and enabled greater experimentation in cooking. Home entertaining became popular again after the stringencies of war-time. Middle class women began to compete with each other to host the most elegant dinner party (Burton, 2009). Television was another device arriving in the homes of the comfortable classes, and it brought sophisticated cooks such as Julia Child and Graham Kerr into their living rooms. Julia Child enthused about French cuisine, encouraging viewers to try new flavours and new methods. Graham Kerr, a flamboyant personality, was entertaining and charming as well as passionate about good food. His influence also helped to popularise French cuisine with dishes with French names such as *Coq au vin*. Kerr went on to establish one of New Zealand's first cooking schools, the Gourmet International School, with emphasis on providing chefs with a sense of standing and respect – a different position from the prevailing view in this country that working in food service was what you did if there was no other option (Burton, 2009). Indeed the service economy in New Zealand expanded during the 1960s. The

reasons for this are closely tied to economics. The first was that more women were going out to work and so eating out became both a convenience and occasionally a necessity. The second being that there was a newfound (global) interest and enjoyment of food now that supply had recovered from the war years and fresh flavours and new ingredients were available. This was a time of rediscovery of food; the enjoyment of food for food's sake. Coffee bars began to be established around the country, particularly in the main cities, and these were places to rest, socialise, and enjoy coffee in the company of others. Conversely, food quality can also be said to have suffered in some ways, thanks to the mechanisation and manufacturing processes that produced convenience foods to support those same housewives. Instant foods such as mashed potatoes, frozen peas, puddings, and pre-cooked items began to fill the shelves of the new supermarkets (Burton, 2009).

The culture industries (Adorno & Horkeimer, 1977) played a crucial part in feeding the New Zealand public's appetite for sophisticated food. The cookbooks, food magazines and television arriving from offshore were persuasive and entertaining, and offered the means to try foreign dishes from exotic places; thus cementing the change. This was all grist to the striving middle class who desired greater status and recognition, and realised that food was one to acquire them.

Movements such as vegetarianism and 'Slow Food' (Petrini, 2001) were accelerating in response to increasing awareness of the health of the planet and as people gravitated toward an alternative world view. The New Zealand Vegetarian Society was established in 1943 (Amey, 2014), but it was in the 1960s that vegetarianism became more commonly known and "associated with the younger generation that was questioning every established value" (Burton, 2009). Cookbooks published during the 1960s and 70s often had vegetarian chapters, which Simpson (2008) suggests shows an egalitarianism in that "the market [for cookbooks] was too small to target particular social or dietary groups, they were directed at the largest audience they could muster" (p. 303).

More significant food-related changes took place during the 1970s and 1980s that cemented an interest in food in New Zealand. Hudson and Halls, and Graham Kerr were established local television cooks who demonstrated fancy recipes for home entertainers in a flamboyant and entertaining manner (Mossman & Monaghan, 2001). In contrast, another popular television cook, Alison Holst, had a comfortable, motherly manner and aimed to make tasty, economical food for families (Holst Online, 2014). But the passion for the unique and 'exotic' remained strong as young people returned from their overseas travels and strove to recreate the dishes they had enjoyed overseas, to share their experience and perhaps recapture some of the magic of the journey they had found so stimulating. And then there were the new 'B.Y.O.' (bring your own liquor) restaurants which provided an inexpensive compromise between the casual coffee house vibe and the chic, upmarket formal restaurant. Going out to eat became a part of an evening's entertainment along with other attractions such as live music, theatre, or cinema.

Food magazines such as *Gourmet* and *Taste* arrived from overseas but were also beginning to be published in New Zealand, including the seminal *Cuisine* magazine (1987-). As Simpson (2008) says,

> The booming stock market fuelled public consumption at levels never seen before and this consumption was inevitably expressed through food, restaurants, wine and the cookbooks that recorded the changes. (p. 303)

Specialist supply shops such as *Milly's* (est. 1983) materialised in response to the increasing interest in cooking fancy food at home. Chefs were gaining prominence as important figures, reflected in annual food and wine awards and competitions (Burton, 2009), alongside lists of the 'top' restaurants and cafes in each city. New Zealand wines began to win international awards and become sought after, which had a flow-on effect on the food and hospitality industries. An increased focus on physical fitness during the 1980s juxtaposed food and bodies to a great extent, creating demand for less common foods (Burton, 2009)

and alternative diets. In homes, butter was dropped in favour of margarine, food packaging advertised 'low fat' or 'reduced calories', and microwave cooking enabled cooking with little or no additional fats.

The wine industry has also played a part in New Zealand's culinary landscape. Consumption and interest in locally produced wine boomed in the 1980s, as did the exportation of New Zealand wine in the 1990s (Dalley, 2009). The wine industry in New Zealand has grown rapidly and, although it remains small relative to other countries, is a prominent player in the nation's economy (Barker et al., 2001; Slade, 2009). Furthermore, food and wine festivals including a 'wild food festival' for rare and unusual ingredients (Wilson, 2009) are now common across the country. Capitalising on the high quality wine and fresh produce available here, culinary tourism is also growing as an industry for New Zealand (Smith & Hall, 2003). The 'Food and Wine Tourism Network' was established in 2004, and lists a large range of tourist products that can be booked by travel agents abroad (Tourism New Zealand, 2016a). The Tourism New Zealand website regularly reports on visitor satisfaction with their food and beverage experience while travelling here (Tourism New Zealand, 2014).

The share market crash of 1987 took its toll on the burgeoning restaurant trade. It seemed that people either had less to spend, or overt spending seemed incongruous, and so inexpensive cafes became the preferred venue for eating outside of the home (Burton, 2009). As home cooking became a more attractive option, more specialist food stores were supplying the ingredients for particular needs. Now it was possible to use the correct type of rice for the dish rather than generic 'rice' which was probably not fit for either risotto or sushi. In New Zealand's restaurants, younger chefs, having returned from sojourns overseas, were presenting food in a new style; food that combined ingredients from Asia, America and the Pacific in what was called 'Pacific Rim' food. In 1993, food store Sabato opened and began supplying specialty and imported ingredients from Italy, France and Spain to restaurants and retail customers (Simpson, 2008).

The Depression, two World Wars, the availability and spread of popular media are all part of the complex layering of influences that have affected attitudes to food. Alongside these, events specific to New Zealand society and culture may have contributed to the development of a foodie culture. The change in immigration policy in 1987 resulted in a rapid increase in the volume of immigrants to New Zealand, particularly from countries in Asia, and now almost 40% of residents of New Zealand's largest city, Auckland, were born overseas (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). An ethnically diverse population has meant an increase in the range of food that can be found here. For example, Indian and African immigration has brought a number of spice shops to urban Auckland (Friesen, Murphy & Kearns, 2005). Many Asian restaurants and grocery stores have opened, and Asian vegetables such as bok choy are found at most supermarkets. In addition, large supermarkets frequently have an 'international' aisle, with packaged ingredients from all over the world, particularly Japan, Mexico, South Africa, and the Netherlands. As well the increasing diversity of the population, there has long been a tradition, of sorts, that young New Zealanders (and Australians) will travel to other parts of the world on their 'overseas experience' or 'OE' – a working holiday often beginning or based in London (Inkson & Myers, 2003; Wilson, Fisher & Moore, 2009). The experience is intended to 'broaden horizons' and satisfy curiosity about other cultures and landscapes, most of which are a very long way from home. In Haymarket, London, the travellers will find the New Zealand food store stocked with anything they may miss from home, such as the yeast-based sandwich spread Marmite and pineapple lumps sweets.

In some cases, the OE may also satisfy the traveller's curiosity about their British or European heritage. A logical result of travelling is that new knowledge of cultures, including food, is brought home on their return and informs day to day living (Bell, 2002). The newfound worldliness affects the travellers' perspective; this too could be described as a form of culinary cultural

capital, which may influence the way the travellers eat, cook and consume in the future.

Within New Zealand there are distinct dichotomies of food access and food production practices, some in clear contrast to the projected image of New Zealand as a kind of agrarian paradise; clean, green, and 100% pure (Tourism New Zealand, 2016b). In 2013 there was a large-scale product recall of what was thought to be contaminated milk products, both within the country and sent off-shore to major export partners. That product potentially contaminated with botulism-causing bacteria could have slipped past testing regimes was the first area of significant concern, the impact on future export relationships was the second. In the end, it was found that the bacteria concerned was not the botulism-causing strain, but by that time trade and New Zealand's image had already been severely damaged (Gray, 2013). Meanwhile, a damaging practice by some dairy and beef farms, where farm run-off is sloughed into waterways, continues to have a very real impact on the environment but has not had the reputational impact that the 'contaminated' milk products did. Export of high quality beef earns the New Zealand economy $3.8billion per annum (New Zealand Meat Board, 2016) and the export market appears to have little concern for production practices that actually damage the clean green nature of the country. The tensions that these environmentally damaging practices cause for foodies are explored in this research.

There have been clear moves toward organic and bio-dynamic produce in New Zealand, beginning in the late 1980s when the organising of a group of "lifestyle and philosophically committed growers" led to the formation of Bio-Gro NZ, an organisation that certifies organic products and registers growers in New Zealand (Coombes & Campbell, 1998, p. 134). Since the early 1990s, organic production has been expanding rapidly, but most significantly in the export sector; the domestic market remains relatively small, and based around more perishable products (Campbell & Liepins, 2001, p. 2). Despite the generally low demand, there are food stores entirely devoted to organic products and a few

organic products have recently become available in supermarkets, though in relatively small volume, and often in the specialist or health food aisle. The formation of the Values Party in the 1970s, which grew into the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand in 1990 (Greens.org.nz) signified the formalising of a political movement about environmental politics. One major platform for the party was their anti-genetic modification (GM) stance, and so the revelations regarding GM corn plants that were allegedly imported and released for growth in 2000 (Hager, 2002) was a significant event in the life of the party. 'Corngate' as it came to be called in the media, could be viewed as the last large-scale food based protest that occurred in New Zealand. The protest activity involved marches, rallies and petitions against genetic modification of food crops. Governments have since been cautious about any change to biosecurity laws with regard to genetic engineering issues.

Distinction in the New Zealand foodscape

There is another, more critical perspective on the development of cuisine culture in New Zealand that has not been described here yet, but should be, in order to round out the New Zealand culinary context that foodies inhabit. Rather than being a story of creativity and the 'ingenuity' for which Kiwis are renowned (Grant, 2008), it is one of cultural domination through food. This is not a new concept, nor is it unique to New Zealand. However, the particular tensions that are described here remain current given the relatively young age of the country. Although many historians would say that the period of colonisation of New Zealand finished before the period of this study, it does provide context for the development of the story of New Zealand's culinary history, and may indeed continue to inform the views of foodies however subconsciously. While I am most concerned about the foodie phenomenon from around the 1990s through to the new century, there are antecedent conditions that are important, such as the change in health of the indigenous people due to the introduction of sugar, alcohol, and high carbohydrate foods that the

indigenous populations were not used to. These changes are well documented in studies of the Inuit and Aboriginal people of Canada and Australia (cf. O'Dea, 1984; Hodgson & Wahlqvist, 1993; Richmond & Ross, 2009), although in New Zealand they should be considered in conjunction within other socio-cultural change such as the introduction of tobacco, communicable diseases, and deprivation of Maori during and after colonisation that had significant impact on Maori morbidity and mortality rates (Ellison-Loschmann & Pearce, 2006; Pool, 2012).

Contemporarily, it is significant that there are very few Maori restaurants or Maori cookbooks relative to the number of other restaurants and books published in New Zealand. Morris (2013) associates this lack with Bourdieu's discussions on taste and distinction (1984), and suggests that it has the hallmarks of colonialism which contribute to keeping Maori culture in a submissive position. Morris notes that Maori food is described as having very little cultural capital with Pakeha, and that the reason stated for this is that the food does not taste good (2010). However, she suggests that it is 'distasteful' in a socio-cultural sense rather than tasting bad in the culinary sense and that "for Pakeha, Maori food is not sophisticated food…" (Morris, 2010, p. 13). Morris writes that the creation of a 'fusion' New Zealand cuisine is reminiscent of cultural appropriation: it supports the cuisine of the prevailing culture while 'fusing' the subordinate culture to it, resulting in further subordination of that cuisine as merely a "point of difference" (p. 14). This is far from the inclusive and 'culinary neutral' cuisine (Heldke, 2003) that it appears to be. Furthermore,

> eating Maori food does not appear to provide a cultural capital boost among New Zealand food adventurers. Why not? First, in Aotearoa New Zealand Maori are not exotic, they are indigenous. (Morris, 2010, pp. 15-16)

Morris highlights that eating *indigenous* food does not carry the same cultural capital as eating *exotic* food, because "[i]t seems that when a society is not nice,

neither is their food" (p. 18), referring to the remaining political and social tensions between Maori and Pakeha over historic and current injustices. The other aspect of this critical perspective is the adoption (again, by the dominant Pakeha culture) of other immigrant cuisines without the willingness, necessarily, to adopt the immigrant peoples themselves. Pearson and Kothari (2007) maintain that cuisine can be interpreted as 'culinary cosmopolitanism' (Gunew, 1993) which is the "acceptable face of multiculturalism" (Pearson & Kothari, 2007, p. 50). They suggest the adoption of ethnic cuisine in New Zealand has been a superficial form of incorporation of ethnic diversity by the privileged middle class to enhance their cultural capital, and that discomfort about multiculturalism remains as real as ever. And for some immigrants, whether first or third generation, the mainstream adoption of certain cuisines over others seems discriminatory, as Kothari's notes in her documentary *A Taste of Place – Stories of Food and Longing* (2001):

> I'm ambivalent about Sabato. The food lover in me is really pleased that my food options have increased, but I also feel excluded in a way that's really hard to explain. Curry seems crude in this world of delicate herbs and oils (32:38)

For the immigrants in Kothari's documentary, food is about nostalgia for 'home', but also requires complex navigation; it spells difference and exclusion as keenly as belonging. This situation is in direct contrast with New Zealand's founding 'myth' (Burton, 2009, p. 172) of egalitarianism, which Belich (2007) has argued is evidence of the superior status of New Zealand's working class relative to that of Britain, and not an absence of class at all. The working class immigrants who settled in New Zealand were initially able to regularly eat meat, for example. However in recent decades the gap between the rich and poor in New Zealand appears to have widened. As an indicator of this, up to 17% of children (180,000) in New Zealand are living in material hardship, and families are forced into economising behaviours such as ceasing to purchase fresh fruit, vegetables and meat, among others (Perry, 2013).

There are some elements of a New Zealand foodie's interest in food which could be defined as a desire for distinction in New Zealand. To describe oneself as a foodie is akin to describing oneself as a kind of amateur expert, or an ardent fan. For some foodies, the noun has associated with it a certain cultural capital, and so naming oneself a foodie is like putting on a unique or distinctive accessory. It may also be a marker of pride in oneself or in this country. After all, there is much to be proud of in terms of New Zealand's culinary offering to the world. 'Our' butter, lamb and beef were exemplary and sought-after exports to Britain, and that social memory remains. So there may be a residual level of national pride and nostalgia that plays a part in the foodie sense of distinction around quality and excellence.

Foodies in New Zealand have many avenues to follow to fulfil their need for foodie resources. They could visit the boutique kitchenware stores which are dotted around main centres. As of October 2012, a foodie could enrol in a course at world famous culinary arts institute Le Cordon Bleu, which opened a training facility in Wellington, where students can learn French culinary technique guided by world class chefs (Le Cordon Bleu, 2014). On weekends, foodies can attend many farmers markets where chatting with the grower or producer has become popular; you can meet the person who grew the vegetables you buy, talk about their practices, and perhaps get some advice on how to use the ingredient to best celebrate its features. Far from viewing the sourcing and preparation of food as a chore, foodies may see these things as "aestheticized leisure activities" (Lupton, 1996, p. 126).

Further evidence of a heightened focus on food in general New Zealand society today is the growth in number of large scale food events, including the Katikati Avocado Festival, the Wild Food Festival in Hokitika (Veart, 2008, p.308), Taste of Auckland, and The Food Show, alongside other cultural events such as the celebration in Auckland of Diwali and the Lantern Festival for Chinese New Year, at which the food stalls are a significant drawcard.

A note on New Zealand's food television

New Zealand's access to media products about food abounds, including magazines, books, websites, and youtube channels, but television is probably the most pervasive and accessible. Food television continued to proliferate during the 1990s and into the new millennium (Simpson, 2008; Veart, 2008; Pearson & Kothari, 2007), to the extent that FoodTV is an entire channel on Sky Television devoted to food shows. During the 1990s the food media products on New Zealand television screens moved to a fresher, funkier format than the 'mumsy' early forms. For example, Jamie Oliver's *Naked Chef* series of 1999 demonstrates the pared back, casual, quick and tasty kinds of television cooking that helped to make food acceptable and accessible to home cooks (JamieOliver.com, 2014). Today's food television varies greatly in style and purpose; some shows remain purely the recipe demonstration format, others include travel (local and international) and the introduction of food personalities – individuals who grow or produce or cook food in (often) picturesque ways. Some food television is targeted at mothers (for example, *Rachael Ray*) and interspersed with light entertainment and talk-show style interviews. Others make food the context of a reality television spectacle, such as a cooking competition between amateurs for the coveted title and rich prizes of *Masterchef*. New Zealand television stations have broadcast many of the most high-profile food shows from Britain including those with Jamie Oliver as a key figure, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Rick Stein, Nigella Lawson, and Gordon Ramsey. Additionally the Kiwi celebrity chefs such as Peter Gordon, Peta Mathias, Annabel Langbein, and Michael Van de Elzen (*The Food Truck*) remain popular. A trope in these television shows is the emphasis on 'hero' ingredients and chefs, and the generous use of adjectives such as 'local', 'fresh', and 'artisanal' which express valuable cultural capital.

One curious aspect of food television is that it is suggestive of a kind of 'hands on' sensuous engagement with food and yet the medium itself lacks the key senses that relate to food: smell and taste. Despite this oxymoron, there are

many food television programmes broadcast here which, in New Zealand's commercial television system, must mean they are considered profitable by broadcasters and advertisers. New Zealand's own food television offering comprises male and female television food presenters who demonstrate various food-lifestyles, from those who live off the land (Annabel Langbein) to the jet-setting chef (Peter Gordon), in addition to the reality television genre. Food television produced in New Zealand often references other countries and cultures. In this way, our food television is revealing of the aspirations of New Zealanders: "to be world citizens with the ingredients, skill and knowledge to produce sophisticated world-class food" (Pearson & Kothari, 2007, p. 54) *and* advocates of high quality local produce, not merely provincial or traditional eaters. The flourishing television genre and popularity of other food related media products signify a changing sensibility among New Zealanders, at least among those who can financially afford to make choices about food. It seems that food has been raised up from being the fuel of hard work and one of New Zealand's biggest exports in the form of meat and dairy products, to something that is meant to be enjoyed, of fine quality, and suggestive of a mode of identity. This is all part of the New Zealand foodie lifeworld.

Tension and balance

The foodie lifeworld is also a place of tension. Foodies must navigate marketing, food fads, and government promoted health strategies. Currently there are socially constructed "moral panics" (Thompson, 1998; Ashley et al., 2004) about obesity and diabetes, organics and lately sugar, which dovetail with aspirations of consumers to be thinner, more 'green', or live an aspirational lifestyle. These function as markers of cultural capital and modes of identity in contemporary life. But perhaps more compelling are the reports of children who arrive at school without having eaten breakfast, and without a packed lunch. Recently in New Zealand two former food marketing executives, assisted by 'celebrity chef' Michael Meredith, have co-founded a not-for-profit

organisation 'Eat My Lunch' which provides nutritious packed lunches to children in schools in South Auckland and parts of Hamilton (eatmylunch.nz). Another enterprise is working in Wellington to redistribute food that would otherwise be wasted from supermarkets and restaurants to those who need it (kaibosh.org.nz). So rather than hunger being a global problem far removed from the foodie lifeworld of New Zealand, hunger is a problem 'at home'.

In New Zealand, food has become a signifier of place in tourism, in export, and in media products. New Zealand's food is regarded as fresh, natural, and abundant. But the food scene comprises more than this highly marketable image. There are significant volumes of imported food in the supermarkets. The supermarkets are run by a duopoly of companies, one New Zealand owned (Foodstuffs) and one Australian owned (Progressive Enterprises, a subsidiary of Woolworths) and in fierce competition with each other for market dominance. For the shopper, there is a tension posed, as in most Western cultures, between local produce and corporate driven convenience foods. And convenience becomes even more of a societal tension when considering the availability and apparent reliance on fast food. A recent front page article in the New Zealand Herald highlights the prominence of fast food outlets in one main road in West Auckland (Theunissen, 2015) where there are thirty four fast food outlets and two major supermarkets within a three kilometre stretch. The article raised concerns about unhealthy food and its link to poor health outcomes such as obesity and diabetes. The article also refers to the council resource consent system which permits retailers to open their businesses if certain regulations are met, showing that councils do not have the mandate to limit fast food businesses in the area. On the other hand, one retailer interviewed in the article notes that the customer has made the decision to purchase food from his store, and that customers choose this food knowing what is healthy and not (Theunissen, 2015). So consumer choice is contrasted with the ease and abundance of unhealthy food here, and regulatory processes do not apply. As I describe this contemporary dilemma, I wonder how the foodies who are 'democratic' in their

eating (Johnston & Baumann, 2010) and enjoy fast food, are navigating the tension of nutritional value in their food lifeworlds.

As this chapter describes, amongst the politically-motivated mire of nation creation, of immigration, import and export, and the tensions of contemporary consumption, lives a phenomenon which sits at the heart of the foodie home and on the kitchen table. The choices foodies make about what to eat, where, and why, what to cook, how, and why, by those who consider themselves foodies are buried in political life. These sites of food significance may, for foodie individuals, contribute to the foodie phenomenon in bigger or smaller ways, and offer common context for the deeper exploration of the foodie lifeworld in this research. The next section sets out the activist environment that forms a basis for politically motivated activity by foodies in New Zealand.

Impulse to action in New Zealand

There are many definitions of activism, a term that requires unpacking in order to understand my use of it in this context. The term has been used to describe a range of activity, from lobbying and distributing information to civil disobedience and demonstration. But more recently, as Bennet (2005) and Reitan (2007) point out, the term has been re-appropriated by social movement scholars to encompass 'small' politically- and socially-motivated activity based in lifestyle. Like these scholars, I come to this study with a broad and inclusive view of activism, committed to the notion that people have agency when they make deliberate choices about how to behave – whether that is taking part in a march or writing a letter or simply purchasing one product over another – as opposed to living and consuming unquestioningly.

Portwood-Stacer (2013) notes there is a communicative dimension to lifestyle activism, that the "performative and propagandistic" (p. 3) elements of this kind of activity are essential to the effectiveness of the activities. I consider this to be relevant to the participants in this research, in that their mode of identity as

foodies is the performative aspect of the passion and energy they have for food, and the passion and energy comes from a directional activity that, for them, is participating in a wider movement. This chapter makes the case for a fundamental inclination toward improvement that is a part of how New Zealanders engage with the world, formed in part by the element of utopianism in the nation's roots.

I propose that the public protests that have occurred in New Zealand are formative of the identity of this country in regards to certain international political positions. Some protests were informed by, and supported international conflict, while others were local or internal struggles unique to the country. It is worthwhile briefly exploring the historical activist 'scene' here in New Zealand, to better understand the familiarity (or discomfort) of New Zealanders with activist work. I do not attempt to provide a complete list of New Zealand's protest action here, but by describing some of the activity I mean to indicate the culture of activism in this country, and foreshadow the form of activism within the foodie phenomenon that is discussed in depth later in this thesis.

The suffrage protests of the late 1800s, which emerged from the Women's Christian Temperance Union, were seminal to the eventual act that granted women full voting rights in 1893. New Zealand was the first country to grant women the vote, and further rights in the following years, due in large part to the work of the activist women working for the cause (Grimshaw, 1972; Hutching, 2010). The activities of Kate Sheppard[16] and other suffragettes included speaking, organising and petitioning: traditional forms of protest which were more commonly engaged in by men at that time (Hutching, 2010).

The 1951 waterfront dispute arose partially from increasing division within the labour movement between the militant labour unions and the moderate Labour government. Tensions over pay, combined with the post-war discontent and change of government from Labour to National in 1949 led to New Zealand's

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[16] Suffragette Katherine Wilson "Kate" Sheppard (1847 − 1934).

longest period of strike action (or lock-out, as the wharfies saw it) at 151 days. More than 22,000 workers were locked out and many more unions came out in support of the wharfies. But the National government, however, described the situation as a state of emergency and organised military personnel to load and unload cargo at the Auckland and Wellington ports while wharfies and their families struggled to make ends meet. Relief organisations helped to feed families during this time. Eventually many wharfies were blacklisted and could not find work at the ports again, and it is generally considered that the cause was defeated on this occasion (Bassett, 1972).

The indigenous Maori people of New Zealand sometimes choose to engage in an indigenous form of protest, the hikoi.[17] Hikoi is best described as a group march over a large distance, usually spanning days or weeks. This walk as an expression of dissent by Maoridom is usually aimed at the government of the day and has been practised on several occasions when there is an issue that arises out of the race-relationship, or that directly effects the established rights of Maori. Perhaps most famously, the 5,000 strong hikoi of 1975 to protest the grievances around land arising from the Treaty of Waitangi (Tiriti o Waitangi) began in the Far North, and the converged on the houses of Parliament and pan-tribal Maori leader Whina Cooper[18] presented a Memorial of Rights and a petition of 60,000 signatures to the Prime Minister (Harris, 2004). A hikoi itself is generally peaceful, consciousness raising activity which aims to gather support and be inclusive. As the hikoi reaches each marae[19] along the journey, there is opportunity for local issues to be voiced alongside discussion of the issue at hand. In this way the strength of the movement and depth of understanding of the grievance grows and evolves.

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[17] Hīkoi 1. (verb) to step, stride, march, walk. (http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz).

[18] Whina Cooper, ONZ DBE (1895-1994).

[19] Marae (in Te Reo Maori) is a tapu (sacred) meeting place that serves social and religious purposes. Manuhiri (visitors) are ceremonially welcomed on to the marae before any other business commences.

The South African Rugby (Springbok) tour of 1981 was the focus of one of New Zealand's most turbulent times of protest, one which divided the country along lines that had not been so explicitly defined before. The issue at the heart of the protest was the ongoing apartheid in South Africa. New Zealanders became vocal upon the issue when South Africa's stance on race separation affected international Rugby competition. Two proposed tours had been cancelled during the 1970s, but an invitation from the NZRFU to the South African Rugby team in 1981 was accepted, and a tour of New Zealand provinces was planned. The groups CARE (Citizens Association for Racial Equality) and HART (Halt All Racist Tours) which was started by students at the University of Auckland, were working hard to publicise their distaste for the systemic racism practiced here, and the endemic racism of South African government and New Zealand's guilt 'by association' through hosting this tour (Chapple, 1984).

The anti-Springbok tour movement gained significant traction amongst New Zealanders, particularly the educated middle class (Phillips, 2011). Many of the protesters had grown up in the relatively prosperous years of the 1950s. Many of them were also rugby fans. Prosperity and peace had given them the freedom to challenge the old order. This generation had come to political consciousness marching against the Vietnam War, French nuclear testing and nuclear ship visits in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The anti-tour protest movement included many urban, educated professionals but also enjoyed strong union support. Historian Jock Phillips sees the tour as a clash between the "old and the new New Zealand" (Ministry for Culture & Heritage, 2014a), for example, the struggle between baby boomers and war veterans, or city versus country. In terms of national identity, it was a struggle between the Crown rule and an emerging independent Pacific nation.

Violent clashes between protesters and police, and protesters and tour supporters, occurred around New Zealand as the tour moved from town to town, and two games were cancelled altogether. Although the tour remained largely on schedule and apartheid remained in South Africa, the protests about

racism 'hit home' with New Zealanders and brought issues of race relations in New Zealand to the fore (Cameron, 1981; Chapple, 1984). One online encyclopaedia entry argues that this was a watershed moment for New Zealand, when the country became suddenly cognisant of its evolving identity (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2014b).

New Zealanders also came out strongly against nuclear armament in the 1970s and 1980s (Ministry for Culture & Heritage, 2015). As with the movement against apartheid in South Africa, the movement against nuclear testing and against alignment with the US and European powers on the topic of nuclear arms was a significant moment in the development of New Zealand's identity (Templeton, 2006). The stance made by New Zealand on the subject was unsupported by traditional allies Australia and Britain, and it seems that New Zealand was forced to "go it alone" (Hensley, 2013) on the world stage as leader of the opposition to use of nuclear weapons. Street marches were the clearest display of disapproval. For example, in 1983, more than 20,000 women of the Women's Peace Movement marched up Auckland's Queen Street to a rally in Aotea Square in a demonstration against nuclear armament. The next year, 1984, was an election year and the Labour party which was committed to a nuclear-free stance, won the election by 19 seats (56 seats − 37 seats) in New Zealand's largest ever voter turnout (Electoral Commission, 2014).

These examples are a small selection of the protest action that has occurred in New Zealand. Others include the march in support of the homosexual law reform of the mid 1980s, sailboat flotillas accompanying anti-whaling ships in the Pacific Ocean, and the largest protest for many years in 2010, where 40,000 people marched up Queen Street in Auckland against government sanctioned mining in the nation's national parks ("Thousands march against mining", 2010). Alternative forms of protest have been demonstrated too, such as the occupation by Maori of Bastion Point for 506 days in 1977-78 which represented the struggle for redress of stolen land by colonisers (Ministry of Culture & Heritage, 2016). Against this background of sporadic but intense

activism, protest activity in the realm of food has been about genetic modification, irradiation, and chemical pest control. For example, irradiation of produce such as tomatoes, mangoes and capsicum became an issue in 2013 when the government allowed certain irradiated produce to be imported (Ministry for Primary Industries, 2013). The irradiated produce was not required to be labelled piece by piece, but a label had to be displayed in close proximity to the food in stores. The Green Party have been most critical of the practices, both the irradiation and the labelling, and they are noted in the party's *Food Policy* document (Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand, May 2014). The activist response to these issues has not been so visible or vibrant as the actions described above, taking the form, instead, of a flurry of online activity, letter writing, and lobbying of organisations such as Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA).

Summary

The events outlined here demonstrate that New Zealanders have some experience of standing up for issues that they see as fundamental. They confirm that there is precedence for protest and action in the form of marching, lobbying, voting, and agitating. The principles for which there is historical precedence of protest are, perhaps, some of the more fundamental principles that affect people; that of human rights, equality, security, environment, and peace. These concepts are relatable across populations and it is easy to make the argument for the position New Zealanders took on these issues. Neither do these events illustrate the difference between the historical precedence of protest activity and the activity explored by this research becomes apparent. These historical events do not illustrate the full range of forms of social and political engagement common among New Zealanders today, or illustrate the emergent 'lifestyle' political activism that is engaged in contemporarily. And these events do not illustrate the passion or the small scale, cumulative impact of these activities. They do suggest, however, a fundamental optimism in

people who can envision alternative futures which match their values – a utopia. And, significantly, the events described above also highlight the influential role that a minority may play in shaping opinion and altering the socio-political situation.

In this chapter I have provided an overview of aspects of New Zealand culture that relate to the purpose of this research. I have recounted the post-colonial myth of nation creation, briefly depicted the country's culinary heritage and discussed some key moments (by no means all) of social protest in New Zealand's recent history, with which to illustrate the atmosphere and tradition of protest in the New Zealand culture. The next chapter adds a further aspect to the 'scene' I am building. It is an exposition of the literature that begins to answer the research questions in terms of the intersection between the lived experience and social movement activity, where lifestyle politics and the emerging 'lifestyle movement' appear in contemporary life.

Chapter Four

Social Movements, Subcultures & Lifestyle Movements

This chapter provides an overview of the concepts of social movement and subculture, with the aim of demonstrating the application of these concepts to the foodie phenomenon in New Zealand. There are two main benefits of recounting the origin of social movements and subcultures. The first is to note the different paradigms of scholarship that have been applied to these movement phenomena, which will inform the design of this research. The second is to contextualise the evolution of new social movements (NSMs) and lifestyle movements as societal and cultural changes occur. This chapter is complementary to the two previous chapters in that it serves as a *reconnaissance* of another aspect of the socio-cultural phenomenon that is the foodie: in this case, the assemblage of socio-cultural communication that forms recognisable patterns known as social movements and subcultures.

This chapter begins with the historical development of social movement scholarship, and provides an outline of the key characteristics of 'new social movements' (NSMs). Then, as a useful, complementary lens through which to

explore a contemporary social movement, I outline a social psychological perspective on the movement participant. Next I provide an overview of subcultural analysis over time with particular reference to what is termed 'post-subculture' which, like 'new social movements', represents recent developments in, and an expansion of the definitions of, these two forms of social organisation. Following this, I then discuss the intersection of the fields of social movement and subculture scholarship, and begin to explore the less traversed path of the lifestyle movement.

Social movements

The term 'social movement' is widely interpreted in academia. The difficulty with this is that 'social movement' has been used to describe everything from radical activism to fads and social trends. Scholars from a range of disciplines have defined social movements as befits their particular paradigm, but there is no unifying theory of social movements, and so definitions tend to vary around a small number of common elements. Gusfield's (1970) definition contains useful terms that can be read as separate from any theoretical underpinning. He writes that social movements are "socially shared activities and beliefs directed toward the demand for change in some aspect of the social order" (p. 2). Gusfield emphasises the importance of the 'activities and beliefs' in this definition as being a response to more than just a low rumbling discontent, but rather a clearly articulated problem and a sense of what needs to be done. The problem may be situated within an institution or within a wider culture or society.

Della Porta and Diani (1999) list four characteristics that appear in most studies of social movements though the research may be from multiple perspectives. These are informal interaction networks, shared beliefs and solidarity, collective action, and use of protest (pp. 14-15). Networks play an essential role, which is to spread information and ideas to create the conditions where individuals can make meaning and turn beliefs into action through interaction. Solidarity

becomes possible when there are shared beliefs and a sense of belonging and this in turn enables either the definition of a new perspective on an old issue, or the emergence of an entirely new social issue. The redefinition process outlined here leads to the emergence or crystallisation of a movement even when collective action (such as public demonstration) is not occurring.

It is interesting to consider the redefinition process as it relates to the foodie phenomenon and whether collective action is present or not in the local foodie lifeworld. According to Gusfield (1970) and Melucci (1996), collective action is essentially deliberate action by a group that is determined to effect change. For example, subscribing to a newsletter or purchasing only environmentally friendly products are activities that may contribute to the overarching goal of the movement. Alternatively, as Searle argues, fundamental to collective action is the 'we-intention', where action is oriented toward a mutual goal (1990, p. 414). These activities are not the discrete acts of individual participants, but of people with a sense of belonging to a group bound together by ideology. Collective action occurs when participants can define themselves and others in relation to the idea or goal that links them (Touraine, 1981).

Action outside of the "routine procedures of social life" (Diani, 1992, p. 12) or engagement in demonstrations and activism has long been considered a fundamental characteristic of political social movements, but is not so apparent in other forms of social movement. Indeed, recent conceptions of social movements are increasingly diverse, culture-based, and lacking the conventional forms of protest usually associated with social action for change. In line with this shift toward a cultural basis of analysis is Killian's (1973) discussion of values and norms in social movements. He wrote that each movement has, at its core, a value or set of values which are reinforced and justified in ideology and through norms which govern the behaviour of participants in the movement. Expression of these norms achieves three purposes: symbolising commitment, strengthening identification, and distinguishing participants from non-participants of the movement (Killian,

1973). Over time, these norms exert constant pressure on participants which in turn gives the movement momentum and direction. Significantly for this research, Killian (1973) suggests that even activities outside of movement work may come to be governed by these norms, such as choices about consumption, which suggests a close link between culture and movement participation.

Types of social movements

Social movements are common but diverse phenomena. While many are politically motivated in the traditional sense of being a direct challenge to the governing political bodie(s), many are not. Some *are* intended to bring about change in social conditions, but others have more benign goals such as alteration of lifestyle, consumption patterns, or worldview. Some are centrally organised, loud, and occasionally violent. Most will be seen most clearly with hindsight, when it will be possible chart their direction, shape and effect. Melucci (1996) likens social movements to prophets, suggesting that they "announce what is taking shape even before its direction and content has become clear" (p. 1). This assertion is interesting in the context of the foodie phenomenon, in regard to what appears to be a renewed centrality of food to people's lives over and above the basic need for sustenance.

Blumer wrote that a social movement is the emergence of "a new order of life" (1951, p. 199) that is motivated by both dissatisfaction with the current condition and some perception of an alternative, better way of living. Early in social movement scholarship, Blumer distinguished between three kinds of social movements, each with varying purposes. These are expressive, specific, and general movements. An expressive movement is the kind that does not seek to make objective change – legislative or otherwise – to the social order. The goal of an expressive movement, in fact, is to make change in the character and personality of individuals in society. This kind of movement has most often been associated with religious movements, particularly cults (Blumer, 1969a). The specific movement has a well-defined goal, the achievement of which will

permit the movement to develop two things that are critical in differentiating this from the general movement – organisation and structure – so the movement becomes, in essence, a society. With organisation and structure, it follows that a specific movement is likely to have leaders, guiding values, and rules. For example, as part of a wider anti-nuclear movement, the protests against nuclear testing on the Mururoa atoll in the 1980s were highly organised, closely associated with large environmental, peace, and humanitarian organisations, and actually led to legislative change in New Zealand (Lange, 1990).

The general movement is the least explicit of the three. It does not have the clear organisation or structure of the specific movement and its goal is much more nebulous. Blumer calls this a 'cultural drift', where there is a general shift in people's values, conceptions, and desires. Because general movements lack a clearly defined goal, and lack organisation or leadership, they move in a "slow, halting, yet persistent way" in some direction (1951, p. 200). An example of this is the women's movement which began as a slow change in values across multiple spheres – at home, in marriage, in industry, education and politics – before gaining momentum and splitting off into honed, goal oriented specific movements such as voting rights for women (Gusfield, 1970, p. 5). Other characteristics of general social movements are visible in the women's movement too. The movement can be described as episodic, with spasms of activity and progress followed by periods of inertia. Motivation may come from people in different places at different times, working on making progress in a number of different areas without that work becoming generally known across the movement.

The unfocused, bumbling nature of a general movement is often the beginning of the crystallisation into a specific movement(s), which by their very nature cannot achieve the breadth of scope that the general movement encompasses; nevertheless, a specific movement can be perceived as more effective in reaching its goals *because of* its narrower, more explicit focus. That is not to say that

general movements are ineffective, simply that the perception their effectiveness is likely to be hampered by its lack of organisation and longevity. While general social movements tend not to have leaders, there are individuals who seem to pioneer the intentions of the movement without necessarily articulating them. These people are, in Blumer's words, "voices in the wilderness" (1951, p. 101) who may not have a dedicated following as such, but who set an example and appear iconic of the core sensibilities of the movement.

General social movements are prolific in the creation of written materials, which again do not have a clearly defined goal or direction but support those same core sensibilities. The literature tends to express some level of dissatisfaction with a way of life and perhaps present a utopian alternative. It is likely to be critical in gaining support for the cause by raising awareness and inspiring action. Essentially, a general movement will develop in an informal, unstructured fashion without an obvious beginning. It may not develop into one or more specific movements but may instead remain a chaotic but slowly simmering phenomenon representing the 'zeitgeist' or spirit of the age.

The changing nature of movements

Whether or not social movements today are distinct in all ways from social movements of the past is debated among movement scholars. Certainly, social movements have changed and diversified, and certain historical definitions of social movements no longer fit. Della Porta and Diani (1999) describe the environmental movement as one that is distinct from previous movements for a number of reasons. The first is that the actors in this social movement come from diverse backgrounds – ethnicity, class, status – and that adversaries of the movement may in fact come from the same social base as the actors. This is clearly different from, for example, the American Civil Rights movement, where there was a clear dichotomy of oppressed and oppressor. Another reason the environmental movement is different, is that no one group can lay claim to the goals of the movement: water or air quality is something that affects all

socio-economic groups. In addition, the movement cannot be related to the 'nation state', because environmental problems tend to be either very local, or global concerns that no single government can address in isolation. And finally, the goals of the environmental movement are raising awareness and persuading individual consumers and corporate bodies to behave differently, to put other concerns before profit. Significantly, this reflects Inglehart's (2008) discussion of post-materialism which suggests that societal values have changed from being about class and wealth, to being more about identity and self-expression. As I consider the foodies who are the subject of this research, I am interested to discover how much of their foodie lifeworld is externally focused in terms of raising awareness, and how much is internally focused, in pursuit of personal achievement.

The environmental movement usefully demonstrates that the understanding of what comprises a social movement has altered significantly over time. Indeed, the study of social movements over the past few decades has been subject to various movements itself – movements in theoretical analysis that emphasise one kind of analysis over others. Each of these paradigms is supported by extensive literature and keen advocates who assert the validity and usefulness of the theory and, often, define key characteristics of social movements that fit that paradigm.

Four social movement paradigms

Le Bon (1960 [1895]), Freud (1921), Miller and Dollard (1941), and Adorno et al. (1950) are advocates of the 'strain theory' paradigm, a social psychological analysis of crowds in the late 19th century that was influential throughout the 1950s. Through the 1960s collective behaviour and symbolic interactionism were key ideas in this area (Smelser, 1962; Gusfield, 1963; Snow and Oliver, 1995). The strain paradigm places collective action at the heart of the social movement, particularly as the participants' way of making meaning and achieving cultural change. Marginalised groups feel frustration with some

social situation or feelings of relative deprivation due to rapid social change (Gusfield, 1968). Their reaction to this frustration manifests in the development of new shared beliefs, often aggressively expressed, as in cases such as the rise of Nazism or the American Civil War (Gusfield, 1968; Della Porta and Diani, 1999). In this way, social movements "represent attempts to transform existing norms" because collective behaviour, in this perspective on social movements, poses a challenge to cultural norms (Della Porta and Diani, 1999, p. 6) or is a response to perceived change.

After the 1960s, the 'resource mobilisation' paradigm grew out of organisational theory and political sociology, and out of critique of strain theory. Scholars of the resource mobilisation paradigm assert that strain alone does not explain the emergence of movements; that the success of a social movement depends on its ability to organise and mobilise (Haenfler, 2006; Jenkins, 2008). This theory emphasises the strategic and rational actions of participants and conceptualises movements as part of the normal process through which people engage in political action (McCarthy & Zald, 1987). Scholars wrote that individuals in social movements would follow their interests, calculate the costs and benefits and consider the material and non-material resources available to or needed by the group (Obershall, 1973; Tilly, 1978). In addition, to achieve change it is essential to garner a 'critical mass' of engagement with the movement; a minimum number of people who weigh up the benefits and act in support of the articulated change. Even so, Marwell and Oliver (1993) suggest that within this group, there is likely to be a small number of highly motivated, resourceful individuals who do more to mobilise the movement than the average group member, often for altruistic reasons.

Although the political process paradigm (also called political opportunity theory), lodges within the rational paradigm, it places greater importance on the political-social situation. This perspective focuses on resources *external* to the group. It also analyses which characteristics of the political system influence the development of a social movement and how adaptable the

movement is in the face of shifting political conditions. Emphasis on political opportunities has led to better understanding of the emergence of movements and enables comparison of movement progress across nations with similar political characteristics. Tarrow (1994) wrote "people join in social movements in response to political opportunities and then, through collective action, create new ones" (p. 17). This approach suggests that analysis of social movements as being marginal and evidence of systemic dysfunction is not taking into account the big picture; that it is the workings of the institutional political system and its relationship to society that is key to the detailed understanding of social movements. However, critics of this perspective note that the 'big picture' here does not encompass all the structural origins of protest (such as rapid social change), or acknowledge the aforementioned cultural innovation that occurs simultaneously (Rupp & Taylor, 1987).

In the late 1980s the resource mobilisation and political process paradigms began to fall out of favour. While those paradigms can be usefully applied to organised movements, scholars were seeing new kinds of movements that did not have the internal structures, the political interaction, or the underlying 'strain' inherent in previously defined movements. Concurrently, it appeared that participants' lived experience of the movement largely took place in the personal and cultural spheres rather than in political or organisational contexts (Haenfler, 2006). Movements were likely to be diffuse and to lack bureaucratic cohesion, and bear close resemblance to Blumer's 'general' movements referred to earlier. Out of this crisis came a number of social movement theories with some common attributes, usually clustered and titled 'new social movement' (NSM) theories (Buechler, 1995, Haenfler, 2006). Key scholars of the NSM field, including Alberto Melucci, Enrique Larana, Alain Touraine, and Claus Offe, tend to take a social constructionist view, exploring the implications of changes that have occurred recently in Western societies (Della Porta and Diani, 1999).

NSM scholarship creates a loose framework for contemporary social movements by defining characteristics that are common to NSMs and different from 'old' social movements such as the Marxist movement. The framework comprises six characteristics which provide a valuable key to identifying and classifying movements as NSMs (Johnston et al., 1994; Buechler, 1995). The first of these characteristics is that symbolic actions by individuals occurring in the cultural sphere are emphasised over instrumental action by groups in the state or political spheres. The second is that processes for self-determination are emphasised over processes intended to maximise power. The third characteristic is that post-material values, rather than material or economic issues, are motivation for collective action. Fourth, collective identities are crucial to mobilisation, but these are nebulous, pluralistic, and not structurally determined by class. Fifth, grievances and ideologies are socially constructed, rather than evolving from structural or class situation, and are not tied to political parties. And last, collective action can come from submerged, latent, and temporary networks, and is not reliant on centralised, organised forms. These characteristics of NSMs demonstrate the centrality of identity concerns, and are useful for categorising social action that is created under different circumstances than that of traditional movements.

In its essence, the NSM approach represents a shift in the conceptualisation of social movements from being about making widespread societal change to being about the realisation of emerging individual and group identities. Melucci writes "The freedom to have which characterised [...] industrial society has been replaced by the freedom to be" (1989, p. 177-78) which situates NSMs in post-industrial, post-material contexts, quite different from the struggles for social and economic rights that the labour movement addressed. Martin says NSMs "emerge in a world of surplus opportunities, resources and choices" (2002, p. 81). Therefore, rather than seeking material gain, many contemporary social movements have at their heart the desire to resist the colonisation of private life by the state, and assert individual identity (Habermas, 1984;

Melucci, 1989; Della Porta and Diani, 1999). Action undertaken by participants in NSMs is situated in the individual's own lifeworld and connected across the movement through collective identity, rather than through mobilised groups.

To illustrate, the women's and LGBTI[20] movements can be defined as new social movements in that their fundamental intention is to assert the rights of people to determine particular identities. These movements are less about economic or material gain, and more about the validity and self-actualisation of identity. The movement becomes the focus for the individuals' definition of themselves, and works reflexively to reinforce individual and collective identities. While there are activist groups within these movements that engage in conventional forms of protest and political engagement, a large proportion of action is individualised, cultural behaviour in the social sphere. In addition, participants in new social movements herald from diverse backgrounds, and hold a variety of political views. Lastly, goals, grievances and ideologies of these movements are diverse, and are socialised through a range of communication networks and media.

Debates within NSM theory

Three major debates frame the NSM approach, centred on issues of newness, class, and political engagement. The first concerns whether all contemporary social movements can be considered genuinely 'new', or whether they in fact have close ties to past movements, even as a predictable stage in a long term life cycle of movement (Brand, 1990). For example, the women's movement has roots in the suffrage movements of the late 19th century. However, while these movements are not independent from the past, they now have "more diffuse goals and different modes of mobilization" (Johnston et al., 1994, p. 9) and it is this that makes them 'new' in the sense intended by NSM scholars. Plotke

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[20] LGBTI is a more inclusive expansion of the gay rights or homosexual law reform movements. The acronym stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex. Occasionally A (Asexual) or N (gender-Neutral) is added.

(1990) suggests that NSMs exaggerate cultural goals and do not accurately acknowledge their conventional political activity. However, global awareness due to globalisation and the postmaterialistic value base are, according to Dalton and Kuechler (1990), further aspects of newness that were not a part of movements in the past. Therefore, evolution from old movements notwithstanding, the term 'new' is useful for signifying the contemporary, global environment that movements are situated within.

The second debate has to do with the relevance of class in NSMs. Old social movements are generally thought to derive from working class or 'lumpenproletariat' origins, whereas some NSM scholars suggest class is irrelevant to NSMs because contemporary grievances affect social groups from various class backgrounds (Johnston et al., 1994). They suggest, also, that people are not participating in the movement through a class-based solidarity, but rather because of ideology and values; although is going too far to suggest these ideologies and values are entirely classless. Indeed, Offe (1985) writes that the social base of NSMs is distinctly 'new middle' class, given its tendency towards unconventional, informal forms of collective action.

A third debate among movement scholars is about the definition of NSMs as essentially 'cultural' phenomena rather than 'political' phenomena. Unfortunately, this debate tends toward a polemic dichotomy, whereas in fact all movements are simultaneously cultural and political in varying degrees. One way around this problem is to argue that contemporary social movements are about something greater than conventional politics; that they "provid[e] a metapolitical challenge" rather than a specific, situated one (Buechler, 1995, p. 12). Alternatively, NSMs have also been defined as apolitical or a pre-political form of social activism (Buechler, 1995) in regard to their orientation toward culture and identity. Tied into this debate is the question of whether NSMs are reactive or progressive. Buechler (1995) writes that Habermas suggested the former, that they are primarily "defensive reactions to the colonizing intrusions of states and markets into the lifeworld of modern society" (1995, p. 10). ,

Buechler argues, in contrast, that this colonisation provokes conflicts that, in turn, produce movements in the cultural sphere which are progressive (1995). In both cases, the impulse to collective action is exploitable by the movement.

Clearly, social movements today are layered, shifting phenomena situated in multiple spheres. Melucci maintains that social movements are "systems of action, complex networks among different levels and meanings of social action" (1996, p. 4). In order to properly comprehend the significance of these meanings for the participants in social movements, a cultural mode of analysis is necessary.

The cultural components of social movements

The naming and defining of NSMs coincides with what can be seen as a 'cultural turn' in sociology in the late 20th century (Zald, 1996; Eyerman, 2005). Cultural analysis has been present throughout the various periods of social movement scholarship, although it was somewhat out of favour during the 1970s when the rational, impersonal 'resource mobilisation' paradigm was dominant. Focus on culture and ideology in social movements re-emerged as tools such as framing and semiotic analysis were developed. Indeed, for NSM scholars it is the cultural elements that distinguish NSMs from past movements (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996, p. 5).

Some scholars insist that it is essential to consider social psychological dimensions of social movements because of the presence of collective behaviour; crowd phenomena particularly cannot be grasped without this "microlevel theorizing" (Snow and Oliver, 1995). This method for locating the individual within social movements is best described as 'framing' (McAdam et al., 1996, p. 5) and is closely associated with the NSM approach due to the centrality of culture and issues of identity. It bears close resemblance to Goffman's frame analysis (1974) which has been applied to social movement theory extensively.

The first of these social psychological dimensions is the microstructural, social relational dimension, which is about the existing or emerging networks, and affiliations that play a role in movement participation. Fine and Stoecker (1985) note these emergent networks and groups often develop their own small group cultures or 'ideocultures'. Therefore, defining the values and norms of these cultures-within-cultures informs the analyst's understanding of the wider movement. The personality dimension is largely about personal efficacy – the belief an individual holds about themselves that they can make a useful contribution. The socialisation dimension is in fact more of a process. It is the process through which individuals are both socialised into understanding the values, norms and beliefs (the culture) of the movement, and reflexively undergo change in their identity (Gecas, 1992). This dimension is likely to be relevant to this research in explaining the process through which individuals come to identify as foodies. Snow and Oliver (1995) noted that the affective (emotional) dimension was probably the least well researched of the social psychological dimensions due to the Western tradition of separating reason and emotion, although the two are both socially constructed and therefore can be usefully juxtaposed.

More recently, however, the role of emotions in social movements has been explicated thoroughly, and it is now agreed that emotions are the link between values and actions (Eyerman, 2005). The last of Snow and Oliver's (1995) social psychological dimensions is the cognitive dimension, which helps to unpack the nature of the process of deciding to participate in a social movement, and determine construction of meanings that are attributed to that participation. This dimension is closely related to the work on collective identity and collective action of Melucci (1989; 1996) and also draws on Goffman's 'frame analysis' (1974) about the social construction of reality. Goffman's framing theory has been used extensively in studies of social movements to illustrate how ideologies gain support and traction in participants' minds, leading to action.

Framing

Social movement occurs when problems are framed in such a way that the audience is persuaded of the need to address them collectively, as opposed to addressing them individually. Therefore, framing plays a pivotal role in social movements by influencing or altering movement participants' perceptions of a situation. Zald defines 'frames' in the social movement context as:

> the specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive
> cues used to render or cast behaviour and events in an evaluative
> mode and to suggest alternative modes of action. (Zald, 1996,
> p. 262)

It should be noted, however, that frames are most likely shaped by social and political contexts, and so it is important to cast wider than social movement activity to understand what is signified by the collective action. Ideologies – the belief systems that supports and motivate collective action – are framed, just as problems are, and it is equally important to recognise the social and political contexts of those; in particular, understanding that competing ideologies form in response to some event or emerging contradiction in society.

Framing is clearly an important factor in the emergence of a movement. It is the process by which a problem is made sense of, and people discover that they wish to act in response to it and become movement participants. The importance of framing does not diminish after a movement has begun. Rather, as McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996) write, in a mature movement, the framing process is a more conscious, strategic act than the spontaneous one it was in the beginning. However, once the frames become embedded in the movement and more tangible, they are more likely to be contested from within and without the movement.

The purpose of this discussion of social movements is to explicate social movement phenomena, which are complex, and to illustrate the key defining

characteristics of contemporary social movements, particularly the social construction of identity and shared meaning. The social psychological dimensions of social movements are a culture-based approach focused on the individual, and complementary to the set of characteristics that are observed in NSMs, or 'lifestyle' movements. In combination, they provide a useful framework that will help to conceptualise the foodie phenomenon as a social movement in the next chapter.

Subculture

The study of subcultures, like social movements, has experienced a number of phases in its history. Initial exploration of groups in society that behave differently to the majority began with research into 'urban micro-sociology' at the University of Chicago, twenty years before the term 'subculture' was coined (Thornton, 1997). Now, 'subculture', among other terms, is used to denote a wide range of phenomena of different origin and type. A great many studies in subculture have focused on youth, 'style' and music (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004), and because of this, the term 'subculture' has become so closely associated with the concept of youth and 'street' that it has had to be forced to meaningfully represent other groups. There exists, too, the situation where 'to label a social formation is in part to frame, shape and delineate it' (Thornton, 1997, p. 5). These are problems addressed by scholars who find subcultural studies limiting for a number of reasons, and who have successfully coined other terms to describe groups outside of its original, narrow definition. While there are good reasons to follow this lead and move on from subculture, there remain many pertinent, valuable concepts in this body of theory that are relevant to the foodie phenomenon, and so a brief overview of research into subculture and post-subcultural forms is presented here.

Subculture, being a part of the wider culture, is often defined by its 'otherness', its relative difference from mainstream society and its norms (Brake, 1985; Thornton, 1997). This has resulted, throughout the process of identifying

specific subcultures, in a heavy emphasis on notions of class, deviance and resistance, and the social structures that the subculture either derives from or responds to. In addition, there is some agreement that subculture formation such as the punk subculture of the late 1970s-80s (Hebdige, 1979; Yinger, 1982; Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004; Gelder, 2007) is in some ways an expressive response to ideological disappointment, and cultural or structural change. A subculture comprises people with something in common, a problem or an interest, that is innately oppositional to the hegemonic ideals of the majority of society (Thornton, 1997). Writers have deliberately avoided the term 'community', however, because of its connotations of neighbourhood and family, whereas it is the very *lack* of familial ties that is thought to be a key feature in subcultures (Thornton, 1997). A subculture is different also from a fad or craze in that it more permanent (Gelder, 2007), though just as likely to have a significant consumerist element. In fact, the relationship between subculture and consumerism was poignantly summarised by Irwin (1977, p. 121), and echoed by Hebdige (1979), in reference to two lifestyle cultures or 'scenes' – hippies and surfers – when he asserted that subcultures have four phases: formation, expansion, corruption, and stagnation. Corruption occurs when the styles and attitudes are appropriated by mainstream culture and turned into valuable consumer products, and may signal the demise of the subculture to some extent.

Subculture, like culture, is made up of systems of meaning and values, which are expressed and interpreted through the 'way of life' of those belonging to that (sub)culture (Thornton, 1997). The prefix 'sub' signifies both the group-within-a-group, and, importantly, the subordinate position of that group in relation to the 'parent' culture (Clarke et al., 1976) for reasons of class, race or age (Thornton, 1997). Brake's (1985) definition argues that subcultures

> provide a pool of available symbolic resources which particular individuals or groups can draw on in their attempt to make sense of their own specific situation and construct a viable identity. (p. 27)

Thus, individuals who do not 'fit' with the dominant culture may choose to construct their identity in relation to an 'other', although that other is rarely entirely opposed to the dominant culture, and is likely to share at least one factor such as class origin (Brake, 1985).

American subcultural studies

The University of Chicago's Sociology department developed two hypotheses to explain subculture in response to the belief that deviance was the product of a criminal mind. Research grew in line with the fundamental idea that society is a system in equilibrium, and that events such as urbanisation were creating an imbalance which gave rise to non-mainstream, antisocial behaviour, particularly among young people (Williams, 1958). During the period between the 1920s and the 1940s, Park et al. (1925), Thrasher (1927) and Cressey (1932) documented the (often, but not always) deviant behaviour of marginalised groups in urban environments. The second hypothesis, developed during the 1950s-60s, was the theorising of deviance within a functionalist framework (Cohen, 1955; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960), where deviant behaviour was attributed to the psychological strain caused by an individual's inability to achieve the goals of the dominant culture due to the social system. It is against this background that subculture developed: where there was a critical mass of individuals experiencing this psychological strain through rejection of mainstream culture's goals (or achievement of those goals by unconventional, non-conformist means) and creation of alternative norms and frames of reference (Williams, 1958; Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004).

The two main criticisms of the University of Chicago approach refer to the limited scope of the studies, which tended to be on immigrant or poor populations (Jenks, 2005), and to the assumption that the subcultures were a

simply a response to social conditions without consideration of any other, more subtle, explanation.[21]

Symbolic Interactionism

Blumer's 'symbolic interactionism' is relevant here, not least because he also comes from the Chicago School and contributed to one of the most cogent theories to come from that sociological tradition. Blumer used the term 'symbolic interaction' (1969b) to describe the transactional behaviour of subcultural actors engaged in making meaning. This theory emphasises subjective interpretation, where "participants assign meaning to their own and other's actions by the use of symbols" (Littlejohn, 1992, p. 173). There is an element of performance about these interactions as a result of taking on roles where actions are shaped and reinforced by social environments, as Goffman, another Chicago scholar, has suggested (1974). This is pertinent to subcultures in that different situations bring forth different performances from people or groups (Gelder, 2007), and so taking a symbolic interactionist perspective may prove useful in analysis of the behaviour of foodies as a social group.

British subcultural studies

During the 1950s to the early 1970s, research on youth in Britain mirrored the Chicago school's focus on deviance, urban environment and socio-economic situation. Researchers argued that delinquency was not only the product of, but a role-playing tradition within, lower socio-economic groups (Mays, 1954; Cohen, 1972; Patrick, 1973). Hall and Jefferson (1976) altered the course of research, however, with their work that interpreted youth subcultures as "spectacular indicators of the ongoing class struggle in British society" (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004, p. 5). Theirs was an influential, big picture perspective that incorporated the Chicago school's desire to explain instances of deviance

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[21] Such as the exploitation of the 'teenager'– a group that is neither child nor adult, and holds significant potential consuming power (Savage, 2007).

from the dominant culture, but also to situate these phenomena within structural changes in Britain after World War II. Hebdige (1979), who acknowledges that there was some debate about how and why social structures such as class were changing, suggests that increased affluence and mass media, among other changes, led to increased fragmentation of the working class, and the growth of a youth working-class culture. Bocock (1993) argues that affluence and consumerism are closely related, and consumption grew amongst almost all the social groups at that time, including the working class, who could now afford to purchase aspects of what had been until then a middle class lifestyle. The newly acquired (relative) wealth was a way to gain desired commodities, but what these commodities represented and how they were used delineated subcultures from mainstream culture (Hebdige, 1979). In the punk subculture, for example, the Union Jack was cut up and worn on clothing and safety pins were worn as jewellery, both to shock and to subvert the normal meaning of these objects.

From this point on, scholars at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) fervently promoted the concept of individual as *bricoleur*, and subculture as a coherent set of symbols, comprising behaviour, use of leisure time, and dress that articulated resistance among the working-class youth. They said subcultural form was expressive of "the fundamental tension between those in power and those condemned to subordinate positions and second-class lives" (Hebdige, 1979, p. 132). The effect of this resistance is not, however, the resolution of class inequalities or frustrations because, as Clarke et al. (1976) state, "Subcultures 'solve', but in an imaginary way, problems which at the concrete level remain unresolved" (pp. 47-8). For example, punk behaviour, dress and music may appear antagonistic and in direct opposition to mainstream culture, but punk rebellion is located within a hegemonic system and the rules of that system (such as laws) still apply. Perhaps more accurate in this context is Matza and Sykes' (1961) assertion that subcultures offer

non-conformist routes to pleasure, rather than setting out to challenge hegemonic social behaviour.

There are a number of criticisms of the CCCS perspective on subculture, some of which emerged soon after the publication of Hall and Jefferson (1976) and Hebdige's (1979) books. One serious limitation, usefully discussed by Muggleton (2000) is the assumption that subculturalists were almost always demonstrating *working-class* resistance. The CCCS' tendency to theorise grand narratives like this one, which suggested that the lives of the working-classes were shaped by events beyond their control, may have been due to the minimal amount of empirical research undertaken. Indeed, another criticism is that these researchers made little effort to discover what meaning was made of, for example, punk styles and attitudes by the punks themselves and instead dwelled on the symbolism of the consumer goods associated with the style (Miles, 1995). The effect of reducing subcultures to a symptom – of modern consumer society weighted down by class-based injustices – was to colour the way the CCCS then went about reading them (Gelder, 2007).

A tendency of the CCCS, as an extension of their emphasis on working-class subcultures which were largely male and 'street' evidenced, was to largely ignore the female and domestic spheres (McRobbie and Garber, 1976). Few researchers worked in this area, which Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) suggest may have been a hang-over from the male-dominated sociological tradition that immediately preceded this time. However, McRobbie and Garber (1976) found that teenage girls were actively engaged in subcultural activity in what they call 'teeny bopper' culture (now called, with hindsight, 'girl power') which "can be viewed as a meaningful reaction against the selective and authoritarian structures which control girls lives" (p. 220). Since then the male-centric bias has been heavily criticised, although major studies show youth subcultures (Haenfler, 2006) remain largely male dominated.

Lastly, the CCCS were focused on the very dedicated youths who 'lived' their punk, mod, or teddy-boy identities intensely, and so neglected the far greater number of youths who moved between styles and 'tasted' a range of identities throughout their youth. As Frith (1983) noted,

> for every youth 'stylist' committed to a cult as a full-time creative task, there are hundreds of working-class kids who grow up in the loose membership of several groups and run with a variety of gangs.
> (pp. 219-20)

So the experimentation that is generally understood as fundamental to the experience of being a teenager is largely absent in the work of the CCCS, as is the possibility of dabbling in one of these subcultural styles for fun. This is problematic in that the more ordinary, mundane aspects of people's lives were artificially removed from the equation, when what was being sought was a better understanding of the way people live (Cohen, 1980; Gelder, 2007).

In essence, the work of the subculturalists in post-war Britain was at once ground-breaking and over-simplistic, and their theories cannot be usefully applied on their own to cultural analysis today. As Murdock and McCron (1976) wrote,

> the problem is not only to explain why styles such as the mods or the skinheads developed within a particular class strata […] but also to explain why adolescents in essentially the same basic class location adopted other modes of negotiation and resolution. (p. 25)

But as well as the limited scope (post-war Britain) which does not translate well to other countries or locales as illustrated by Brake (1985) and Pilkington (1994), the problem of mass culture and mass consumption is not dealt with adequately, particularly in today's diverse and arguably post-modern, eclectic mode (Muggleton & Weinzierl, 2003).

Post-Subculture

Responses to the CCCS' modernist approach to subculture are multifarious, and while still largely youth and music focused, do lend themselves to analysis of wider definitions of subcultural phenomena. Among them, one of the major departures from the CCCS approach is that subcultural activity need not necessarily be inherently resistant, which derives from the concept of plurality fundamental to this post-modern perspective. Whereas Hebdige et al. see criticism of mass-culture in punk style, scholars of post-subculture note the approval – even endorsement – of consumer goods and media by contemporary subcultural groups. And not just goods and media pertaining to one 'style' either, but carefully selected from a range of styles. Muggleton (2000) states that the modernist styles have become 'hip' codes "available for the pleasure of the (apparently ironic, reflexive and knowing) postmodern consumers who wish to construct their own identities..." (p. 39). Therefore, postmodern subcultural identity is fluid and multi-faceted, and no longer so structured by class (Thornton, 1995).

The subject of political post-subcultural behaviour is a developing one. Muggleton (1997) stated that post-subculturalists are "just another form of de-politicized play in the postmodern pleasuredome, where emphasis is placed on the surface qualities of the spectacle at the expense of any underlying ideologies of resistance" (p. 182). In contrast, six years later, Muggleton and Weinzierl (2003) write that 'hedonistic', apolitical subcultures like techno-tribes have mixed with radical activist countercultures and social movements. The resulting post-subcultural protest formations articulate resistance across both the cultural and the political spheres.

Within post-subcultural study there are two major trajectories: a focus on cultural capital and taste aligning with work by Bourdieu (1984), and the reconceptualising of subcultural groups as tribes and neo-tribes by Maffesoli (1996) and Bennett (1999), or as lifestyles (Reimer 1995; Miles, 2000) or scenes

(Irwin, 1977; Straw, 1991). Bourdieu (1984) describes cultural capital as a kind of commodity, in that many actions and interactions are efforts to gain cultural capital. He describes other 'capitals' – including economic, and social – which together with cultural capital equate to status or class (Thornton, 1997). Bourdieu demonstrates that taste is part of a system, "through which we classify and make sense of the world, and distinguish between what is and isn't us" called the habitus (Ashley et al., 2004, p. 64), and maintains that class is a primary determinant of taste. For Thornton (1997),[22] who is less emphatic about the relationship between taste and class, distinction is made by youths in clubcultures or Gans' (1999) 'taste cultures' who invest those with similar knowledge and competence with varying degrees of *sub*cultural capital. These distinctions are at the crux of subcultural capital which is defined most clearly by "what it dislikes and by what it most emphatically isn't" (Thornton, 1997, p. 208), and great pains are taken to demarcate and protect subcultural capital from the masses. Analysis of taste cultures, then, enables a nuanced examination of identity without being bound by rigid class arguments.

Lewis (1992) argues that analysis of taste cultures is difficult because they exist in complex, overlapping strata, and notes that postmodern theorists, who see culture as made up of symbols without reference, would suggest that it is impossible to find coherent meaning in chaos. In his work on musical taste, he does, however, suggest breaking down taste cultures into demographic, aesthetic, and political dimensions which serve as parameters to mapping these complex phenomena.

Reconceptualising subculture

'Neo-tribes' is just one of a number of ways that subculture has been reconceptualised after the CCCS. According to Maffesoli (1996), neo-tribes are small groups of people in urban environments, without rigid forms of

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[22] cf. Warde, 2000.

organisation, who share interests, worldviews, behaviours and styles but do not necessarily share class backgrounds. Sweetman (2004), in reference to Maffesoli (1996), particularly emphasises the temporary nature of the groupings, the centrality of feelings, and tribes' "preoccupation with the collective present" (2004, p. 86). Maffesoli's intention in defining these groups as tribes was to illustrate the increasingly de-individualised and fluid nature of contemporary social relations, although within neo-tribes members remain more individualised than they were thought to be in the subcultures of the CCCS, and rate their individual needs above those of the group. Maffesoli (1996) argues that society is experiencing resurgence in traditional notions of community and a move towards a more empathetic method of being social. This is reinforced by the individual's experience of living everyday among social groupings of friends and acquaintances – groups that are informal and dynamic and centred around lifestyles and tastes (Miele, 2006). There are criticisms of the neo-tribe concept: that it has not been thoroughly empirically verified (Malbon, 1999), and it fails to reflect the increasingly political nature of youth groupings (Muggleton & Weinzierl, 2003). However, the concept of tribes has been adopted and developed by other scholars and remains influential in post-subcultural scholarship.

'Scene' is another term used to name particular cultural phenomena. It was first employed to refer to youth and musical (jazz) subcultures again and classified as a "folk metaphor" by Irwin (1977), who noted that the term was being used to refer to style of life as a 'thing'. However, 'scene' has in recent years been applied much more widely to a range of cultural practices. An advantage, but also a disadvantage of the term is it can be applied to phenomena of various scales; it can describe the localised activity, or encompass a global taste community (Straw, 2002). The disadvantage, then, is that it is such a flexible term that it is somewhat imprecise. But, as Straw (2002) notes, its flexibility allows for observation of "a hazy coherence between sets of practices or affinities" (p. 250) while still holding class or subculture theory in the wings –

present, but not immediately so. The term also encourages the simultaneous experience of 'intimate' community and the cosmopolitanism of urban living. 'Scene' is best articulated in relation to this study as the site (the physical and the social experience) that nourishes cultural practice (Straw, 2002). It is important to note the difference between 'scene' and 'neo-tribes', which is that 'scene' actually refers to material elements such as place and atmosphere, rather than the people within it. However, 'scene' does not ascribe enough importance to the communication and interaction between participants, while conversely 'tribe' carries a strong anthropological etymology.

'Lifestyle' is another of post-subculture's alternative conceptions of subculture. This term, originally used in this way by Weber (1978 [1919]) and adopted by Reimer (1995), Chaney (1996), and Miles (2000), describes the use of commodities as cultural capital, and that the meanings ascribed to those commodities develop through individuals' desire to participate in the creation of their identities. Significantly, this model acknowledges the shifting nature of identities as individuals move from one identity to another, or engage with a number of identities at once.

Each of the terms above has a particular application depending on the cultural phenomenon it refers to and what special emphasis is required. In each case, the terms developed out of dissatisfaction with the historical and philosophical 'baggage' contained in the term 'subculture'. 'Subculture' accurately represents the *submerged* nature of an aspect of *culture* that binds some but not others. In addition, its emphasis on identity creation and self-actualisation is suited to this study. As Wulff (1988, p. 22) articulated it, subculture usefully describes the "distinctive organisations of meaning" of social groups, which reflects in subculture the discussion of framing in the social movement section earlier in this chapter. As Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) note,

in subculture there is at least an identifiable, knowable and researchable space that provides a point of departure in examining what cultural activity is not. (p. 15)

But subculture has become a caricature of itself, as it is often used glibly to label whatever the latest youth style is, without the necessary cultural attributes to quantify it. Therefore, for this research, I intend to reconceptualise 'lifestyle' because it has useful application to the particular social phenomenon that I am researching and also connotes the 'lifestyle movements' referred to earlier in the chapter.

Intersection of social movement & subculture

It is unsurprising how little work has been done on the relationship between social movements and subcultures, given that they come from two quite separate scholarly traditions. The theorising that has occurred, however, describes two main points of conjuncture: the conceptualising of cultural politics, and a general shift in collective action from strategic and material concerns to that of identity and expression (alongside other, global concerns). In addition there exists, buried within this theorising, the hint of a suggestion that subcultures are in fact a part of social movements; variously as seed, as residue, or as kind of suspended animation of the movement itself, and that they have always been so, which suggests that contrary to a long history of distinct scholarship the two can be taken as natural affiliates.

Martin (2002) notes there are parallel debates between contemporary subculture scholars and social movement scholars which are principally about cultural politics; and the relevance and salience of such in analysis of these phenomena. Indeed the emphasis on the roles identity and consumption play in shaping ideology and action is apparent in both subculture and social movement fields. He notes that the focus of NSMs has shifted from the study of mobilisation and political struggle to the analysis of symbolic challenges and

collective identity, and suggests that the work of Melucci (1985; 1989; 1996) in articulating the cultural political elements of NSMs may be usefully applied to analysis of subcultural behaviour, in regard to unpacking the complexity inherent in these forms of collective action (Martin, 2002, p. 74). However, Haenfler (2006) regards NSM theories as inadequate in fully explaining decentralised movements. He argues that NSM scholars have tended to concentrate on organised movements despite their theoretical emphasis on decentralised, culture based movements, which has led to a flawed understanding of lifestyle-based resistance and the role of collective identity.

Throughout his study of 'straight edge'[23] (which he defines as both subculture *and* social movement), Haenfler (2006) is careful to maintain the distinction between commitment to a collective identity and movement participation. He suggests one may lead to the other but they are not mutually dependent, despite the natural tendency of 'straight edgers' toward political activism. When 'straight edgers' do participate in what would be regarded as the 'movement' aspect of the culture, they "customise their participation to meet their own interests and needs" (Haenfler, 2006, p. 71).

In discussing what he calls 'new protest formations' which combine subcultural identity construction with social movement activism, St John (2003) describes the formation as engaging hedonistically *and* macro-politically with contemporary concerns such as the global capitalist economy. Della Porta and Diani (2006) augment this argument with their discussion of movement subcultures, where individuals' involvement in movements is not restricted to formal participation in political organisations. They describe the situation in which people form dense networks of informal connections (through socialising with various groups, focused around venues such as cafes and bookshops), which

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[23] Straight edge (sXe) is a hardcore punk subculture, adherents of which do not drink alcohol, use tobacco or other recreational drugs, and a large proportion are vegetarian or vegan (Haenfler, 2006).

maintain collective identity in times when movement mobilisation may be at a low ebb. [24] These scholars suggest that in these networks,

> the political dimension of action intersects and overlaps with the private
> dimension, to generate the foundations of a specific form of subculture.
> (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 132)

In this way, individuals participation in social movements is more about the personal expression of cultural and political views than devotion to a particular activist project. Social movements are present "in the everyday networks of social relations" (Mirosa, 2007, p. 2233) and in the attempts by individuals to practice alternative lifestyles. Furthermore, as Haenfler (2006) suggests, "individualized forms of participation, taken together, amount to a collective cultural challenge" (p. 72). Collective identity could be viewed, then, as the foundation of movements that otherwise lack formal structure. These 'diffuse' culture-based movements present social challenges that may be as significant as organised movements, though quite different in execution.

There is an undercurrent, at this point in the literature, of perceiving subcultures as basic components of social movements. McAdam (1994) suggests the relationship between social movement and subculture is close and long-standing; that subculture is a kind of nursery and source of nourishment of movements. Particularly in the sense of activism, these subcultures

> function as repositories of cultural materials into which succeeding
> generations of activists can dip to fashion ideologically similar, but
> chronologically different movements. (McAdam, 1994, p. 43).

It has certainly been recorded in research that during a period of movement 'dormancy', individuals and small groups play a crucial role in nurturing an

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[24] Della Porta and Diani (2006) also note the debate about the importance of face-to-face community networks given the pervasiveness of mediated communication, and "whether identity bonds still need some kind of shared direct experience and or 'real' interaction to develop" (p. 132).

activist subculture (McAdam, 1994). Indeed, this can be a highly efficient, effective move, for movement organisers who 'tap into' an existing subculture can "rely on earlier framing activity and ... have less need of moral shocks" (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 122). Without the push for tangible change, without action, social movements *devolve to subcultures,* a "cultural enclave" according to Carroll and Ratner (2001, p. 609), in which the political aspect of the movement is lost. I take this to mean subcultures can be understood as social forms of *potential.* Whether marginal subcultural ideologies gain ground and become movements or not is dependant, writes Eyerman (2002), on political opportunities that emerge through changes in dominant culture. But it is clearly a reflexive relationship between subcultures and social movements because, as St John (2003) notes, new kinds of subcultures emerge – his 'technotribes' for example – due to the decentralised nature of contemporary social movements. This reflexivity allows the subculture to shape the movement's agenda, as well as provide a source of energy and momentum (Brotherton, 2007).

Lifestyle reconceptualised

The term 'lifestyle' is closely bound up with consumer culture, and while foodies certainly are consumers, that is not all they are. But it is generally at the cultural rather than the political level that lifestyle poses a challenge to society, as Haenfler, drawing on both subculture and social movement oeuvres, defines it (2004; 2006; personal communication, February 5, 2011). So it is more than just their personal lives that participants in lifestyle movements want to change, it is also the cultural and, to a lesser degree, the political spheres. In particular change at the cultural level focuses on systems of meaning, norms and behaviour. Participation in lifestyle movements is highly individualised and largely uncoordinated; just as participants' levels of commitment vary, so does the form of participation (Haenfler, 2006). As Powell (2002) notes, "lifestyle is a daily individual commitment that constantly confronts the system and

reinforces the movement's ideology" (p. 171). But as well as being discrete, individualised action, participants in lifestyle movements appear to understand that others are taking similar action, interpreted by Haenfler et al. as "belief in the power of non-coordinated collective action" (2008, p. 6).

At the crux of the diffuse lifestyle movement is the imbricative relationship between personal identity and collective identity. Participants develop their own identity with reference to, and in the context of, a collective one. The personal identity, and the behaviour that ensues, is congruent with the morals or values of the person, as well as with the values of the wider movement. This "enactment of values" (Powell, 2002, p. 170) by people loosely bound by a guiding collective identity forms, for the participants, the experience of a "community of meaning" (Haenfler, 2004, p. 796).

Lifestyle movements have little formal structure. What structure there is tends to derive from social networks, collective identity, and to some extent from links to formal social movement organisations. For example, in the case of veganism, participants experience a community of meaning that attributes their personal actions to the wider cause. They may also socialise or make loose connections with other vegans, and some may be involved in organised animal rights activism. So it seems that structure in diffuse movements arises from a variety of sources. To aid in constructing an ongoing movement discourse, lifestyle movements rely on the development of cultural products, such as literature and media, and influential figures called "cultural entrepreneurs" (Haenfler et al., 2008, p. 17). These things provide continuity and help to differentiate between movements and more transitory events such as fads. In sum, the 'lifestyle movement' is individualised activity at a cultural level, along with a sense of shared meaning and identity informed by networks, and cultural artefacts and may have as much impact on social life as any more political, organised movement.

The concept of lifestyle is associated with that of modernity; it developed when the middle classes were sufficiently wealthy to enjoy a certain amount of leisure time, and focused on developing lifestyle as a form of social distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). Consumption practices and the social status inherent in those were no longer restricted to the very rich, or upper class sections of society. Chaney writes that it is only in the eras of mass entertainment and mass communication that lifestyles could develop; those forms of shared cultural information are critical to forming the basis of aspirational identity (Chaney, 1996). However, lifestyle as a socio-cultural form has evolved alongside the late modern or post-modern zeitgeist, and is no longer just about competing class interests and self-actualisation. Lifestyle has developed, in some instances, into a cross-class social movement, where individual lifestyle remains at the heart but individuals behave in ways that contribute to shared – if not specific – goals. Bennett (2003) suggests that in most contemporary post-industrial democracies, and due to globalisation, people have a great control over their social identity and can make choices that reflect and reinforce a preferred lifestyle. One of the forms those choices take is a form of political expression. This is a different form of political expression from the traditional forms, because:

> individuals whose meaning systems cohere narrowly around personal lifestyles, immediate social relationships and material values often find government and conventionally organised politics distant and hard to engage. (Bennett, 2003, p. 139)

The new forms of political expression are made up of individual identifications such as consumer choice and community service, which amalgamate into significant levels of activity. Beck (1997) calls this 'sub-politics', located at the margins and are therefore fragmented, localised, and symbolic, rather than structural or ideological. Lifestyle politics, then, by its individualised essence, serves to connect consumption choices with social and political contexts. This is not a disengagement from politics, although it may involve a step away from

typical politicking, but, rather, an engagement on a very personal day-to-day level. Indeed, in some instances, it may not be 'change' that is desired, as much as 'no change' – in Craig's (2007) study of the Electricity Grid Protests south of Auckland in 1998, the lifestyle protestors were in fact defending the status quo, as they did not want the proposed high-voltage pylons to be installed across the landscape. And again, the people who are actors in lifestyle politics or lifestyle movements are not necessarily linked by relationships to others who participate, or have any prior experience of activism. This would suggest that despite an apparent apathy and disillusionment leading to a separation from politics, citizen engagement has just taken new forms. As Bennett writes, "civic culture is not dead; it has merely taken new identities, and can be found living in other communities" (1998, p. 744). Lifestyle politics exists in a kind of liminal space, between 'true' politics and pure self-interest. It may be possible to better understand concepts such as citizenship and democracy in contemporary society through observation of the way people express lifestyle and consume.

Therefore, lifestyle politics is not 'politics light', as critics lament, but 'politics deep', as political activity is embedded in the lives of individuals (Craig, 2007). Rather than being purely self-motivated or an egocentric expression of self, (or dismissed as a middle-class phenomenon), aspiration toward a lifestyle can be afforded social significance when viewed in the context of wider political engagement. In formal organisational contexts, taking account of an individual's view (for instance, via a consultation process) is usually a genuine effort by an organisation to respond to stakeholder's needs; but in the absence of an organisation or a process, individual needs need not mean any less.

> Discussions of needs and consumption are intrinsically political, and intrinsic to politics, because they advance claims to live a particular form of life (they involve claims about how life ought to be lived) and they advance claims on social resources. (Craig, 2007, p. 232)

So lifestyle politics is a field that can lie at the intersection of identity creation and consumerism.

The principle 'the personal is political' is relevant to lifestylers, and to organisations who market to these people, for lifestyles are intrinsically enmeshed with consumerism (or anti-consumerism, which, ironically, has its own marketing directives) as lifestyle is a major site of identity construction and expression for people today (Portwood-Stacer, 2013). Lifestyle politics is a relatively new, growing field of study. As Haenfler writes, it is a "scholarly blindspot concealing the intersections of private interaction and movement participation" (Haenfler, 2012, p. 2). Further research into activism based in lifestyles will explore the contemporary 'off the grid' ways of being political. Lifestyle activism is often not recognisably political in the traditional sense, but immersed in the shared ways of life of lifestylers. These symbolic and diffuse actions by people who do not identify as activists appear to effect change when brought together under some unifying theme, even if the 'change' observed is a cultural effect rather than a political one. As Portwood-Stacer writes, "whether a practice can be considered activism does not depend on the measurable effects of the action, but rather on the meaning people attribute to it" (2013, p. 5). Equally, those who definitively do identify as political activists tend to be motivated to "integrate movement values into a holistic way of life" (Haenfler, 2012, p. 7), so there is a presence of the softer 'little p' politics inherent in their world view, even outside of 'Big P' political activity.

Lifestyle activity appears to be borne out of two inseparable motivations: to take a personal responsibility for something affecting society or planet, and to act to have an effect on one's own life according to an ethical or moral standpoint – to 'live' the desired state. As in the case of the anti-grid protestors who first identified as being personally affected by the proposed development, but whose identity grew into an "understanding of themselves as citizens and activists as the "political" nature of the campaign and its long term impact on communities became more apparent" (Craig, 2007, p. 240). This suggests something wider

than simply an expression of their individual rights or motivation to protect their own lifestyle. It suggests an increasing awareness of being among others in a community that has a responsibility for the protection of something more than one's own view, or one's own health. At the same time, the chosen path for acting upon the problem as they see it seems to be to 'live' the preferred lifestyle on an individual basis: it is through personal protest on an individual scale that the wider community's purpose is achieved. The cumulative value of their daily choices reflects their integrity and authenticity (Haenfler, 2012). The individuals apportion some responsibility for the wellbeing of their community or wider society to themselves (Littler, 2009).

Definitively mapping a lifestyle formation has proven to be fraught with complications, however. Part of the complexity is the significant role of individual attitude which, for most, changes reflexively. Portwood-Stacer (2013) suggests the mapping of distinctive focal concerns (themes) and of 'sites and strategies' (Chaney, 1996) where "sites are the sorts of places and spaces that lifeworlds inhabit, and strategies are the sorts of projects that are pursued" (Chaney, 1996, p. 86). It is an assumption of this research that the daily choices of individuals are heavy with meaning and are integral to the creation of a lifestyle movement, while at once being fluid and reflexive. As Chaney writes, "culture has to be appreciated as a self-conscious repertoire of styles that are constantly being monitored and adapted rather than just forming the unconscious basis of social identity" (Chaney, 1996, p. 81). Sites and strategies are a useful way to pin down a lifestyle movement, allowing deeper description and analysis of a changing social and cultural phenomenon. Significantly, sites of lifestyle movements are not restricted to conventional social division such as gender or class. It is only since modernity that lifestyles and all the associated affiliations could develop, because the significance to the individual of their chosen lifestyle is greater than those traditional categorisations. Instead, sites are patterns of lifestyle behaviour that can be consciously recognised, adopted, and adapted.

In this thesis, the living of a 'lifestyle', in the sense that I use it here, is both a form of social identity creation and the basis for involvement in a form of social movement, particularly where the moral or aesthetic underpinnings of the lifestyle is in conflict with another social phenomenon, such as when, for example, an individual's preference for eating locally grown food is hampered by the dominance of large supermarket chains which force small producers out of the market. Two opposing perspectives are present here. The first is that participation in lifestyle is a kind of rejection of conventional activism. Giddens (1991) writes that lifestyle politics enables a freedom from "the fixities of tradition and formal conditions of hierarchical domination" (p. 214). Indeed, Portwood-Stacer (2013) notes that a turn toward lifestyle has been recorded as a "personalistic retreat" from traditional political activity (p. 5). The second perspective is that lifestyle movements are simply a comprehensive amalgamation of political activism and everyday life. Distinctive political positions in individuals can emerge from lifestyle, despite being far from politically active in the traditional sense. Lifestyle movements, like other forms of politics, work to "establish alliances and mobilise support" (Craig, 2007, p. 242), although the goals of this work may be dismissed by those within and without as small-scale. From this perspective, lifestyle politics reframes day-to-day life as an ongoing struggle. It is unsurprising, then, that politicians now frequently use personalised rhetoric to communicate their messages, advocating for increased personal choice to win support (Bennett, 2003).

Another complication of mapping a lifestyle movement is the influence of media. Given the highly reflexive nature of lifestyles, untangling the media framing of an issue, or the emergent sites and strategies of a movement including reflection in media, is complex. The evolutionary properties of a lifestyle movement must be acknowledged here again, including the social, cultural, and political contexts from which it has emerged.

Increasingly, an expression of agency in the form of lifestyle is a common and powerful means of making socio-cultural change, which goes beyond the pursuit

of pleasure or self-fulfilment. Craig (2007) writes that lifestyle encompasses individual expression, and "a consciousness about the social responsibilities associated with a given lifestyle" (p. 231-2). Whether the participants in lifestyle movements understand the tension inherent in their participation, implicitly or explicitly, is something that this research begins to explore.

Summary

Subcultural study has come a long way since the CCCS' work on youth resistance. Far from being about the huddles of disaffected young men on the streets, subculture scholarship today incorporates a much wider scope of age, gender, locality, purpose, and of political and cultural engagement. Bloustein (2004) argues "to understand the nature of contemporary social groupings requires a more complex, 'thicker' and more multi-layered framework" (p. 150), that embraces the more mundane, everyday contexts of subcultural behaviour. Indeed, the function of early subcultural study – to explicate its divergence from dominant ideology – may now be redundant in the face of a hybrid, fragmented contemporary culture (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). Therefore, to make subcultural (lifestyle) contexts useful in this research, a shift in theory and practice is necessary, from deciphering texts to understanding the ways texts are used and communities of meaning are created by the people who use them to reflexively construct subcultural identities (Frith, 2004; Martin, 2004).

Portwood-Stacer (2013) writes that social movements and subcultures are intertwined in the form of lifestyle activism. Individuals may identify as activists in the sense of taking part in a wider movement, but may also engage in lifestyle politics and lead a lifestyle that is congruent with a subculture (which is, in turn, congruent with the goals of the wider movement). Others may live a subcultural life rife with lifestyle politics, but not engage at the radical activist level. But movements and subcultures are not natural bedfellows and are not united in early literature. The tension remains at a fundamental level and it is the presence of lifestyle scholarship that allows for

the two to meld and crossover. Where subcultures are about being stylistically separate from the mainstream and maintaining a space of difference, movements work to recruit participants by normalising the message and increasing acceptance and support for change. As Portwood-Stacer (2013) writes, "the material and symbolic dimensions of it may, in fact, be working at cross-purposes" (p. 151). Nevertheless, the two inhabit social and cultural spaces with many commonalities. Lifestyle practices may be the expression of political activism within a neoliberal context, but it does not devalue the potential for crossover to more radical activist practice. It does, however, require a shift in the mind-set of movement organisers to include lifestyle 'tactics' and make best use of these as a "component of an activist strategy" (Portwood-Stacer, 2013, p. 152). Lifestylers are contributing to cultural change by maintaining a presence in society that activists will use as a platform from which to spring their more radical strategies. The efficacy of lifestyle politics and the living of a lifestyle by politically engaged but not radical individuals will continue to be criticised by radical activists and movement scholars. This criticism serves the purpose, rather like the fourth estate of journalism, of keeping activists and lifestylers alike accountable, and perhaps clarifying the two states to the greater effect of each.

Haenfler's work in defining lifestyle movements in the context of the straight edge phenomenon has usefully melded the subcultural and social movement aspects of social phenomena. He writes that lifestyle movements are "reformist rather than revolutionary" (2006, p. 62) and that they "consciously and actively promote a lifestyle or a way of life as their primary means to foster social change" (personal communication, February 5, 2011). But I feel that the experience of the person participating in the lifestyle is at the heart of this research, and so I wish to add the 'lifeworld' perspective to the term to ensure that the research is designed with this in mind. In addition, I acknowledge that this research resides in the relative wealth and comfort of the 'first world', and the concept of reformist lifestyle movements may be incongruent with the social

and cultural challenges faced by people in developing countries or those facing political unrest.

This chapter has provided exploration of the fields of social movement subculture research and, by departing from the customary path of previous scholarship, explored the intersection of the two. This chapter, along with the two previous has assisted in locating this research in social and cultural contexts and has begun to answer the second of the two research questions regarding the intersection of individual practice and political movement. The next chapter describes the methodology and method of the empirical research that I undertook to explore the foodie lifeworld and, specifically, the *a priori* purposes of foodie activity.

Chapter Five

Methodology & Method

The focus of this research is the exploration of the foodie lifeworld, and the intersection, if any, of foodie activity with contemporary social movements. Although there is an element of politics, the aim is not to evaluate whether foodie activity is making political change, but to better understand the reasons and justifications that motivate the foodie participants to engage with food in the way they do. This research is naturalistic (Huttlinger, 2011), and explores and records the way that the attitudes and behaviours of the research participants combine to form a way of life which is purposeful and expresses their values in relation to food. This chapter explains how the research was carried out and how an interpretive mode of research was valuable in achieving that aim. There are two main objectives for this chapter: to explicate interpretive research, and to describe the techniques of thematic analysis used to analyse the interview data.

To achieve the purpose of this research, I generated two research questions which guided the research design and procedure.

Research Question One: Are there underlying *a priori* purposes to foodie

engagement with foodie activity?

In my observation of friends and acquaintances who self-identify as foodies, I note they behave in different ways and for different reasons. The purpose of this first question is to explore and make transparent the aspects of the foodie lifeworld that influence this behaviour. The question is intended to explicate the ideological tenets of the *lifeworld* in the sense that Habermas (1984) describes the "taken-for-granted background assumptions and naively mastered skills" (p. 335) which are formed pre-reflexively. This question goes deeper than examining the nature of the behaviours, although this is part of what is recorded. This question delves into the motivation(s) and values that the foodie research participants articulate about how they have come to behave this way and what significance they ascribe to their behaviour. In working to answer this question I have asked foodies to share their self-actualisation and personal meaning-making with me during interviews. This will provide crucial information which will inform my approach to answering the second research question, which is:

Research Question Two: In what ways, if any, do local foodie practices

intersect with other political movements?

This second research question relates to my curiosity about the politicised views and actions of foodies in relation to food. This aspect of foodie life became known to me after some initial exploratory interviews and reading I did early on in the research project. This part of the research is informed by the critical feminist approach to politics whereby the 'personal is political'. By this I mean that the people who identify as foodies may not be apolitical in their value set and attitude, and this may be observed in the way they speak about food. I wanted to analyse the reflexively-formed political aspects of the foodie lifeworld, discover their nature and nuances, and consider them in relation to other political activity present in social life. The utility of doing this is to

explore the connections between the politicised activity of the foodie lifeworld and other political movements which will illuminate crossovers, and lead to a deeper understanding of individual agency in political movement scholarship.

These questions could apply to a study with a large sample size, such as a survey, bringing about results that could be generalised across a population such as all of New Zealand. A large scale research project into people's political connection to the food they eat could be useful knowledge for anyone wanting to catalyse and catalogue formal social movement activity, and may be an avenue of research that I pursue in future. However, in this research project I focus my attention on a small sample with the aim of gathering data from which it will be possible to glean the qualities of foodie lifeworld(s) and the correlations between those qualities and other forms and types of social movement. My research will bring insight to this area which would not be possible without this close scrutiny (Macdonald et al., 2002). This research is undertaken in the qualitative paradigm, which does not aim to create laws generalisable across populations, but instead explores deeply, and with rich "thick description" (Geertz, 1973; Greenblatt, 1997), a small expression of a phenomenon.

In other words, this research is a deep exploration into the lifeworld of a small number of foodies. From this exploration I will extract the qualities of the meaning that informs and shapes the activities of these foodies. The realities experienced by the foodies will be foregrounded, as well as their process of construction of those realities. The research explores "the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape enquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). It will be a fine-grained exploration (Pozzebon, 2004) that illuminates the way foodies construct reality, and focusses on the collaborative process of bringing about meaning. The method outlined later in this chapter complements this methodological standpoint and enables a more nuanced understanding of the aspect of society that I have focused on.

Research philosophy

In qualitative research the researchers are always present because their interpretation of social life is a filter through which new meaning is made (Charmaz, 2005, Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The researcher's perception of the world and attitude toward academic enquiry inevitably shapes the research design and approach to investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In addition, the participants are not static beings, but living, changing beings, and therefore not "perfectly observable" (Bailey, Ford & Raelin, 2009, p. 29) in the sense that they are constantly evolving "conscious, willful creatures" (p. 29) to which positivist methods of research do not apply. In as much as the researcher is a filter, and participants are constantly evolving, it is the nature of research that researcher and participants make meaning together.

Meaning-making is iterative and constantly reflexive. As Deetz (1982) maintains, "knowledge is produced in talk, not simply transmitted" (p. 133). If participants and researchers are constantly and reflexively changing, then a single datum must be considered in relation to the greater body of data or else be given too great a significance that cannot be justified. In terms of this research, analysis of the participants' attitudes and values must be interpreted with the knowledge that their lifeworlds are personalised and evolving, and that the process of speaking about their foodie lifeworld reflexively changes the reality of their experience. The fluid nature of social relationships (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and the evolutionary processes of social interaction are central to this perspective.

I take a relativist ontological view that is sensitive to varied and variable interpretations of the world by people who socially construct complex, evolving and unique realities. Indeed, it was the primacy of relationships in the socially constructed reality, the foodie lifeworld, which piqued my interest in this research topic and led to my curiosity about the meaning that the foodies ascribe to their particular reality. Accordingly, I did not approach the research

with a pre-conceived idea about the meaning of foodie activity, but looked for coherent patterns in the data. Each interview captures the attitudes and beliefs of the interviewees at that moment in time, which, in line with the evolutionary nature of socially constructed realities, is likely to have since transformed, however minutely, into something else for these participants. Taking the view that social and cultural research can only provide insights into social and cultural life, and that those conditions are in constant flux, what is created is only a temporary truth, not an "explanation of reality that is adequate for all time" (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 34). However, treating all the interviews as a single data set, it is possible to observe patterns of meaning within individuals and across the data set which are thematic and rich (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006) and expressive of a momentary, but valuable, truth.

With ontological and epistemological perspectives such as these, interpretivist research is an appropriate paradigm in which to situate this study. The value of interpretive research is in the qualities of the data. These are the richness, the depth, and the meaningfulness of the information for the research subject. Interpretive researchers explore social interaction and examine the way the social world is constructed by individuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Mumby, 1988). Therefore, data should be sourced that enable investigation of individuals' views. In addition, if researchers are to interpret these views, then they should immerse themselves in the research topic and gain a thorough knowledge of it (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

I do not take a critical interpretive stance in this research. Deetz writes "Research should perform a critical function by demonstrating where false consensus exists and the means by which it is constructed" (Deetz, 1982, p. 133). Critical research is about exposing the inconsistencies between espoused and actual realities of day to day life. Although I do not take a critical position to reveal conflict as the researcher, I remain sensitive to power (Pozzebon, 2004) by exploring the ways that foodies address the conflict that *they perceive* through living their values and taking action. My analysis of the

empirical materials will contribute an assessment of the "practical accomplishment of meaning and its relation to social action" (Holstein & Gubrium 2005, p. 483). In this way, I have let the discordant subject matter which causes the participants discomfort be revealed through their words and actions. Further, the examination of social life makes possible the acknowledgement of the critical consciousness in the researched individual. Individuals are actively making choices, are "self-interpreting beings" (Taylor, 1985), and "are not fooled or foolish" (Smith, 1990). This makes research into their actions and lifeworld particularly worthwhile by valuing the individuals' thoughtfulness and agency in action.

I have operationalised this research with view that there is no objective absolute truth to be discovered, there are only subjective versions of truth to be observed and unpacked (Hugly & Sayward, 1987; Hatch, 2005; Bailey, Ford & Raelin, 2009). Interpretive research explores the shared subjective interpretations that are constructed in social life (Deetz, 1982, p. 134) and takes subjectivity not as a problem but something valid and interesting. Indeed, individual and collective subjective views are celebrated and made visible through interpretive research.

I found the idea of 'bricolage' to be germane in describing the interpretive researcher that I am. This is due to the process of drawing together diverse (though interrelated) ideas about how qualitative research occurs with the experience of actually doing the research. As Denzin and Lincoln (2003) write, the montage that is created in the process of qualitative research has many different voices, and I became especially aware of this during the process of analysis.

Interpretive research offers a number of variants in intention and approach. The variant that complemented this research topic was one attuned to the meanings of social action, which comprises the "constellation of procedures, conditions, and resources through which reality is apprehended, understood, organised and conveyed in everyday life" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005, p. 484).

With a focus on the construction of social realities, the mechanisms by which people engage in everyday life are revealed. Holstein and Gubrium (2005) write that attending to the choices that are made *and* how they are made brings interpretive practice into the political realm. An outcome of this research is the contextualisation, along with the interpretation, of the views of the participants, so that the conclusions are not free-floating but anchored in time and space, in the social and cultural history of this country. A research approach that is attuned to social action and politics is ideally suited to answering my second research question which looks for meaning in politically motivated practices.

This kind of research is not value-free, and I was very aware of my own presence during the process of reviewing and analysing the data. The thrill of finding themes was tempered by my awareness of myself at these moments, as I observed myself become committed to the themes I was identifying. I wanted to ensure I did not develop a confirmation bias toward a concept, which is why the mechanics of recording the process of coding was essential to ensure that the codes and themes have validity and are justifiable later. Also, I acknowledge my own attitudes toward food production and attempt to suspend other cultural assumptions, lest they muddy the process of analysis. Later in this chapter I have described the process of analysis and how I avoided these possibilities of bias during that process.

In this section I have outlined the qualitative basis of my approach to research, and specifically, I have explained the reasons that an interpretive paradigm is appropriate to the research topic. The next section presents the methodological tool that was ideally suited to building a corpus of empirical material to analyse. I begin with the theoretical discussion underpinning the method, and then provide a detailed account of my use of this strategy of enquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) in this study.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fielden, Sillence & Little, 2011) is a method of identifying patterns in the data through a process of coding. It could be described as "a way of seeing" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4) that establishes coherence within and among the disparate elements in a body of information. This method of analysis can function as either an organising principle or a tool for interpretation, depending on how it is used. Braun and Clarke assert that the technique should be "a foundational method for qualitative analysis" (2006, p. 78) due to its flexibility and application across many types of qualitative research. Thematic analysis can also be used to move qualitative data to a quantitative form if required (Boyatzis, 1998). However, in this research it has been used to assist in the interpretation of the empirical material and inductively generate insights into the latent realities of the research participants.

An intention of this method is to identify "similarities and differences across the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 97) which indicate the nature and dimension of the data and are a starting place for interpretation. The similarities are described as themes. Themes may be manifest in the data, meaning they are unambiguously present, or they may be latent which means they are underlying, and require the researchers to draw them out and make them obvious (Boyatzis, 1998). Whether it is manifest or latent, the theme needs to be located and described with the purpose of assessing its implications. In this research I have chosen to conduct inductive thematic analysis which means I am guided by the data in terms of what I identify as a theme, rather than seeking themes which fit a "pre-existing coding frame" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). The questions I asked during interviews are directed toward the subjects I am curious about of course, but I do not come to this research with a hypothesis to prove or disprove, but with an open mind as free of allegiance to one theoretical position as I can be.

It is commonly accepted that researchers cannot be entirely neutral in their positioning (Constas, 1992; Wolcott, 1995; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), which is why the researcher's reflexivity during the process is essential. Furthermore, I was particularly taken with Geertz's (1973) candid discussion of validity where he writes "cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete" (p. 29), about which Wolcott (1994) concurs and adds that validity in qualitative studies is just as intangible, the closer to the subject you move, the further from reach it seems. These discussions were encouraging as I dealt with many moments during the process that required me to hold an idea 'lightly' like a bubble, in case too close an inspection or an attempt to affix it to paper caused it to disappear entirely.

A further advantage of using thematic analysis for this research is the ability to build "thick" (Geertz, 1973) and "rich" description (Boyatzis, 1998) from the data that enables a deep focus on the phenomenon being explored. This is valuable because the lifeworld of foodies in New Zealand is under-explored, and this research presents a unique avenue of enquiry. Thematic analysis has been identified as particularly useful in subjects that have limited prior research, because of the richness of the findings (Lacey & Luff, 2001; Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that it is also an efficient research method to use when there is a large volume of data to be analysed, and is an inclusive method that allows for researchers in other fields to make sense of the findings. Moreover, efficiency and clarity are beneficial in the sense that accessible research about social life, in this case about lifestyle movement activity, is more likely to inform and therefore alter social life.

Thematic analysis has critics as well as proponents. While the methodology is becoming increasingly well defined, it remains vulnerable to the criticism that it is not rigorous enough because of its flexibility which allows the researcher to develop the method as suits their own style of working. I found this flexibility to be advantageous, but noted the need for vigilance regarding transparency during the process of coding and determining themes (Constas, 1992; Tuckett,

2005; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The more thematic analysis is conducted over time, the greater the efficacy and capacity of researchers to use it (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that far from being ambiguous, as some critics claim (Aronson, 1994; Tuckett, 2005), thematic analysis is a robust tool suitable for using unaccompanied by other methods, as long as the coding system is thorough and accurately documented.

In practical terms, the process of using thematic analysis begins with two activities; a nebulous "sensing" (Boyatzis, 1998) combined with specific pinning down of the "codable moment". Boyatzis (1998) specifies a phased progression of sensing (or recognition) – encoding – interpreting. In contrast, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest an iterative process of generating initial codes first, then searching for themes, before reflexively returning to the coding to verify and strengthen the identified themes. In reality these phases may occur concurrently. After coding the full data set, the phase of reviewing the themes begins where the ideas are refined and drawn out through sorting and comparison. What is being sought here is 'internal homogeneity' and 'external heterogeneity' (Patton, 1990) so that within themes the codes are coherent, while there are clear distinctions between themes. This phase involves reviewing the codes and emerging themes holistically, looking for internal consistency, relationships between themes, and anomalies that strengthen or weaken a growing theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The final phase before writing up the data is to describe each theme by further describing and naming it. This serves to bestow it with the richness and depth it must have to be usefully interpreted.

The next section describes the method of data collection and the process of coding by which I identified the themes that categorise my data.

Data collection and analysis

The ethical considerations reviewed and approved by the university's ethics committee were typical for this kind of research. I was mindful that asking a person to reveal their "intimate personalized and first-hand information" (Leininger, 1985, p. 6) is essential to understanding the world as they see it, but also carries responsibility, and so those were duly thought through and described in the ethics application document. My intention to conduct in depth interviews with participants required a focus, in applying for ethical approval, on the risks and mitigation around privacy and ensuring that the participants were not made vulnerable or unduly uncomfortable during their participation. In addition, although my intended guiding interview questions were not about potentially uncomfortable subjects such as volumes of food eaten or expenditure on food, I ensured that my participants were aware that I would keep their involvement confidential through the use of pseudonyms and by obscuring any other identifying information, such as their workplace. That way, the participants could speak freely and without fear of criticism for their food choices or attitudes.

To source my research participants I used a combination of my own networks and snowball sampling (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). I began by asking friends and acquaintances who themselves identified as foodies if they knew anyone else who would identify as a foodie, and then followed up on suggestions with an introductory email and information sheet. Some of my acquaintances I had met at food events, such as The Food Show, and if they showed interest in my research I then asked them if they would consider participating. The snowball technique was then applied to these participants too. If they were interested in participating they responded to me and we scheduled the interview. I then asked the participants if they knew of anyone else, and so the snowball sampling technique functioned effectively that way. I stopped using the snowball technique to identify further participants

when I noticed that the responses to my questions were similar to previous interviews, and I realised at that point I had reached data saturation.

The interviews were conducted in two main phases, due in part to some personal events that occurred in the middle of the data collection phase and required that I take a period of leave to address. Although at the time it appeared disruptive to the flow of the research project, in fact the period of leave provided an opportunity to reflect on the goals of the research and alter the direction of the research to better fit my evolving research interests. The first interviews were in the first half of 2012 and had a greater focus on explicating the foodie lifeworld from the perspective of the female participants, because the initial study was designed to explore the meaning of foodie behaviour in women, from the women's perspective. However, it was during those interviews that I became attuned to (other) politically resonant themes in what the research participants were expressing. The list of topics to cover in those interviews already included a substantial segment on political motivation and activity so the data already gathered was not wasted. After returning from leave, I formally adjusted the topic of the research and went ahead with the data collection phase with this refined focus. The interviews conducted after my return were inclusive of male foodies sourced via the snowball technique.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants (Wolcott, 1995). This kind of interview lends the opportunity to pursue interesting topics further, and to circle back to topics during the interview for clarification. This flexibility was invaluable when participants referred to something germane while speaking of something else (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). We were able to complete the current line of enquiry and then return to the salient idea and explore this in depth. As Leininger writes, the interviewer needs to uncover and understand the "cognitions that help [the participant] to make sense of the

world" (1985, p. 6) and an interview style that has room for further probing questions can assist in that. [25]

In addition to the participants' 'cognitions', I was attentive to the process of social construction of meaning during the interview itself (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Rather than view participants as "passive vessels of answers" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 98), they are actively engaged in the development of new insights of their experiences by virtue of being interviewed. Therefore, it is reasonable to reiterate here that the interview is not a method of discovering universal truth, per se, but of recording a moment in the participants' evolving perspectives (Taylor & Bogdan, 1995, p. 109). One further point related to the research interview is the necessity of distinguishing between witting and unwitting data (Robson & McCartan, 2016), where witting data is the information that the research participant intended to share, and unwitting data is anything else that may be gleaned from the interview. While I was interested in both those forms of evidence, I was careful to avoid extrapolating the data too far beyond the participant's intent. This was an ethical decision I made, to try to present the data as honestly and authentically as possible.

In total I interviewed fourteen self-identifying foodies, and the interviews were all approximately one- to one and a half hours in duration. We arranged to meet in places where the participant felt comfortable, and these included private homes, office meeting rooms, cafes and in café function rooms. The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission, and the recordings were transcribed to searchable documents. Having an audio recording as well as the transcribed written text was helpful because I could listen back to the audio recording to check that my interpretation of the context of what was said was accurate to the way it was vocalised by the participant, in terms of tone and passion (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

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[25] Appendix 1 is an excerpt from the indicative list of interview questions I worked from during interviews as an example of probing or supplementary questions.

Having assembled the corpus, I began the data analysis phase of the research by familiarising myself with the interview transcripts, reading them over and listening back to the tape recordings. Hearing and reading all the interviews together in over the space of a few days enabled me to become familiar with the data and sketch some initial, abstract ideas to review again later (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, p. 272). Then with large sheets of paper I ruled a grid and began coding for patterns across the body of material, and for key concepts within each. Key words were present but were secondary to concepts. For example, while participants often mentioned the word 'family', I saw that their mention of family was often in the context of telling how they learned about food or their early food experiences, so I coded moments like that as 'inheritance'. The recurrence of a concept across the data set indicated a possible coherent theme, but I also coded for repetition and intensity. Repetition within an interview, or intensity of feeling, indicated to me that it was a particularly significant idea for that participant, and warranted closer analysis. I kept a note of the excerpts which articulated the concepts most clearly, for referring to during the writing up of the themes. As the themes gained definition and richness, I often returned to previously coded transcripts to check my coding with my newly evolved understanding of the theme. By coding the entire data set iteratively, and by using the parameters of repetition, recurrence and intensity, I feel confident that the themes I have identified are defensible and concrete.

I wish to add a note regarding my experience of working with such rich data that represents one of the possible traps of doing qualitative research: when reviewing the transcripts I found that every idea, every utterance by the participant was seductive and potentially salient. It was challenging to continually bring my focus back to the research questions and to work to answer those, because there were many other avenues of inquiry I could have followed. In addition, as I coded I was careful to locate the codable moments in the context of *foodie* behaviour and attitude, to circumvent any risk that I may

conflate concepts with 'foodiness' if they are, instead, general human perception found in people other than foodies.

At a point toward the end of the coding process I came to see a clear organising principle for the numerous themes that I was developing, which split the themes into two main groups: the first titled *Pressures*, the second, *Action*. Thematic analysis requires a certain amount of "tolerance of ambiguity" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 15), and the division was not absolutely clear cut and the concepts overlapped extensively, however, the division can be described, roughly, as inwardly felt (*Pressures*) and outwardly expressed (*Action*). The themes within the *Pressures* group related, variously, to concepts such as cultural life, inherited or learned attitudes about food from family, community and media, self-imposed pressures such as sense of responsibility and integrity tied to mode of identification, environmental beliefs, and political orientations. I saw all these concepts being experienced by the research participants as different kinds of pressures, whether societal or self-imposed. The codes within the *Action* group were about different forms of purposeful activity or self-expression. The concepts such as 'liberty' and 'future-proofing' captured, for example, the moments that the research participants expressed the impetus to act and the personal responsibility they held toward the food futures of subsequent generations. When I came to write up the data I found that overlap between the groups was a further source of insight, and so some of the five themes that I present in the next chapter comprise concepts from across both groups.

This chapter has provided a rationale for the two research questions and has also outlined the research methodology and orientation of my research. It has also described the tool of analysis and method I used to analyse the data set. The intention of this chapter is to make clear the process of data collection and analysis so that the following chapters are firmly located in theory and practice. As I wrote up the data, I became aware that for every excerpt I included, I was excluding three or four others that were equally interesting. The process of writing up the data was one of crafting, and these choices had to be made in

order to bring together a thorough and cohesive thesis that is not weighed down with repetitive material. With the same intention, some excerpts are lengthy because I wanted to maintain the integrity of the data. I was concerned that short quotes taken out of context could be interpreted in a number of ways, and it was important to me to accurately represent the candid views of the participants in the wider context.

The next chapter presents the rich themes I identified through the analysis phase, and explication of the themes in detail, with supporting excerpts from the interview transcripts which illustrate the "essence and nature" (Leininger, 1985, p. 5) of each theme.

Chapter Six

Analysis & Findings

This chapter presents the analysed data thematically, and supports each theme with excerpts from the interview transcripts. The organising principle that assisted me in the analysis of the data, which was to split codes into groups *Pressures* and *Action*, is not visible here because some themes comprise concepts from across both groups. In this chapter I present the five key themes, and my intention is to clearly and richly articulate the nature and scope of each theme.

As I consider the purpose of my research and analyse the data, I am mindful that foodies, by definition, love food. The unifying factor amongst my participants is that they love to eat food, make food, think about food, talk about food, share food – and it is from this love of food that the research has grown. In each interview I asked the participant to finish the statement: "Being a foodie is… ". Their answers were pithy and expressed, above all, the centrality of food in their lives, as evident in these examples:

> *It's kind of like being in love with something, isn't it? It's like a love affair with food.* (Ingrid)

> *Being a master of your own consumption, I think … you know what you're consuming, you know what you're doing, you know all about it and then you're*

going to eat it. (Renee)

Living life [laughs]. Yeah. Being a foodie is like, yeah, it's just life; it's just my life; it's just living. It's all I can say. (Kim)

I proceed with the analysis of the data with the participants' love of food at the forefront of my mind. The chapter begins with the theme that recounts the evolution of the participants' foodie lifeworlds. The subsequent themes are increasingly activist in tone, culminating with the theme in which the politically potent features of the foodie lifeworld are set out.

The Food Lifeworld: Family & inheritance, food life & lifestyle

The 'food lifeworld' is a contextual theme which describes the backgrounds of the individuals who participated in this research. The theme has two aspects, the first being the inherited contexts, by which I mean the ones that explore childhood experiences, particularly the memories that link food and people. The second aspect is the contemporary food lifeworld, which explores the significance that food has in each participant's day-to-day life, and the circumstantial layers which exist contemporarily.

First, the inherited food lifeworlds of the participants varied, but one constant was an acknowledgement of the part families played in the development of a food sensibility. Parents and grandparents were mentioned frequently as having had a role in teaching about food in the participant's childhood. For some foodies, the learning that occurred included the growing of vegetables as well as the preparation of food to eat. That learning has remained with these foodies, and appears to be considered by them as a natural and foundational part of their development into a foodie. Caroline said:

I realise now that I learned a lot from my parents, it comes back, never goes away.

And Kerry said something similar:

> *I was just brought up around food being important. Like, food is a family thing.*
> *When you care about people you eat together.*

Here, Caroline and Kerry use food as a context for describing a family dynamic that teaches within the context of food, and indicates that sharing knowledge is valuable and valued by the family. Kerry seems to be expressing a way that her family *did family*, that food was a way to demonstrate and engender caring, whereas Rosalind's story of watching her grandmother cook situates food at the heart of the way the grandparent-grandchild generations did *togetherness*, after her parents' divorce:

> *My parents got divorced quite early when I was nine years old, so I spent a lot of*
> *time with my grandmother and she was one of those really old fashioned, you*
> *know, housewives. But everything, everything was done from scratch. When she*
> *needed a broth or when she needed a thing that was not out of the basics you make*
> *everything up from scratch. I watched her cooking quite a bit and she always*
> *engaged my brother and me into it and so [we] helped her, even stirring something*
> *you know, I guess a lot of the memories I have of her – we spent a lot of time in her*
> *kitchen and just being there.*

These stories from childhood suggest that the experience of watching or helping with the cooking and eating with family, as a young person, was formative for these foodies. In addition, participants afford these key 'food figures' a lot of respect. Throughout the interviews, the participants shared memories with me that demonstrate how the participants fuse food and family in their minds. Robert explicitly showed how memories of important people in his life merge with food:

> *One of my earliest memories was just of my grandparents talking about the taste of*
> *tomatoes.*

This is significant because it reveals the level of detail that occurred in food conversations in Robert's family; this was about the nuances of taste within types of tomatoes, rather than between types of fruit. What these examples show is that a family member in particular had significant influence around food. Kerry was openly nostalgic about the food of her American childhood and the role her grandmother played in that. She said:

> *My grandparents are coming over from the States tomorrow, so we're looking forward to having all the old food that Grandma used to make when we were kids.*

In the interview Kerry appears to have expectations that the reunion of family members that will take place will automatically be complemented, and therefore enhanced, by the presence of food.

Notably, the key figure in the participants' childhoods was not always a woman. For Andrew, it was his father's experience during and after the war, and through travel, that influenced his father's taste in food, which has in turn had an impact on him.

> *Dad was always – from the war he travelled a lot with the war and then he was a speedway rider in England and they used to travel to various competitions around the place. And so he always had a taste bud for something different or spicy or whatever and I think that got me interested to start with, and through that as well because he travelled and had a passion for travel. I picked that up whereas my brothers – they've never had a great interest in travel.*

Andrew's pride in his father is revealed here, so he positively associates his father's interest in food with the interest that he also feels. Caroline goes a step further and says that at the time her mother's particular interest in food was keener than most:

My mother was intensely interested in food in the sixties, but she was unusual in that, you see, … was always trying to find the things she read about in Elizabeth David, or other cookbooks.

Caroline's pride in her parent, like Andrew's, is palpable here. Her reference to her mother reading Elizabeth David[26] is indicative of the beginning of a surge in British food media that was reaching New Zealand's shores, and the historical incidence is notable. Participants often made use of these childhood food memories as a way to convince me, the interviewer, of their longstanding foodiness. Being able to cite childhood experience of food signified deeper relationship with food, over and above simply eating.

Ever since I was a kid, I was a really picky eater and I can always remember being really interested in food, I learned to bake with my mum and my grandmother and learned to cook from my mother, probably starting when I was three or four or five, you know? So there wasn't really a time when I didn't think quite a lot about food.

Sam refers to a multi-generational foodiness too. She mentions her grandparents' taste for continental food, and that her mother is "quite a foodie" and that she and her mother "do foodie stuff together". It is as if having European tastes and her inherited interest in good food holds a certain cachet for Sam, and I speculate that there is a sense of distinction here.

Gardens feature heavily in the backgrounds of these foodies. Caroline and Carys emphasise the integration of gardens in their childhood food lives.

I grew up eating with good parents who gardened and grew vegetables and I was a Brownie and learned how to grow radishes. I mean I grew up with that.

Caroline's extra emphasis on growing up with food knowledge articulates her belief that it is a critical element in becoming the foodie that she is now. Carys,

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[26] Elizabeth David, CBE, 1913 −1992, British food writer and author.

too, sees the time involved in the garden as a child as being foundational to her attitude toward food.

> *That came from home, from parents that were keen gardeners so I developed a love of gardening and valuing it as not just aesthetically pleasing but also as a source of food and I guess my heritage has been an upbringing, is we've always been, as children, involved in the garden. Eating what we grew, growing the majority of our vegetables and fruit. Preserving for the seasons, so when the stone fruit wasn't available, firstly preserving, the second part of that generation was around freezing. So it's always been a part of the family really and so gardening was also delineated at home in terms of Dad's was the vegetables, Mum's was the flowers and they shared the fruit.*

Carys' detailed description of how the gardening was shared defines a certain gender divide and a rationality that organises the work, because gardening was not just a 'hobby' for her family, it was an important source of food as well as pleasure. And a productive garden takes significant work.

Some participants spontaneously referred to gardens and gardening in relation to their food lifeworlds early in the interview, which located the environment immediately in the wider context of being a foodie. This was heartening for me hear because by the second stage of interviews I had begun to listen particularly for connection between foodie sensibilities and related subjects. When I asked about the lifestyle she aspires to have, Carys went on to reveal her wish for more time to garden in her contemporary life.

> *I think I'd probably still live city-boundary rather than central city but I don't know that the gardening and the food components of our life would be a lot different – except I might have more time in the garden, that would be lovely.*

The process of discussing the past tended to induce comparisons with the present for some participants. One interviewee noted how much her palate had changed over thirty years, and that her repertoire of foods has grown

significantly. Jacqui mentions avocado and garlic as being two foods that are commonplace now but were not well known about (by her) in her young adult life. She also expresses frustration at the change in dietary advice over that time, noting – in the context of children's health – that butter, full fat milk, and cream were regularly used but in moderation, and that children used to be more active. Caroline also notes the change in the food landscape over time, and reminisced that eating fast food during her childhood meant her father "would take two pots down to the Chinese takeaway in Christchurch, one for chow mein and one for chop suey, whatever that was in those days". For another participant, the comparison was between her home country and New Zealand. Rosalind referred to the necessity of being cautious about buying fish to eat in Germany because of the levels of mercury in it, and notes:

> *Here you don't have to think about these things so much, you can go and buy and it is for me very refreshing, but I guess coming from an area where you really have to look out where your food comes from, you really have to, you know.*

Some participants had experienced times in their lives where change occurred, and this affected their food lifeworlds too. For Jacqui, whose husband became vegetarian early in their marriage (despite her job in a butcher shop which supplied them with free meat) and then stopped eating all processed food too, her home cooking was significantly affected. She says:

> *He wouldn't even drink water out of the tap. So I had these two polar opposites, and somehow, the other flatmates couldn't cook, so I had to work around it.*

The change in Jacqui's food lifeworld necessitated a creative response which has since developed into what she identifies as full-blown foodiness:

> *So I had to start thinking outside the square of cooking, and I've always loved reading, so I started to get the odd cookbook and look at different things.*

The willingness (brought on by necessity) shown by Jacqui to think 'outside the square' and find solutions to the problems is interesting because it signifies a

curiosity about food which is reflected in her interest in food today. Sam, too, had the vegetarian challenge to contend with, but in her case it was her change from eight years of vegetarianism to eating meat that caused the mental shift: "But I didn't really know, I didn't know how to roast a chicken, or cook a steak, or a roast. I still don't". Sam, in contrast to Jacqui, does not demonstrate curiosity about cooking these traditional type meals, but her curiosity about food is demonstrated at other times in her interview. Other participants spoke of the food challenge that arose when they left home or found themselves living alone. These moments seem to be catalysts in their discovery of food and cooking, requiring them to make a leap in terms of their knowledge and experience of cooking. The point here is that leaving home triggered a passion for food in these participants, but it does not do so in everybody who suddenly finds themselves responsible for their own meals.

The second aspect of this contextualising theme explores the contemporary food life and lifestyles of the participants, including the enjoyment they find in food, the observations they make about their food lifeworld and their day to day engagement with food. When they were asked to reflect on their lifestyle, participants answered in various ways. Some noted recent a change in circumstances as having changed their food landscape. For example, Sam has noticed a distinction between the food cultures of the North and South Islands, because she now spends more time based on Stewart Island with her partner. She says the food culture on Stewart Island is based around fresh fish much more than it is in Auckland where she has lived most of her life. She notes the multi-generational aspect of the Stewart Island community, and that consequently she spends more time around older people. This has an effect on her food landscape:

> Some of it I'm just like I have to smile and choke down and if it's spiced for flavour it's definitely something to be frowned upon. But then again [an elderly friend] she still cooks on an old coal range and she makes amazing roast mutton in it. It's funny because roast mutton is kind of coming back now.

As for the integration of food in their lifestyles, Andrew and his partner Rosalind take a practical approach. For example, Andrew describes their social life as being centred on food.

> *I wouldn't say it's the only thing in my lifestyle but it's a big contributor to it because it's part of the social aspect of our life. We love having people round and we like going round to other people's places for meals and that and it's a social thing when you go out so we wouldn't go to pubs necessarily, it's very rare that we got out to a pub, but we certainly go out and meet people at cafes and restaurants or at home.*

Andrew seems to be emphasising food as a part of meeting friends, rather than the meeting up with friends being the main feature which, as he suggests, could be done over just a drink in a pub. Later in the interview, Andrew expresses the way food (and wine) is a grounding reality for him in his role as a business analyst for a supermarket chain. In his words,

> *So one of the reasons I like my job is because it encompasses food and wine. Indirectly or directly. So as opposed to something like banking which to me is always a bit dodgy at the best of times. You know, food and wine I can go and stand in the warehouse and look at it and say 'Oh, okay now I understand the problem or understand what we're trying to do'.*

Rosalind's practical approach to food is to ensure that they can have home cooked, quality meals during the week by spending large parts of the weekend cooking.

> *I guess because I really like to prepare food, sort of have food – obviously we have dinner and usually what I do is I either, when I know I'm going to have a busy week I'm just going to prepare a couple of things on a Saturday or on a Sunday, so that I know I can just put things together.*

Rosalind derives pleasure from the act of preparing food, so even when she spends "at least an hour" on a daily basis doing that, it is not a burdensome

activity. But at the same time, as this next example shows, getting enjoyment from food does not have to come from preparing or eating it. Kerry describes a trip down country to the Katikati Avocado Festival:

> *So I've been bringing people avocados and telling them, I got a box of avocados and we split it between three of us and there was thirty six avocados for each of us, and it was ten dollars, you know. So we talk about the story behind the food.*

Story telling about food is explicitly referred to here by Kerry. In this case is a story is about a number of things; the journey involved in sourcing of the food, the sharing of it between the friends who had gone on the road trip, then sharing more widely, about the cost effectiveness of buying in bulk, and about abundance. Kerry derives joy from these aspects, as well as from telling the story itself.

So food is intimately integrated in to the personal histories of these foodies and in the way they choose to spend their time now. I note, here, that these foodies appear to possess the leisure time and disposable income that allows this focus on food. Food is the context in which other social life happens too, such as meeting friends, honouring family, telling stories, remembering childhood and, significantly for this research, spending time in the garden. As can be seen above and will be evident in later sections, food life stimulates strong feelings. Robert was very passionate about some things to do with food, but when asked about aspects of life that he would like to enhance, it appeared that he was reasonably content. He says:

> *What would I like to do? I'm pretty happy in everything really, I don't mind. Maybe there is something in this food thing, it's very fulfilling. I don't know.*

This expression of contentment *about* his food life is in contrast with the areas of discontent *within* Robert's food life, such as his concerns about packaged food, farmed food, and food sprayed with pesticides. This is an important distinction

to make, and, as will be explored later in this chapter, a distinction applicable to other foodies in the group of participants that were interviewed.

A further facet of the foodie lifeworld is demonstrated by the participants' location of themselves in the New Zealand foodscape, landscape, and in a cultural geographic sense. Leynse calls this occurrence the "situated eater" (2006) and the term applies to these foodies in the way they articulate their foodiness in a socio-cultural context. This is bound up with the important concepts of 'local' and 'quality'. Participants frequently opposed the import of seasonal fruit from other countries, citing a preference for eating locally. Caroline says:

> *Well, when I say locally I mean I want food that is from this place. I don't want to eat strawberries from California in winter.*

Caroline feels there is something very wrong with eating food that can be sourced, in season, from her own country but it is more than a problem of 'food miles'[27] for her, it is a preference that comes from her sense of loyalty to this country, as a citizen. Amy provides a possible explanation for desire to buy locally produced food. She says:

> *I guess just for personal health and animal welfare, how food is produced and sourced, and also I think within New Zealand culture that you've always been told to buy New Zealand made and to try and source locally.*

Amy has recognised the deep impact that the government led slogan 'Buy New Zealand made' has had, and which may be a subtle but inescapable influence on her purchasing decisions.

Further evidence of 'situatedness' in a foodie is where Sam describes the difference between foodies in the city and in the country – a counterintuitive

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[27] Food miles is a concept that imbues food with the burden of environmental impact according to how far the food has travelled before reaching the consumer.

view, perhaps, where she suggests that city dwellers are more attuned to the political nature of food than country dwellers are:

> *Because in the city there's a very close link between a certain – maybe not foodies per se – but a certain type of hippie foodie, whole food, raw food, whatever and liberal, probably green voting kind of way, but I don't think that is true or is evidenced in the rural context.*

So Sam suggests that living in close proximity serves to incubate and intensify awareness of certain aspects of a food lifeworld. Whether or not this is so, it is Sam's conscious perception of this difference that is demonstrative of her being a situated eater.

Gardening

During the interviews, most participants discussed gardening in some form as being a part of their lifestyles. This is significant when considered alongside their interest in food and, as previously shown, in environmental concerns related to food. While the foodie participants are not making strong links between gardening and their political selves, it appears to be a natural association given their tendency toward 'green' attitudes and the foodie interest in fresh, high quality local produce. For some participants their interest in gardening was founded in childhood, whereas others have developed their interest in gardening alongside or as a result of the foodie aspect to their lives. The participants' reasons for gardening also vary. The next section describes the perspectives held by the participants on gardening and the part that gardening plays in food production in their foodie lifeworlds.

Sam raised the importance of gardening for food:

> *I am also more so into gardening as well. I've got into that in quite a big way so that's a big part of my lifestyle and that links with the foodie thing obviously*

because I'm trying to grow a lot of my own food to supplement the lack of things that I'm struggling with on Stewart Island. Because there is one Four Square and the people who stock it are very good about getting things in but you can't get lemongrass for love nor money and at times you go down there and you can't get coriander – most people grow all their own herbs and I've planted some fruit trees as well.

Sam augments her day-to-day life with gardening. Caroline, too, supplements her store-bought food with home grown food and says "I get an enormous amount of pleasure from picking things out of the garden". However, she also mentioned the difficulty of balancing the work and leisure aspects of her life, and so she will stock up on items to have in the fridge, and then cook accordingly. Both Sam and Caroline appear to derive enjoyment from gardening to add to their food choices, rather than seeing it as a chore.

Kim discusses gardening in a positive manner, which suggests that she finds pleasure in her gardening, particularly alongside growing food to cook with. Her experience in the garden began in childhood, in her father's large vegetable garden. She says:

If we wanted to talk to Dad, we had to go to the vege[28] garden because that's where he was. So I learnt from a very young age about different vegetables.

Nowadays she maintains a vegetable garden and finds inspiration for the kitchen in it. Here Kim refers to the serendipitous nature of discovery:

You might have a look at a seed catalogue or something, which I do regularly – read a seed catalogue – and you'll see a different vegetable and you'll go 'Oh!'. Or else you'll see it on TV, something like celeriac … So you grow it and you create recipes to go with it because you've got this vegetable in your garden and you need to use it.

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[28] New Zealand colloquialism for vegetable (New Zealand Oxford Dictionary, 2005 [Online])

Further to the pleasure Kim derives from growing new vegetables, she manages to grow enough that in the summer months she need only buy fruit from the farmers market. Kim does not indicate whether this makes a difference financially, but clearly feels that home-grown produce is preferable to supermarket-bought produce. For Carys, the gardening and food aspects of her life do crossover, although unlike Kim, she places some emphasis on non-food production gardening in addition to the fruit and vegetables she grows, including "aesthetically pleasing cut flowers, a collection of natives". Carys had parents who were keen gardeners. She says:

> *I developed a love of gardening and valuing it as not just aesthetically pleasing but also as a source of food and I guess my heritage has been … as children, involved in the garden. Eating what we grew, growing the majority of our vegetables and fruit. Preserving for the seasons.*

Through this extract is sense of respect for the natural cycle of growing food to be eaten. It reveals the way Carys values the childhood learning of the skills required to grow food and prudently ensure that nutritious foods are available year round. In contrast, Sam appears a little surprised that she has become keen on gardening, although her incentive is founded directly in growing food to eat.

> *I've actually started gardening for pleasure, even though I started gardening purely for food. Because I was like, the best stuff is fresh, and the best way to get fresh food cheaply is to have it in your garden, so I started gardening from that motivation and then discovered I really liked gardening and also that growing a purely productive vege garden is actually really hard work, and I really came round to flowers because you don't have to rip them up every six weeks when you've taken a crop off them (laughs).*

Sam also mentions that her gardening functions to supplement the limited produce available to her on Stewart Island, such as lemongrass and coriander, so there is a very practical aspect to it which allows her to enjoy a wider range of food. For Sam, the limited amount of fresh produce that does get brought

onto the island comes at a cost. She says "It is very difficult to look an iceberg lettuce in the eye when it's sleeting outside", perhaps meaning that she senses a tension between the costly imported fresh produce and the local conditions. When I asked further about the use of greenhouses on the island, Sam said:

> *That's a political choice in a way, but I think probably if you asked them [other Islanders] about it they would say that it's more of an economic choice.*

Caroline feels she is more naturally a cook than a gardener, but gets "an enormous amount of pleasure from picking things out of the garden. That really is fantastic", and her garden supplies all the tomatoes and courgettes she may need in the summer months.

Not all the foodie participants were successful gardeners, however. Rosalind expressed a strong desire to grow more of her own food, but:

> *Unfortunately I'm terrible with the garden. I even managed to kill cacti! But I guess for me that would be the perfect world, you know, I would have loved the time to grow more of my own vegetables so I know where they come from.*

And Jacqui says she feels envious of people who have large vegetable gardens because her busy work life at the moment does not allow the time required to grow anything more than parsley. The concept of time recurs here, which suggests that these participants associate gardening with the luxury of leisure time.

Nutrition & Nurturing

This research was not designed to be about bodies, obesity or related health issues affecting society. However, it would be dishonest to absent the topic entirely when it is clearly a preoccupation for the research participants, and academic scholarship provides a firm basis for the body, and diet, being the site of much that is political. This theme begins with a focus on nutrition and

describes the participants' various attitudes toward health, which range from concern about body image to worry for the wellbeing of society. The theme then moves into a focus on the ways in which the participants nurture themselves and others with food.

A common motif in the research interviews was the subject of nutrition. Participants raised the subject with little prompting; the health of the body as receptacle of food is perhaps a natural link to make when discussing foodie life. The first frame by which participants referred to nutrition was around their own body image and the tension between being a foodie and enjoying delicious food and the effect it has on the body. This concern tended to be about fat but not in every case. Amy described this tension while reinforcing her expectations around the quality of food:

> *If I have a bad meal then I'm like, "Oh that was a waste of time and a waste of calorie storage" [laughter]… I'd rather spend time eating good food and knowing that good food is depositing that fat, and that fat was enjoyable fat rather than something I didn't enjoy.*

Amy is not so concerned about fat that she will forgo a meal that she considers valuable from a foodie perspective, being very delicious. Similarly, Kerry deliberately consumes the food that she enjoys, but at the same time is conscious of the effect of that food. She says:

> *I love cheese, I love curries, those are all very fattening things. I like to eat salads, but I like to eat salads with… haloumi, and aioli, or vinaigrette that is made with oil. So even when I'm eating healthily… I want to eat the good foods as well. So I'm a healthy person who could be thinner if I didn't eat that stuff.*

These quotes reveal an underlying concern for these participants that being a foodie can be detrimental to their health in terms of their weight. Neither participant actually refers to the way they look here, or to any opinion other than their own, but it is unclear whether it is their own sense of image that

concerns them and why. I did not probe any further in this area because it was beyond the scope of this research and I did not want to risk the participants feeling any discomfort about a subject that is not directly pertinent to the research, so that subject remains closed. However, it is interesting to note the prevalence of health concerns among the participants, and I surmise that this lies in the context of wider society's concern with food-induced health issues such as obesity.

To return to the subject of health pertaining to foodiness, Renee speaks more generally about foodie women and their innate positive body image that does not prevent the consumption of fattening foods:

> *I think most women I know who are foodies do have quite a high level of self-confidence because a woman who is concerned about her figure isn't then going to go out and make a beautiful curry for her friends and some naan and some rice or a nice French dish with lots of butter in it.*

Renee is making a distinction here between women who are foodies and women who are not by their attitude to food. By contrast, Ingrid suggests that being a foodie requires an added level of consciousness about what ingredients go into a meal when she says:

> *I think there's a challenge to being a healthy foodie and adapting recipes and trying to think 'Could I make that healthier?' if its yum and I want to eat it often. I suppose there's a bit of a time commitment, but I choose to do that.*

Ingrid appears to be comfortable doing that extra work to maintain her health, and seems to assume that, as a foodie, she is well equipped to achieve that. Julia, too, is open about the tension between eating what she likes and maintaining her health. She says that when she joined Weight Watchers it did not diminish her love of food, but it taught her to make better choices about what she ate. Julia was one of three participants who mentioned a particular diet (excluding mentions of vegetarianism) and the only one who did so positively. The other

diet mentioned was the 'Paleo' diet[29] which was referred to by Caroline and Robert in negative terms. Robert's comment about it was that the science of it "doesn't stack up" and that what proponents of it really want is to lose weight. The weight loss is achieved through restricting calorie intake, which is what this diet does: "Ask a prisoner of war, everyone know this". And along the same lines, Caroline says:

> *Paleo diet? Oh look I'd probably lose weight. The only reason I put on weight is because I drink wine. But I mean it's a problem for a lot of my peers, my age group. No I just believe in eating a wide variety of fresh food.*

For Robert and Caroline, a diet such as the Paleo diet does not fit with their sense of eating well. What is clear from these comments is that health is on the minds of these participants, and in that way they nurture themselves with the food they choose to eat. While body image is one aspect of health and food that occupies the minds of these participants, in fact they placed greater emphasis on the nutritional value of food, particularly when it came to fresh fruit and vegetables. These foodies spoke confidently about the benefits of eating healthily, and one foodie noted that she is careful that she has a balanced diet, with "five plus a day" (Renee) meaning she ensures she consumes fruit and vegetables. She goes on to discuss her holistic view on the value of good food:

> *Food is medicine. I think that if you have a well-balanced diet, very rarely are you going to get sick, your body is going to heal itself.*

'Balance' is a term used frequently by the research participants to mean a mix of healthy foods and a smaller proportion of unhealthy, but delicious, foods that, as foodies, they are not willing to forgo. Jacqui makes point of clarifying the way a foodie would ensure balance:

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[29] The Paleolithic ('Paleo') diet prescribes only the foods that early humans might have consumed, including animal and fish protein and fruit and vegetables and excluding dairy and grains.

People who enjoy food who you would class as foodies, if they were planning a meal they would plan [the dishes] to complement each other, they wouldn't plan it to be full fat the whole way along. Whereas people who aren't interested in their food… they're probably the ones who are in the queue at McDonalds.

In this quote Jacqui distinguishes between foodies, who would design a balanced meal, and non-foodies who may not plan meals this way and may even consider fast food acceptable. To clarify, this is Jacqui's distinction and not mine, but her disregard for the non-foodies in this moment seemed to be clear. However, she was not alone in this stance. Kerry shuns all international fast food outlets such as McDonalds and Burger King and says she chooses "quality over the convenience" when she eats out. For her, it is the processed nature of the food that makes her uncomfortable, rather than a disproportionate level of fat.

In fact, the concept of processed food bothers my participants. It seems to be an anathema to them to break a food down to parts and reconstruct it using artificial additives and preservatives and they would much rather eat 'whole' food. For Renee this stems from the desire to care for her body. She says:

I try and steer away from processed foods, I try and make my own sauces and my own things from scratch because I like to know what is going into it. The less processed stuff you consume, your body is going to absorb more of the goodness.

It is not clear from the interview how Renee developed this view but she is firm on it. Indeed, there is unanimity from the foodies that processed food is inherently less healthy than whole foods, largely due to the added ingredients. Andrew describes choosing cereal bars by reading the labels to find out how much sugar, salt or potassium they contain, and that he reads the labels of all processed food he buys. Kim is, in her words, passionate about eating unprocessed food, especially:

those really highly dehydrated blimmin soup and pasta mixes that you buy, I won't even touch anything like that.

This vigilance is probably not restricted to foodies but it is interesting how many of my foodie participants are concerned with these aspects as a part of their passion for food.

Another subject related to the quality of food being consumed is the foodies' preference for organics. The focus here was less on the environmental purposes of the organic movement (the preservation of insects that function to pollinate or prevent disease), and more on the palatability of the plant product – the fruit or vegetable that is free of chemical residues. The participants presented various views on eating organically produced food. Some had a distinct preference for it, others were unsure or even dismissive of the value of organic food. Caroline is of the former persuasion. She says:

> *I don't want to eat food that has been heavily sprayed with nasty chemicals, that's really important to me.*

Carys also buys organically when possible:

> *because I'm not into chemicals. So I like to know… where it's come from, the process that it's been through so that it is not waxed to make it look beautiful, I don't mind the blemishes on the skin. It's not full of chemicals, it's not a hybrid of something that has been developed in a science lab.*

In contrast, Robert does not believe that organic produce is more nutritious than other produce. And Sam expresses some cynicism about organic food because, in her words:

> *I don't experience a degree of superiority of quality that justifies the price. And I'm not so into the health side of it that I don't need to have all these toxins. I'm putting enough toxins into myself that [laughs] you know, one non-organic apple is probably not going to make much difference.*

The participants' comments on organics in the context of nutrition were not deep but were resolute. They consider the absence of sprays and genetic

modification to be a benefit due to the relative lack of research into the long term effects on the individual or across generations.

In addition to caring for their own bodies through good nutrition, the foodie participants demonstrated their care for the nutrition of others, particularly those with children. Kim says having children caused her to realise the importance of eating well, which, to her, means eating nutritious healthy food that tastes good. She gives the example of preferring that her child eat a homemade biscuit over a store-bought biscuit because while the biscuits have the same amount of calories, at least she knows what has gone into the homemade one. Both Kim and Jacqui discussed times when their children wanted to eat convenience food (two minute noodles and takeaway pizza, respectively) and the mothers offered to make these items from scratch using ingredients from the pantry. The additional work required to prepare these meals reveals the extent to which these mothers go to ensure their children eat nutritious food rather than 'quick' food that has been processed. The feeling of responsibility for feeding children high quality food is something else that is probably not limited to foodies, but which these foodie mothers feel keenly, as this quote from Ingrid reveals:

> *I feel a certain amount of pressure which I put upon myself to feed him well. Even as a baby, he had jarred food three days when we went to Australia. That's the only jarred food he's had in his entire life, and that's not a snobbery thing or anything, it's just that I wanted him to eat homemade food that I knew what had gone into it.*

Ingrid's determination to feed her son only homemade food is undermined by her sense of wanting to ensure her son is not disadvantaged in other ways, so Ingrid does on occasion allow her son a "little quota of junk food". In addition to the tension that Ingrid feels in this case (of healthy food versus unhealthy food), there is a further and arguably more profound tension that she feels as a mother, which is about the best way to nurture her son.

Sam provides an alternative view on the interweaving of a health focus and the foodie lifeworld. Her scepticism is in regards to the messages coming from key figures in the foodie media, who seem to contradict each other. She says:

I think there are two strands of foodiness that are sometimes in conflict a little bit, a conflict between health and pleasure… there's this assumption that anything that is local and organic and sustainable is also healthy, but I don't know if that is always true.

Sam makes an interesting point here about the aura that is created by marketers and the media around the 'eat local' trend and related buzzwords such as 'organic' and 'sustainable'. Notably, Sam is unique in this natural scepticism about trends and assumptions in the context of this group of foodies – no other participant has articulated this particular wariness about accepting the messages uncritically just because they appear to push back against the well documented negative status quo.

In addition to the participants' concern for the nutrition of themselves and their families, they often spoke of a more generalised concern for the health of wider society. This concern was expressed in different contexts, some were about nutritional value, and another was about the information received by the public about healthy choices. Robert is certain that the key to a healthy population is teaching people to cook, and refers to some research which demonstrated that the greater the percentage of people in any society who cook, the lower the rate of obesity. He says "it cuts across gender, across class, everything". Jacqui is concerned that the language of advertising of food products is misleading when it promotes something as being 'low-fat'. She says:

That's fine, but it doesn't actually tell you that it's beefed up the carbohydrate level or the sugar level or something else to give you the low fat but still give you the taste.

In this example, Jacqui reveals some understanding of the artifice that companies use to sell products as a healthier choice.

There was a recurring undercurrent of criticism of supermarkets throughout the interviews, and the following are two examples centred on the fresh produce department. Andrew raised the peculiar situation where organic produce in supermarkets is clearly labelled, and producers have to be strictly assessed to achieve the 'organic' labelling standards, but other products "with all sorts of things added to it" are not. Andrew's point is that the use of pesticides, flavour enhancers and preservatives is so common now that products without those things are deemed 'other'. Renee's criticism was of the fresh produce section, and how long the fruit and vegetables may be in the store before being purchased. She says she worked in the produce department after school, and

> *I know how long those veges sit there, it's disgusting and of course the longer the food hangs around the less nutritional value it's going to have, it starts deteriorating.*

Participants were also deeply affected by the research into the effect on society of eating processed food. Rosalind referred to the necessity of producing food on a large scale to feed very densely populated areas, and the associated compromises taken to achieve that. She speaks of her belief that there is a relationship between the hormones used to force chickens and other protein source animals to develop quicker, and the age at which young girls in the communities which eat those chickens are reaching physical maturity, which has other implications such as the rate of breast cancer. So the distrust of the mass-production of food and all the associated processes concerns these foodies not just for the health of their own bodies, but for the health of wider society. As Carys says:

> *Because a lot of the new fields of food development are young I think we have to be a little cautious I guess.*

When I asked Carys whether her distrust of intense farming and growing was based on the nutritional aspects or the environmental aspects, she was undecided. In her words:

> *It's all about that big picture and that is the environment that we live in and it's also about every piece of the food chain having a contribution to make. So although we may not eat the birds in our backyard for example, they have a role to eating insects that may damage or prevent us from having such a good harvest. Yeah they all contribute to our way of being, our way of eating.*

Carys' comment here is representative of the overall tenor of the participants' holistic views on the balance needed to care for the environment and care for our bodies.

Nurturing

Looking after the health of family and friends through good nutrition, as discussed above, is one way that these foodies care for others through food. In addition to this care in the form of nurturing their bodies, these foodies care for others at the level of nurturing the mutual relationship. This can be in the form of demonstrating their care by providing food that actually increases the recipient's happiness and makes them feel better somehow, such as a favourite dish or 'treat', or a warming soup for someone feeling unwell for example. The relationship between food and mood is, again, not a subject for this research, but it is necessary to acknowledge here the powerful emotional effect that food can have on a person in addition to its health giving nutritional properties. This effect is particularly visible when reminiscing about food eaten in childhood, and the nostalgic nature of those memories for these participants is discussed at the end of this theme.

Some of the recipients are conscious of the way they use food to nurture others and reflexively find pleasure in pleasing others. This was explained

unselfconsciously by Kim this way:

> *Probably a lot of foodies will say this to you, it's the way that they show love for people. So if I wanted to show that I cared about someone, or wanted to make someone happy, or whatever, the first thing I would do is I'd cook for them, and that's what I love to do, I always cook for people… Yeah that's my way of showing love for people. That's the only way I can explain it, really. It makes me happy to make them happy eating.*

Kim associates demonstrating caring for someone with supplying food to nourish or cheer. She also acknowledges that there is a positive effect for herself, which is to gain pleasure from the act of feeding another. I speculate that her comment may be a gendered expression of love. However, Kim is not alone in feeling this reflexive pleasure, although others express it as a "need", for example Renee repeatedly refers to herself as a 'feeder': "my need to feed everyone". And Ingrid describes herself (and her brother, incidentally) as "having a case of the Italian Mamas", where

> *cooking is an act of love. You do it for the people you care for and the people you want to share with. It's not about showing off your skills, or some fancy shmancy porcini mushrooms.*

Here, Ingrid specifically denies that feeding people is also an opportunity to demonstrate her skill with food. Sam, makes a very similar comment regarding feeding people but also admits that the opportunity to exhibit her culinary ability is not lost on her.

> *If I love somebody I tend to feed them. And that's one way I express that feeling, or that emotion, is by really taking the time to make something that I think is really, really delicious and they're going to really enjoy. And there's an element of showing off as well, because I come from quite a foodie family.*

Making food for someone as a way to express love, and receiving admiration in return, is not an unconditional exchange. Sam's reason for 'showing off' here is

because there are others in her family who appreciate food as she does, and to impress them is perceived by her as a minor additional benefit. But the nurturing side of loving with food was more of an emphasis than the social capital aspect of loving with food, for most participants. It is perhaps not surprising, but noteworthy, that the responsibility of a mother was frequently referred to by the participants, either as mothers themselves or the concept of mothering. Amanda looks to a future in which she is a mother and aspires to be, in her words, "a bit of a whizz" like her own mother in the kitchen. She says "the idea of being a good cook for other people is really exciting". The motherly role in regards to food means different things to different participants though. For Ingrid and Renee it carries the responsibility of ensuring that children receive high quality nutrition and that role is both specific to the participant and their family and a responsibility that mothers carry in general. Ingrid describes a conversation she had with another woman who said "Oh, you're one of those mothers that bakes every week" and Ingrid explained that she does this because she wants to be in control of what her son eats, for example by using low glycaemic-index sugar "so he doesn't go too woo-woo". Renee does not have children but says:

> *I think that's one advantage of being a woman and being a foodie is ensuring that your children will eat right.*

To interpret this statement further, it appears that Renee conflates a traditional mothering role and foodiness, in this context, with having a good knowledge of food and nutrition.

Frequently during the interviews participants discussed the ways in which food plays a part in creating and cementing friendships. They recognise their own use of food as a way of 'oiling social wheels' and therefore nurturing relationships. The following excerpts demonstrate that for these foodies, food is a focal point around which they connect with new acquaintances and socialise with old friends. Sam describes food as an easy way into relationships,

particularly new friendships where eating together is be the initial commitment and getting to know someone better is the intended outcome. Sam contemplates why food is successful this way:

> *I wonder if it is because food is a great kind of leveller. We all eat. Whereas we're not all into jazz.*

For these foodies, new friendships can be initiated by a shared food experience. Carys' acquaintance is often preceded by her food. For example, when she meets a colleague of her partner:

> *When you meet somebody for the first time who has been the recipient through a second channel, a channel of cake usually, it's like "Oh nice to meet you" and the next sentence is "I really love the cake". Rhubarb coconut cake as it turned out. So the connection for them was yes, they knew who I'm partner to but also it's the immediate connection with food.*

It is clearly a positive association, out of which Carys gains some admiration, and the new acquaintance is predisposed to have, at least, an easy conversation upon first meeting.

Jacqui spoke of foodie acquaintances "lighting up" when discussing food, which makes further conversation easier because there is the shared interest. The common ground between them works to cement the friendship. Jacqui says when she is with her foodie friends it is highly unlikely that they would not be eating and drinking. Jacqui also sees herself as the trigger for sparking a passion for food in a friend who was not previously interested. She says:

> *The changes in the last three years have been phenomenal. In fact yesterday she came to work with a blimmin cookbook under her arm… so yeah, it's been quite pleasurable watching that.*

Food is a leading aspect of social life for these foodies. Renee speaks of her social media presence on facebook being dominated by food related posts, not just her own:

> *My facebook is inundated with food. My friends will find a recipe and they'll post it on my page and go 'mmmm-mmmm hint hint' [laughs].*

In this way Renee's friends are reinforcing and encouraging her mode of identity as a foodie.

For these foodies, their interest in food assists in creating and maintaining new social relationships but is also a site of intellectual engagement. Carys speaks of the crossover between the two phenomena:

> *I have a range of friends who will talk about food quite happily. That's always a benefit. And we share things, so sharing knowledge and sharing ideas and sharing resources be it food or be it a recipe or handy hint, so those are all social but they're also benefits to me.*

Carys enjoys the learning about food as well as making and eating food, and she shares all those things with her foodie friends. Equally, she values the benefit to herself of having opportunity and like-minded people to engage with about food. Caroline, too, feels that her foodiness benefits her intellectually. She says:

> *I've been in food for a long time and one of the things I love about it is you never stop learning. And that's really exciting to me that every day you learn something new. But I've become less intent on recording it for other people's pleasure.*

Caroline is referring here to her work in various aspects of the food industry during her life, particularly in food journalism, where she is required to record and report on events in the food world and her experience of food in other cultures. Now she does less of that and is able to keep her learning and experience with food for her own enjoyment. She has never lost her passion for

food and continues to enjoy learning about food in her personal life. Renee feels that nurturing her own interest in food is important because

> *if you don't, it dies and I think if it's a passion and it dies, then part of you does as well. So it's quite important to hang out with other foodie people. You keep that going, metaphorically you feed off each other.*

Here Renee recognises the determination needed to keep a passion alive and that, for her, social interaction about food is critical.

Participants touched on the nostalgic elements of food too, which seem to be one way that these foodies locate food in their foodie life narratives. The memories they have of eating food at special occasions or with significant people in their lives form a part of their foodie mode of identification. Jacqui says:

> *Nana's Apple Charlotte, as she called it, she was Scots, there was nothing to compare with it. And nobody has ever made anything like it, basically it was an apple pie. My mother's roast chicken, her roast dinners full stop were legendary... and once again it comes back to a family nurturing type thing.*

The memories Jacqui has of her grandmother and mother's cooking are of meals designed to fill up a family and taste good. Her memories suggest a heritage of able cooks who regularly produced flavoursome meals for the family. Jacqui demonstrates pride and admiration in this excerpt above, which flows into her own pride in producing good food. Carys uses food nostalgically to honour a person, as she describes:

> *Here's me talking about not importing food but Stilton is different. And so going to see [family member] in Taupo we always take Stilton because he's English and that's his favourite cheese, and so we always take that and then I usually make oat biscuits to take with it. So I'll make the biscuits that I know he likes, so yes it's an association with him.*

In this situation, Carys puts aside her reservations about food miles for a particular cheese which she knows is meaningful to her family member. In this way she nurtures that person and also ties a particular food to them in a nostalgic sense.

<p style="text-align:center"><u>Sense of purpose</u></p>

This section draws on interview data to illuminate the sense of purpose that the foodies feel around food. The research participants expressed, in varying degrees, a level of responsibility to do well with food. This occurred in different circumstances for each participant, be it making the family meal or shopping ethically, or modelling food habits. The sense of purpose described here sits within the *Pressures* group of codes, and is further evidence of there being motivation other than the pleasure of the self through food. This theme also touches on the freedom to make choices, and the reclaiming of power from complacency. These foodies have a nuanced understanding of food, and actively seek knowledge and form opinions on aspects of food which, in turn, become action.

"My small contribution…"
While the research participants made it clear to me that they see their actions as contributing to social or cultural change, they openly acknowledge that their part in the change (such as improved access or ethical food production) is humble. Throughout the interviews I heard participants express a quiet determination, deeply felt but discreetly acted upon. Alongside this I heard a distinct thread of optimism too, a visualisation of a better future in whichever political aspect of food is their platform. For example, Ingrid spoke of her choice to spend more on free range products to the benefit of small business and the less wealthy:

> *There are a lot of people who aren't in a position, financially, to make that choice,*
> *and they don't have a choice, they need to buy what is cheapest… we're not rolling*
> *in money but I've got the choice… I can afford to pay a little bit more and buy the*
> *free range product, which hopefully will keep those people in business, and as more*
> *people use them maybe the price will come down and it'll be more accessible to*
> *other people.*

In this case, Ingrid's expenditure on higher cost free range product is hardly going to revolutionise the egg industry, but she sees it as a contribution to change. Caroline, too, uses her purchasing power to support change; in her case it is the restaurants that have their own kitchen gardens, "I think that's really commendable, that they're trying to at least do something themselves". Later Caroline mentioned her other change activity, when she took part in a protest about the proposed closure of the wharf in Auckland, she said:

> *All I did was add to the numbers, which hopefully had some effect. But it makes*
> *me feel I was actually doing something.*

Renee dreams of working with Jamie Oliver to change eating habits to a more healthful diet. She is self-deprecating when she says:

> *If I had the career behind me I'd be right up there with him going 'Yeah! Let's*
> *change the world!', but you know, I can't do that right now.*

Educating others

Another element of the quiet determination expressed by the research participants revealed itself as a desire to educate others. This is less a humble trait, more a willingness to take risks in order to drive change. Rosalind described speaking up on her local community facebook page about the use of plastic bags and the strong discouragement she received in response: "And dear God, you know, I got absolutely shouted down". She went on to express a desire to use her accounting background to show people, in monetary terms,

what they could save if they became more environmentally aware. Caroline also described her natural tendency to educate:

> *I quite like to initiate conversation around things, I think I do it without thinking sometimes. Yeah I do try to encourage other people to think about what they're eating and why they're eating it, where it's come from, that type of thing.*

"Other people should…"

Within the overarching theme of 'sense of purpose', the temptation, conscious or otherwise, to educate others aligns with another thread that comes through the interview data, which is a view held by the participants that others should take responsibility. Exactly who should take responsibility, and for what, varies among the participants, but nevertheless, responsibility is frequently assigned to others, even as they recognise their own responsibility. For example, Robert says:

> *I just think the more [access to quality food] is looked at the better – someone has got to alert the government to this you know, it would save so much money in health care.*

Andrew's focus is the economic effect on big business:

> *If enough people basically voted with their taste buds or their options, producers would be forced to produce the food and quality that we want.*

The message derived from these excerpts is that there needs to be a greater level of activity around these issues, and these two participants perceive a utopian food future if only *someone* would do *something*.

Worry

Complementary to the 'Sense of purpose' theme is the acknowledgement of the personal toll that caring deeply about food takes. During our discussion, Caroline twice indicated her feeling of deep concern about some of the issues

and, alongside explaining her considered consumption habits, revealed a sense of helplessness in addressing the problems. We touched on the TPPA (Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement) and then environmental issues, and she said:

> *There are aspects of that which are also incredibly frightening. But it's really hard to know what we as individuals can do to stop and change it. And that's hard to live with. So the whole problem of bees. All those things, huge.*

The problem of bees that Caroline refers to is the significant decline in bee populations in the past few years, which is causing some environmental and food activists a great deal of concern because bees are essential to the pollination of food crops. Caroline is describing the scale of the problem here, but also the scale of the potential impact. Her concerns are founded in a general understanding of the problem, demonstrating the currency of her reading. In the same vein, Caroline spoke of Monsanto and made her distrust clear:

> *I mean I worry constantly about Monsanto. I do worry, it plagues my mind that Monsanto do what they do.*

Here she refers to the purchase of a seed company by Monsanto, and the subsequent disappearance from any market of a variety of tomato (Redmond, 2010). So what is demonstrated here is that while Caroline participates in driving change through her consumption practices, she sees her part as being insignificant in the face of the large scale problems that exist.

Martyrdom

Another characteristic detected in this theme is the participants' doggedness in the face of obstacles about doing things the way that they feel is best. They are determined to press on and live their values, confident that they make some difference and everything must help the cause on some level. In Ingrid's case, the determination takes the form of a kind of martyrdom; the do-it-from-scratch

attitude is a compromise, but one she must make for the sake of being true to her values.

For example, Ingrid says:

> *I mean I cook every meal from scratch. We buy very little processed food, we buy canned tomatoes and things like that, but I cook every night, even when I work I come home and I'll cook.*

For many, it would seem acceptable to buy a meal or take a meal out of the freezer, but Ingrid prefers to avoid those shortcuts, and so she has set high ideals for herself which create significantly more work. Conversely, the do-it-yourself attitude also speaks of a kind of liberty. When the participants choose to spend more money or time on their food lifeworld, it is an act of reclaiming the power that – for example – fast food or convenience food companies hold. Robert believes firmly in learning to cook because, in his words:

> *I reckon if you know how to do it you have a great deal of control over your life, you expand your food choices.*

Political Beliefs & Political Compass

In the introductory chapter of this thesis I described the nuanced way in which foodies integrate knowledge of food into their consumption practices, and that for foodies, food is awarded more significance than just sensuous enjoyment. The foodie lifeworld is imbued with a sense of ethical consumption, and a holistic perception of the effect of that consumption on aspects as varied as trading economies and welfare of animals. This is consumption with a conscience, where foodies approach their food with their intellect engaged. The social, cultural, and political contexts of food appear heightened in the foodie lifeworld; I propose that an essential element of what it is to be a foodie is the

resonance of meaningful consumption for both the satisfaction of the self and the greater good.

This theme describes the level of political awareness that most of the participants demonstrated in regards to food. It draws out nuances in the political natures and political awareness of the research participants, thus forming thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the data through which to discuss the implications of these themes in chapter seven. By 'political awareness' I mean the participants' understanding of phenomena which may be legislated about by governing bodies. For example, the importation and use of genetically engineered seeds for food crops is political because government must make the decision whether this is to be allowed in New Zealand by weighing up the consequences.

In addition to the legislative sense of the term, I also listened, during interviews, for *political* in a radical sense. For example, the choice that an individual makes about where they shop is a personal choice, but it informs, and is informed by, consumption practices of the society they live in. So concepts of 'personal' are understood as having a wider meaning for society. In this research most participants choose to shop locally (from local producers, and for New Zealand grown products) because they understand that choice as having an effect that is greater than, and distinct from, their lifeworld, perhaps affecting the environment or the economy.

This theme is revealing of the participants' consumption practices, but also of their beliefs about animal welfare, equality and access to food, and the involvement of governing bodies in their food. It is also about their 'political compass': the direction in which they are politically motivated. For instance, some hold conservative views, others hold liberal or green views. Often the issues we discussed were ethically challenging, which is sometimes in contrast with legislation as it stands. The political knowledge of the participants is not deep; they are not academics, researchers, or political scientists. They have a

'good enough' understanding (and mentality) to develop an opinion, feel something acutely, or change their behaviour because of that knowledge. They may be more well-read on a subject than their non-foodie friends. Most often they are motivated to act on a consumer-activist level, and occasionally on a political activist level.

This section begins with a description and examples of when participants were explicitly making the link between their actions and politics by referring to government or legislation. Next there are examples of the participants' expression of a dilemma or dissatisfaction with situations in the food lifeworld, particularly around issues of access to food, poverty and equality. Then the particular political directions that are taken by the participants are developed, including the green political orientation and issues of environmental impact, followed by ethical motivations around both animals and humans.

A few of the participants paused for thought when I asked about political motivation, as if they had not considered their consumer decisions and activity as manifesting in the political realm at all. Some explicitly said that their interest in food was not political, but in the other things they told me throughout the interview it was clear that what I consider to be political issues were 'on their radar' even if they did not identify them that way. The last section of this theme explores the moments during the interviews when the participants said that they were not political, or they were unconvinced of the link that I proposed, or they felt they lacked the information to be able to decide either way.

The subject of this section reflects the proposition of this research, that foodies are participating in a phenomenon much wider than their enjoyment of food: that their participation has social and political implications, that foodies are politically motivated beings, and that through their actions foodies are catalysts for change.

Government & Legislation

While coding for political moments in the interview data, the topic of government involvement arose a number of times and I began to pay particular attention to the attitude of participants at these times, as expressed in the things they said about the role of government and legislation in their food lifeworld. Participants showed the ability to critique, and occasionally commend the New Zealand government and others for their actions, and to differentiate between causes. Most participants seem to feel, in connection with the problems they talk about, that governments should be held accountable. However, I plainly saw that the participants took on board a synergetic relationship between themselves 'the people' and the legislative bodies they criticised, as well as a holistic view on behalf of others.

The participants who mentioned government involvement in food were generally distrustful of that involvement. Discussion in the media of the proposed TPPA was topical at the time of the interview, and Andrew mentioned it in the context of an influx of foreign manufactured food products coming into New Zealand and the concerns that he has about irradiation. His wish is to see better labelling:

> *We don't [in New Zealand] generally have irradiated food for instance, but I suspect that's depending on which government is in at the time and if the TPPA came in then maybe that's more likely to occur. So I'd be more particular about what I wanted and I suppose in supermarkets now I want to see a lot more labelling about what is and what isn't.*

It is clear that Andrew sees a direct link between legislative activity at a government level and how that might affect consumers. His perspective is one of suspicion that political activity occurs that may not be beneficial to consumers. The depth of Andrew's understanding of the mechanism for creating and administering legislation that has an impact on food supply

appears to be slight; although he does speak further about the risks that the TPPA may hold regarding New Zealand's sovereignty:

> *where multinationals could sue the government for putting in laws that are put in place to actually protect the population. In that I disagree quite strongly.*

Although I did not expect to get in-depth analysis from participants, Andrew gives the impression of having done some, but not exhaustive reading about the TPPA. What comes through is a certain suspicion and a resistance to the government's signing of the agreement. His hesitation is revealed again later when he discusses other economic pressures that governments are under. Andrew's concern about food safety is revealed, including that he feels the need for "full disclosure of risks or possible issues". While it is not clear, it would seem to be a lack of governmental disclosure that Andrew is referring to. The extent of Andrew's concern is not precisely quantifiable, as he does not mention either himself or society, but does use the term 'we'. The disquiet that Andrew feels about the work of government is echoed in Carys' comment here about the (opposition-led) 'Food in Schools' bill.

> *So recently the Food In Schools bill that got defeated in parliament, kids can't learn when they're hungry, can't perform when they're hungry and I firmly believe that there is a widening gap in the socio-economic stratas of our society and there are kids who come to school five days a week without any food in their stomach.*

It is clear that Carys feels strongly about this issue and is disappointed that this bill was defeated. Carys is tracing the link between the problem as she sees it and wider societal issues when she first speaks of childrens' learning, then 'performance', which indicates a school or population-wide measure of educational achievement. It is interesting that Carys has at this point removed herself from the issue and speaks of her concern for others. Sam, too, is critical of the relationship between government and the food industry and in her interview made the point in regards to the upcoming New Zealand Food Bill (now Food Act 2014) that regulations in New Zealand are biased towards large

food producing conglomerates. Sam is open about her protest activity around food legislation when she speaks of the New Zealand Food Bill which sought to reform the regulation of food safety: "I'm very cranky about it" (Sam). However, she also identifies a tension around becoming politicised about an issue:

> *but this is the thing about, you know, politicisation – I feel quite strongly about that, I made a submission but at the time, and as I do, I liked some kind of "Grow your own milk" group on Facebook then over a period of time what comes to light is that they're also kind of, we don't have that close a political identity. You know there are kind of anti-fluoride, anti-1080 and things that I kind of put slightly in the nut basket. I don't back off from doing that particular thing but I do see that some of the other issues are like, "Oh, I'm not there with you at all on that one".*

The tension for Sam is the experience of sharing common cause with other people on one issue but against those same people on other issues. This quote is illuminating because it shows how politically attuned Sam is when she can differentiate between the Food Bill and other highly charged local health and environmental issues and knows where her opinions lie regarding each. Another interesting element of the discussion we had about this issue was the engagement with social media (in this case, facebook) as a form of protest activity, although this brief mention does not permit me to be certain just what the purpose of the facebook group was or how it functioned. Sam also seemed to encourage participation on an activist level in other people. We discussed the implications of the then-Food Bill for sellers of homemade jam at local markets, and I suggested that perhaps they would not be allowed to sell food products made in their home. Sam responded:

> *Well that is what a lot of people are saying about this food bill, and I hope that there is enough awareness that people kind of get out and have a bit of a yell about it.*

154

From this statement I believe she, too, intended to "have a bit of a yell about it", which suggests she is not only a politically attuned person, but an activist too.

Rosalind was explicit about her frustration with government in New Zealand regarding environmental issues, specifically the plastic shopping bags that groceries are packed into at supermarkets. Having grown up in Germany where governments have encouraged the use of reusable shopping bags with a financial disincentive, Rosalind is frustrated that New Zealand has not committed to this particular environmental practice in the same way. She says:

> *If I don't go with my own bag into the supermarket in Germany, yes I do have to pay even for the paper bag. Because if I'm not organised it will cost me. I think this is where the New Zealand – and it doesn't matter whether its Labour or National or even the Greens, which I would have hoped, they're a little more gutsy on that thing, there needs to be just more pressure coming from there. I know, I've got very strong – I'm sorry I do have very strong views on that.*

Rosalind makes a direct link between government responsibility and environmental effects, with one aspect of New Zealand's food supply chain – the plastic bag – as the conduit for either positive or negative environmental outcomes. She sees the onus of responsibility being on the government to make a legislative stand and implement a 'top down' approach. She seems sceptical of change occurring at the consumer level, without acknowledging her own part in that. Later Rosalind speaks of the difficulty of requiring change at the consumer level when there are economic tensions for many families.

> *So to me it would be a bit hypocritical to go to someone who has really not a lot of financial means and say "Really you do need to start looking and thinking of environmental issues", you know, they do have other problems. Yet it is basically this whole – so you basically improve the standard of living and then you actually improve obviously the eating and also that flows through to the environment. Because you can't have one without the other.*

Here Rosalind is describing a holistic scenario where aspects are reliant on each other in a system. What is implied is that the government needs to work to improve the poverty gap for families in order to gain traction on other issues including health and the environment. Robert echoes this sentiment when he discusses his reservation about the food industry:

> *There should be legislation about these things. Each on its own merit, but people have to start taking this food thing seriously, cooking is really important for your health and socialisation and you need to have people cooking but you can't have people cooking it because you've got a really strong food industry that is pouring out all this stuff that they want people to buy and, yeah.*

Robert's criticism of the food industry is clear, and places responsibility firmly on government to lead the change that is required by developing legislation. Robert's emphasis here is the importance of good food for physical and general wellbeing, whereas Rosalind has an environmental incentive. Both Rosalind and Robert are positioning food as a focal point around which society, including government, is negotiating futures. Another of the research participants is critical of governments' lack of action on food production. Amy began to discuss New Zealand's slow start in developing strong environmental practices compared to European countries. She says:

> *It is just more to do with government that I feel puts us behind. Depending on which government is in, depending on what agenda they're pushing. I think that the government isn't pushing more sustainability of the land and how to generate a better way of producing food.*

Amy holds the New Zealand Government responsible for not doing enough to care for and make better use of the resources available.

Making change

In this section I discuss the foodies' desire for change in food education, production and distribution. Some participants expressed dissatisfaction around

society's access to food, and the desire to initiate change in that area. Three interviewees referred to an ideal situation, where all New Zealanders have access to high quality, affordable food, as well as the knowledge to prepare it. They perceived this situation as being in contrast to their own situations of 'plenty', and it was clear that it was a moral tension in them.

Caroline's motivation to work with an organisation that encourages children to grow vegetables at school and teaches them how to prepare them comes from a deeply felt concern for families and their environments. In our discussion Caroline was passionate and direct about where she sees the problems lie, and what government can do about them:

> *The government needs to be proactive in ensuring that they give the children of New Zealand a good start. Through school. I mean they're paying for them to be educated, largely, so they need to ensure that the outcomes are there. And I don't think they are. I don't voice that publically to too many people.*

As can be seen in the previous theme and reiterated here, Caroline's view is that learning about the environment is essential if children are to grow up looking after it and in the food context that is about teaching children to grow and prepare vegetables. What also comes through in the above quote is that Caroline has some misgivings about the skills and knowledge that children are gaining at school, and she believes the government should be responsible for leading the efforts to provide children with opportunities for learning. I speculate that she does not voice those misgivings to very many people because she is mindful of the working relationship that the organisation has with the education sector, and that a positive and trusting working relationship is essential to the success of the programme. This indicates an educated awareness of the delicacy of attempting change in the public sector, especially in education where children and their families are stakeholders.

When I put the idea of teaching children to grow and prepare food at school to Robert, his response was:

> *I think we should herd the kids up and show them how to shop at a supermarket.*
> *They just have to shop first, gardening's a luxury, you know. Teach them how to*
> *shop and how to cook.*

Robert's comment is a useful juxtaposition to the assumption that all New Zealand children have access to some outdoor space at home in which to continue their vegetable growing activities. While the majority probably do, the increase in medium and high density housing in the major cities will alter that situation. Another point here is that even if there were some outdoor space, many families in New Zealand would not be able to make the initial investment into setting up a vegetable garden, or even pots, without some external financial support. So Robert's assertion that we should first show children how to shop is a fair one given the restricted financial circumstances that some families are in.

Renee sees the poverty gap as a motivator for change when she says:

> *Oh I guess [I feel] kind of sadness you know that not everyone gets to eat as well as*
> *I do, and from that I guess stems appreciation, really appreciating what is on my*
> *plate and in my kitchen because a lot of people don't have that. I guess from that*
> *stems the desire perhaps to change that a little bit.*

Renee is making the link between her own situation, which she sees as plentiful, and the situation of people living with financial constraints that affects what food is bought and served. Her concern demonstrates compassion for those less fortunate, and expresses a desire to amend the injustice as she sees it.

Ethics & wellbeing

Another point of politicisation within the greater theme of 'political beliefs and political compass' was around ethics, particularly about the treatment of people and animals, although ethical practices for the environment were also discussed.

Fair trade[30] was the main idea in reference to people of other countries employed by food producing companies to produce food for export. Within this concept, both working conditions and fair pay were discussed with the bigger picture being the economic viability and standard of living of workers and their communities being the motivation. The ethics of environmental practices included genetic modification which is discussed below, and other environmental concerns which are explored in the next section. Two of the participants connected their ethical principles with their foodie selves, and attributed a heightened foodiness to living out those principles.

Renee's compassion illustrated in the section above is not limited to consumers in this country, but includes the producers of food items in other countries. Here she refers to countries perceived as being 'third world' or developing:

> *So that's probably the top two priorities [for me], the processed stuff and the humane… even fruit and vegetables, where is it picked? Is it picked by some poor child in Africa or Brazil you know that is being paid absolutely nothing for their time and efforts, so I sort of try to buy along those lines as well.*

Renee is referring to a concern for fair trade, where producers and employees are appropriately rewarded for the work required to produce these food items and the wider company is assessed and held to fair trade standards. Renee's sense of morality surfaced again during our discussion when she referred to her passion for animals. Renee said this in relation to animal ethics, and revealed her perception of the difference between a 'foodie' and a 'gourmet':

> *Like for example foie gras being overfed duck, geese livers, that's disgusting to me as a foodie, I find that quite offensive because it's not right, it's not ethically right, it's inhumane whereas a gourmet would not possibly think twice about eating it, whereas I would.*

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[30] In this thesis I refer to the concept of 'fair trade' products, not the global Fairtrade network of organisations or the Fair Trade certification process, unless otherwise specified.

To Renee, a gourmet is someone who is interested in the finest foods, irrespective of their origin or production methods. In contrast, she sees herself, a foodie, as being someone who is interested in many types of food but has an ethical baseline, beyond which she will not cross no matter how delicious or tempting the food may be. Indeed, the deliciousness of the food seems to be inseparable from its ethical foundation; she says that foie gras is "disgusting" to her, which suggests that she does not consider it to be delicious because of how it is produced.[31] It is curious that she has developed this view, but our interview did not delve further into this area, focused as it was on that nature of Renee's foodiness.

Renee was quick to qualify her expressed fondness for animals and disgust for *gavage* with the fact that she does eat meat. This quickness suggests that she recognises the ethical dilemma of being a meat eater at the same time as caring deeply for the wellbeing of animals. The quote also demonstrates her evolution – that she is learning over time to think deeply about the origins and production methods of animal products. This is an example of a participant growing politically as well as growing in their own awareness, because the issues she raises can be directly linked to political positions.

Carys spoke of an interest in fair trade consumption too. She says:

> *I'm conscious of, if I look around the ethics in people in other places or assisting them with their lifestyle or to grow or to develop… and what it means to a village.*

There is a sense here that Carys makes deliberate choices to consume in a way that does not perpetuate the abuse of other people. She goes on to explain the positive effects that those choices have:

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[31] Renee refers to 'gavage' – a method of force feeding ducks and geese to artificially fatten the liver.

> *I feel a sense of personal satisfaction in making those choices but it's also a benefit for me on the physical as well as the emotional level… Yeah because of nutrition but also it benefits us from knowing that we've done something good in that we're helping other people, I think that's important.*

As is clear here, Carys sees her purchase of fair trade products as having multiple benefits for others as well as herself, on physical and psychological levels. Later in the interview we touched on genetic modification and her concern for other people became apparent here too. Carys' view is that genetic modification should be avoided where possible, but she also articulates a tension around producing enough food to feed all the people of the world:

> *For me it's a dilemma of what I like to have and it's also if it provides food for the masses that would be starving then naturally is that wrong and feeding people is important. But if I have a choice then I would choose to eat not modified.*

Here Carys tempers her desire for unmodified food with the acknowledgement that many populations have unequal access to food and that modified food might be the way to produce higher volumes of higher quality produce.

Caroline's ethical focus was more on animals and the planet, and less on people. Caroline describes her knowledge of ethics in food production as having grown over time into an important focus for her now, having been barely aware of the issues in previous decades. She says:

> *So yeah I tend to seek out food that is locally grown and I only buy organically grown pork and chicken, something I feel very strongly about. It's also about animal husbandry and how the animal has been treated. So these aren't things that I was aware of when I was a twenty year old or thirty year old or forty year old. But I am aware of now, and they've become increasingly important in my life and if that makes me more of a foodie than I was, then so be it.*

Here she is making the link between being a conscious consumer and being 'more of a foodie', which echoes the sentiment in Renee's words above regarding the foodie tendency toward ethical consumption.

Environmental concerns

The environmental concerns raised in the interviews that are pertinent to this politically oriented theme are from a range of perspectives, but all are linked to food production at different levels. Participants also acknowledged that the issues are complex and highlight the compromise that food producers, governments, and consumers make. Often, the production of a food product may be environmentally sound in one way but not another. For example, it is widely known that the dairy industry struggles with the problems of effluent run-off into waterways, while some farmers are working to reduce chemical spraying of feed crops to the benefit of the ecosystem.

Caroline spoke of environmental ethics in the dairy industry specifically. We were discussing chemical spraying of crops and the effect on human health, but quickly turned to environmental concerns. Caroline says:

> *I mean the dairy industry in New Zealand is atrocious what it's doing to our environment in other ways. I've become quite strongly ethical I suppose about certain things. Like I won't buy shares in Fonterra[32] for instance, because I don't like their ethics.*

Caroline has revealed her continuing enquiry into the relationship between environmental damage and food production. Also, it is clear that her views on the problem flow into her choices as a consumer and, particularly in this example, her potential as an investor in one of New Zealand's flagship companies. She sees non-investment as a statement of her disapproval, although in practical terms it is an absence of activity. Caroline does not indicate where she invests instead. Her use of the word 'atrocious' is forceful

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[32] Fonterra is a New Zealand based, co-operative dairy company that trades globally.

and passionate in this context, which suggests her own strength of feeling as well as the extent of the damage that is done as she understands it.

When asked about the reason for Sam's preference for eating food which has identifiable origins, Sam replied that it was a dual motivation:

> *I think it was a bit of both, I think there was an element of an environmental, sustainable aspect to it, and the whole sort of 'back to the land-ness'; and I think there was also a bit of the principle of 'grandmother food'. They say, there is a school of thought that you shouldn't eat anything if your grandmother wouldn't recognise more than four ingredients on the ingredients list.*

Sam is referring to the addition of flavours, preservatives, and texture modifiers here, those ingredients that are processed and identified by codes. But it is her mention of the environmental motivation that adds weight to the idea that these foodies are motivated by political issues, in this case, the environment. Sam's phrase 'back to the land-ness' also hints at another socio-cultural shift which is closely related to both food and the environment – the aspiration of people in this country to own property and perhaps to work upon it, growing things or raising animals. The sense in this phrase of a *returning to something* that belongs in the past is a nostalgic note in an otherwise present-focused discussion. When I asked Sam to articulate the ways she was political in relation to food, she said:

> *In a sense it's political in that I'm conscious of the choices I'm making and the consequences of them and I know that's driving other behaviours … what you do does have effect even if it's only small. … Actually aquaculture as well because Stewart Island has a salmon farm and I've become much more aware of the costs and benefits of aquaculture which has sort of politicised me in an area of food that I wasn't politicised before.*

Sam demonstrates a strong sense of conscious consumerism in relation to effects on the environment. In addition, she shows that she is aware of her changing political state when she becomes politicised over issues.

Eat local

One of the most frequently mentioned areas of political passion was about eating locally. 'Local' meant different things to different participants, but the core idea was that eating locally (meaning from this country or from their city or suburb) was a better choice. Sam's experience of eating local is the community barter economy of Stewart Island, which takes advantage of the bounty of seafood available there. She mentions the salmon farm again:

> *Sometimes they fillet them if they are not producing eggs anymore and that's the time to get to the salmon farm, take one out, they'll smoke it for you and then you trade it for something else. We have a food barter economy down there.*

A barter system on Stewart Island likely suits the small community, the food industries based there, and is a solution to the relative isolation from big centres. Sam also mentions another example of local community food sourcing:

> *I don't know if it's for political reasons or economic reasons or a mixture of both but it's really common for a couple of families to go in together, buy a cow from the farmer direct and get it home butchered and maybe then halve it… But is it economic, is it political? Maybe, I guess whether consciously or not it's a food miles choice again because you're buying a cow that came from Southland.*

There appears to be a combination of practicality and thrift in this example, and Sam herself is unsure exactly what motivates sourcing beef this way, but she is correct in saying that this way the beef being sourced has been raised locally, it has not been butchered and packaged in Christchurch or further north, then shipped to the Island. That method of sourcing beef is possible, but appears to be contrary to the Islanders' preference.

Building on the community sharing idea, Kerry speaks of noticing a return to eating locally. She says:

> *That's what, traditionally, people did, when we all lived closer to the land, that's what everyone did. You couldn't get oranges from California, you ate what was*

local, what you grew yourself, what you swapped with your neighbours. … a little bit is sort of political, economic, and that 'let's try and support New Zealand made, locally grown'. The return to farmer's markets and all that sort of thing, I think it's great because that's how we lived once upon a time. We grew something at a surplus, we gave it to our neighbours, we swapped it for something else.

There is a touch of nostalgia about Kerry's description of communities growing, sharing, or swapping food. However, her point is that there is increasing interest in living this way again, and people are enjoying shopping at local markets. Her mention of Californian oranges relates to the issue of 'food miles' – where the cost of access to a particular food is calculated in terms of environmental impact. In this case, it is the cost to the environment of shipping tonnes of oranges from California to New Zealand using fossil fuel powered ships over a period of weeks, in contrast to the effects of trucking Northland-grown oranges to other parts of New Zealand.

Andrew passionately expressed his horror regarding the sourcing of food from America:

It just seems fundamentally wrong when we've got a really good food source in New Zealand.

His phrase "fundamentally wrong" serves to demonstrate the depth of his feelings here, that it goes against nature in some way. In contrast, Ingrid expressed a feeling of conflict about the food miles concept. Her dilemma is around the quality of particular products. She explains that she prefers dried pasta from Italy, and that it is a compromise she makes because she is not willing to sacrifice the quality despite the environmental impact of shipping pasta from Italy to New Zealand. While Ingrid is expressing her dilemma, she also impresses upon me that she knows what the preferable action is (to buy locally produced items) and that she will mostly do that, but that some food items cannot be compromised on. This is a foodie dilemma indeed, where desire for a better product conflicts with the powerful motivation to do the right thing.

Kerry, too, prefers to buy local, New Zealand made products. Her focus is an economic one, where spending locally has a positive effect on the local economy. She says:

> *And I do prefer to give my money to local businesses when possible, so that's why I try to avoid buying things at Foodtown[33] if I can [laughs]… I just think it's important to keep money local, to promote local businesses. I think in a capitalist society part of our only power is as a consumer, so whenever you're spending your money you're making a political decision, and I'm just aware of that. So I try to buy local ingredients when possible, I make sure all my fruit and veg is grown in New Zealand, I try not to buy stuff out of season, yeah. So I guess part, for me, being a foodie is kind of wrapped up in the politics of it.*

This was a moment in the interview when Kerry intentionally used other political terms ("capitalist society") to acknowledge that her foodie activity plays a part in a wider political context, which demonstrates that this participant can comfortably and knowledgeably align politics with her foodie lifeworld. This is in contrast to the articulated denial of politics (that was often proven otherwise through discussion) that occurred in some interviews.

Carys indicated her preference for sourcing locally produced food alongside getting to know the producer. When discussing where she shops, she says she asks questions of the stall holders to find out the origin of their products. She says if they cannot tell you where the product comes from and who grows it, "then you know they're probably not a farmers market". Carys considers a relationship with the supplier an important and integral part of sourcing local food, because there is a level of trust required in buying food which is unlabelled but has the cache of being 'local' because of its presence at a market. For Carys, talking with the producer or the stall holder is key to making informed decisions about the origin of a product. As well as empowering herself this way,

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[33] Foodtown supermarket, part of the Progressive Enterprises group.

she also wants to empower local business – those producers who are independent of the large industrial food producing companies.

Distinguishing food from politics

A peculiar aspect to the interviews was that some research participants would look at me blankly when I explicitly asked about the relationship between being a foodie and political topics, but would demonstrate their strong political motivations in answer to other questions I asked them. The process of asking questions about their foodie lifeworld and questions about political food topics was, for some, a surprising juxtaposition. By the end of the interview, a few participants had volunteered that in fact their views on foodie topics were political on some level. This is interesting because it raises the question; if a foodie's activity is *not* motivated by political reasons, then is it truly a political act? Presented here are some instances where participants initially denied any link to politics, citing their individual passion for food as the only motivating factor.

Julia spoke about the times when her interest in food overshadows her political interests. We were discussing food media, and she mentioned the Listener:[34]

> *I should be reading the articles about politics because that should interest me, but no, it's the section on food.*

Here Julia is expressing a tension between her intellectual drive and her passion for food, where the passion for food is taking precedence. Julia appears to separate, on a literal level, the political aspects of food from her foodiness. There was further disconnect later in the interview when I listed the various political topics we had touched on, and asked if there is a political aspect to her foodie life, to which she answered "No … You'd think there would be, my politics interest, but no [laughs]." This is in direct contrast to the topics we had

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[34] New Zealand Listener is a weekly current affairs, arts, comment and entertainment magazine and website.

discussed earlier where she was so clearly drawing on politically rich ideas in her foodie lifeworld. Amanda expressed a similar tension around food and politics, even expressing a touch of guilt about the fact that she is not as well versed about animal welfare in food production:

> *I don't feel I have the balance, if you take ethical farming techniques and stuff where I feel I'm not balanced, I feel I'm a little bit 'head in the sand'. I'm more aware that that perhaps is a political issue that I should pay more attention to.*

Kim was uncomfortable with the term 'political' in relation to her own foodie lifeworld, although she noted the role that government and health authorities play in trying to change the way people eat. She explained the way her foodie life is motivated less by politics, and more by economic issues:

> *I think it's just more about wanting to support my own country, I guess, and our own economy, and maintaining producers that we have here… [as] opposed to more political things.*

I argue that the topics referred to in this excerpt actually do emerge from the political realm as I have defined it in the beginning of this theme. Therefore, Kim's comment here serves to illustrate how the definition of 'political' differs between the researcher and the research participants.

Robert denies any political motivation, and says that his motivation is more self-interest. He says:

> *So I quite like that fair trade thing but really what I want to know is that no-one's messed with my food before I got it.*

Robert's flippancy about 'that fair trade thing' belies the passion he expressed about the importance of teaching children how to navigate the food industry earlier in this chapter, although it is true that a key theme in the interview with him was about high quality food.

When I asked Jacqui whether she saw any meaning in the phrase 'foodie movement', she responded dismissively, saying:

I see it as a little bit gumboot stomping, flag waving, and not necessarily in the right… it doesn't actually have a connotation to me of being people who enjoy food as opposed to people who are railing against the eating habits [of people in New Zealand].

Jacqui clearly does not consider herself part of a 'movement' as such. Her phrase 'gumboot stomping' suggests a disassociation with the environmental movement in particular.

Sam's experience of Stewart Island has changed her political outlook regarding food. When I asked her about the relationship between her political self and her choices about food, she responded that the relationship has weakened since spending more time on the island, due to the fact that access to food is restricted by relative isolation, and so politics retreat in the face of limited choice. This suggests that, for Sam, being political about food is a luxury state, when circumstances allow.

In contrast, this excerpt from the interview with Caroline is an example of a participant becoming more politicised over time, despite having had a long career in the food industry. Caroline reflects on her initial non-political status, and who she is now:

I was never a particularly political person before... I mean I'd vote. But I was never belonging to a political party or being involved in these sort of groups, in that way. But it's because I feel so strongly about this particular subject I think that, and done what I've done, I've grown personally, and I think it's what has caused me to become more political. It's caused me to think more about a lot of things, and be interested in a lot of other things, not just about what tastes good. So it's broadened my mind enormously in lots of different ways.

Caroline's answer here is reflective in tone, and she demonstrates an optimistic and fulfilled attitude as she recounts her learning. While she admits she was barely engaged on a political level, over anything, in the past, 'being political' is clearly seen by her, now, to be a positive trait in this context.

This theme has drawn out from the interview data the moments at which the research participants referred to their political perspectives and motivations in relation to their foodie lifeworld. The research participants approach their foodie lifeworld from distinctly individual perspectives. However, it is clear from the data that their concerns frequently overlap. Emerging strongly from this exploration of the data is the focus on environmental concerns, as well as ethical approaches to food production. Another strong motif is the 'eat local' concept which, as well as being environmentally motivated, has other elements of economic security and food quality.

Summary

This chapter has described in detail, and with rich examples, the five themes that forge a direct link between the individual foodie lifeworld and the wider social and political concerns of those foodies. The implications of this link will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

It's very difficult to look an iceberg lettuce in the eye
when it's sleeting outside – Sam

The purpose of this research is to explore the social and political nature of engagement with food by people who identify as foodies in New Zealand. Through thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, I have explored the personal philosophies and motivations of my participants in relation to their food lifeworlds. One significant finding related to the participants' food lifestyle was their propensity toward gardening as food production on a small scale to supplement the food they buy at supermarkets, independent stores, and at markets. The analysis also reveals a keen sense of pleasure in growing, harvesting, and eating food, which is another powerful motivation for these foodies. The developing political awareness in the minds of these foodies is evident in the way they describe their activities, and in the way they each feel responsible for eating (and purchasing food) in an ethical way. The foundations of this moral and ethical – and consequently political – way of living their food

life varies for each foodie, but all of them indicated a kind of utopian vision, whether that utopia was around the environment or their own holistic wellbeing.

In this chapter my intention is to set out my observations and conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data, and explain their significance in relation to the research questions. First, I will synthesise the way the data was organised and lay out the themes and sub-themes. Second, I will discuss the observations I make about the participants. Then, the following section of the chapter is where I discuss in-depth the conclusions I draw, referring back to theoretical underpinnings. Lastly I will discuss implications and avenues for further research.

The Data

I explicated the data using thematic analysis and created two principle groups of codes. Each of the resulting themes is a pairing of concepts that emerged from those two groups, linked by identifying interesting conversations occurring between ideas.

To begin the discussion, I want to reintroduce the organising principle of the two groups, *Pressures* and *Action*, and bring these concepts back into the frame. While the use of this dialectic was initially to assist in the sense-making process of analysis, they remain relevant because they encapsulate the external and internal forces which act upon each foodie. For instance, I co-locate the external forces such as the influential role of media that highlights food injustice and environmental problems with the internal motivations that drive these foodies to feel something, such as a sense of responsibility or guilt. The *Action* concept comprises the attitudes the foodies took in living their foodie lives, such as a zealous enthusiasm for purchasing only foods that are grown locally.

The theme titled 'food lifeworld' reveals much about the dialectic of the outward expression of self in regard to identity and the integration of food in their lives,

due in part to their experience of food as children. For some participants, gardening featured strongly in their food lifeworld, and I explored the participants' use of gardening to enhance their foodie lifeworld too. The section of data titled 'nutrition & nurturing' described the participants' preoccupation with the health aspects of food and bodies, and the responsibilities that come from feeding themselves and others out of both necessity *and* desire to please. Alongside that is a description of the participants' 'sense of purpose' in acting in ways which reflect and support their politically charged views: the 'fire' inside of them which drives their actions and brings a sense of achievement as an engaged, effective citizen and foodie. The 'political beliefs' theme demonstrates that the foodies are all politically attuned within a narrow range of political subjects and reveals their consumption practices in response to that awareness. With these themes in mind I will, in this chapter, make observations and draw out the significance of these.

Findings & Discussion

Distinction?

One of the functions of a discussion chapter is to point out the variance between previous scholarship and the findings of this research, and on this point I was surprised to find a major dissimilarity between the participants in this research, and those who were the subject of the research by Johnston and Baumann in 2010. Johnston and Baumann wrote of two key findings which were; that foodies desired to demonstrate cultural capital through food (Bourdieu, 1984), and that foodies overlay a veneer of democracy on their 'gourmet foodscape' which neutralises innate inequalities in food and thus depoliticises them. The study alludes to Bourdieu's work regarding habitus, where he found, in relation to food, "ways of treating food, of serving, presenting and offering it […] are

infinitely more revelatory than even the nature of the products involved" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 193) where it is possible to ignore the politically charged nature of food by instead using food to express something about the self. In this vein, Johnston and Baumann argue that the meanings of food translate to expressions of the foodie identity. This assertion aligns with the concept of the project of the self (Giddens, 1991), which is an ongoing, reflexively-constructed identity shaped by aspiration, and suggests that foodies are amassers of cultural capital. There were exceptions in their study, including a minority of participants who were engaged in 'political eating' where issues of inequality and environment were present, however they were marginal and the theme remained undeveloped in that study.

In contrast to Johnston and Baumann's findings, my research finds that, for my foodies, a desire for distinction was barely present in the foodie lifeworld. Instead, they displayed a heightened awareness of the political nature of food. Theirs is a holistic perspective where food is deeply considered and integrated in their way of life. At no point during the research interviews was distinction conspicuous in the participants' minds. It is possible, I speculate, that being a politically-engaged foodie is a protracted but unconscious form of distinction which incorporates a kind of (sub)cultural capital, but it was not immediately present in the process of analysis. Rather than accumulating cultural capital for their own benefit, the participants in this research approached food in a way which has benefits for the environment, or economy, or for the health and pleasure of others. This does not mean, however, that these foodies operated within ideologies that are entirely free of class considerations. I must acknowledge that the participants in my research tended to be tertiary educated with sufficient leisure time and disposable income and so they do, therefore, have the relative luxury of choosing how to spend their time or money, and may pursue their interests in food without significant restriction.

Indeed, the research participants have elevated the sourcing and preparation of food from laborious work to an "aestheticized leisure activity" (Lupton, 1996, p.

126) which suggests that they can afford the time and expense of focusing their efforts in this area. To refer to New Social Movement theory briefly, Martin's note (2002) that NSMs become apparent when there are "surplus opportunities, resources and choices" (Martin, 2002, p. 81) is germane when considering the politicised choices that these foodies make. These foodies are both privileged and obligated: fortunate to be able to make choices about how they consume, but also responsible for making choices that will contribute to a change movement and improve conditions across the food industry.

Johnston and Baumann's (2010) study was an exploration into foodie discourse, but even allowing for the difference in method between their study and mine, it seems that the self-identified foodies in this research take a different form than the foodies in their research. Therefore this research uses the noun 'foodies' in a different sense from the way Johnston and Baumann do. For that reason, one of the conclusions of this research is that the term should be used cautiously, at least in the academic context. As a term that was fashioned in popular culture, it does not necessarily translate successfully in academia without careful explanation, and it may be in danger of being an obfuscating term rather than a descriptive one.[35] I maintain that the foodies who took part in this research are indeed foodies, but of a different flavour from foodies in research elsewhere.

Situated eaters

The research participants demonstrated a strong 'sense of place' (Shortridge, 2005; de Wit, 2013) within their foodie lifeworlds. De Wit's definition of 'sense of place' is extremely cogent and I quote it here in full:

> I define sense of place as the human experience of place in all its
>
> dimensions: physical, social, psychological, intellectual, and emotional. It

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[35] This point relates specifically to the academic context. As I have described elsewhere in this thesis, I required only an uncomplicated self-identification as 'foodie' when gathering participants for this research, which was, in part, because I wished to discover what the term meant for them. It was an assumption of the research that their understanding of the term was organically developed in their lifeworld and not from any academic research of their own.

includes the beliefs, perceptions and attitudes held toward a place, as well
as residents' conscious and unconscious attachments to place, their feelings
about local political and social issues, and their attitudes and feelings
towards other places. (De Wit, 2013, p. 121)

This definition sums up the research participants' 'sense of place' as I see it,
from elements of their lived experience through to their feelings about social
issues. The criterion for recruitment as a participant in this research required
that the self-identifying foodie be living in New Zealand for two reasons: first,
so that I could explore the significance of this country in the foodie lifeworld,
and second, and somewhat pragmatically, so that in-person interviews could
take place without undue difficulty given the relatively small size and scope of
the research. The criteria resulted in a cohort of foodies who call New Zealand
home, though not all were born in this country.

New Zealand was championed by participants as source of good food, and one
observation made during analysis is how cogent a 'sense of place' is in the
lifeworld of these foodies. The foodies were able to distinguish between the
different regions of New Zealand in food terms, and the difference between
town and country attitudes toward food. The foodies generally associate
produce grown in this land with positive attributes such as freshness and
quality. Perhaps New Zealand's international reputation for sheep and dairy
farming plays a part, but it is more than this. For these foodies, the landscape is
inextricably linked to food production, and consequently, the participants' sense
of place is a prominent aspect of the lifeworld. However, as salient as it seems
here, the term 'sense of place' originates in the field of geography. Another
term that is equally as useful and less burdened by other fields of inquiry is
'situated eaters', first used by Leynse in 2006, and applied here as a useful way
to describe the foodies in this research. Furthermore, my interpretation of the
foodie as situated eater, and the value as I see it of their 'situatedness' is one of
the key findings of this research.

I use the term 'situated eaters' because, alongside all the other elements that these foodies share, they are all exceptionally attuned to the (cultural) geography of this country and its presence in their experience as a foodie. By 'situated' I mean that they are engaged with the sourcing of food in such a way that they locate themselves, geographically, in relation to the food. The term is reminiscent of the 'scene' used by Irwin (1970) and Straw (2002) in that a loose geographical presence is conflated with the affinities of foodies which together "surround and nourish" (Straw, 2002, p. 250) the cultural practice around food. More than just knowing how far the closest supermarket is, these foodies can imagine their food growing and are perceptive about its journey to their plate. By understanding the source and production of the food they eat, they honour the food and raise it from being a mundane practicality to something deserving respect.

These foodies who are so connected to food are not just appreciative of it from afar but are also deeply engaged with landscape. This is expressed by the foodies as a concern for environmental issues. Their frequent mention of the environment shows that they are attuned to the need for care in using the land for food production. I heard pride during the interviews when they described the quality of produce grown here and their preference for locally grown food. There is also a sense that these foodies love New Zealand and feel gratitude for living in such a place. The 'foodscape' and the landscape are alike for these foodies, where eating locally is a source of pleasure made up of pride in the quality, along with preference for food which is locally produced (for economic and political reasons as well as the freshness) and the enjoyment of the food itself. The pleasure is multi-faceted and therefore more fulfilling to them. This is an outstanding difference between the foodie and a 'gourmet' who is greatly inspired by taste and perhaps by provenance, but may not be critically engaged in issues of production. The foodies in this research, however, are profoundly engaged with what they see as the injustices or harms caused by an increasingly industrialised food industry.

The analysis demonstrates that these foodies often take an encouraging and educative position among their friends and acquaintances, which has implications for the New Zealand foodscape and landscape. Their influence is persuasive and may serve, for example, to increase demand for a greater variety of organic produce, or higher quality produce. So an implication of these foodies being 'situated eaters' is the subsequent strength of their influence, and therefore anyone wanting to formally organise a food movement and wanting to attract activists would do well to work with this situatedness as a way to trigger their passion and encourage them to 'cross over' into a formal movement situation. It could be that the foodie lifeworld functions as the movement dormancy (McAdam, 1994) where foodies are, in the traditional sense, latent activists who might be motivated to become active if conditions were conducive. Those conditions might be the political opportunities which emerge, as Eyerman (2002) suggests, through changes to the hegemonic culture. In this case, the challenges that these foodies exemplify are a threat to the anonymous, supermarket-driven, convenience food culture.

Antecedent political convictions

The behaviour of all the foodies in this research is underpinned by antecedent convictions of one sort or another. It is *convictions* that I focus on here, rather than *conditions*, because the convictions of each research participant are the variables that cause the tensions they described in the interviews, and are the basis of the *Pressures* group of codes. As revealed in the analysis, the convictions are political in nature and they vary in each foodie. For example, Renee's convictions are about the welfare of animals and the quality of the food. While Carys' are about the environment and eating locally and Caroline's are about food access and long term environmental effects. What is common across the foodies is that they hold these convictions in high regard and as a central element in their approach to food. Caroline spoke of having developed her convictions over time – and this could be said for each of the foodies because

knowledge is accumulated as one ages – but, for all of the participants however, the kind of foodie they are today is one who is informed by the convictions which have, in their minds, become principles. That is, they do not see the convictions as opinions but as powerful 'words to live by' and the living expression of those convictions is what these foodies strive toward. For example, when Caroline refuses to eat Californian strawberries, she puts her political convictions ahead of her desire for the taste of strawberries despite her great interest in food. For her, eating a Californian strawberry would go against her conviction that it is wrong (unethical, or damaging) to eat food that is unseasonal and has travelled thousands of miles. For a person motivated by the pleasure of food, the aesthetic attributes of the strawberries are likely to be diminished by the packaging and refrigeration for export, and by the long period spent in storage. However, even if the strawberries were equally delicious after shipping, Caroline's enjoyment of the fruit would remain compromised. This points to a real tension that exists for my participants, as though there is a continuum with pleasure at one end and principle at the other. Situated eaters must navigate this continuum, pursuing pleasure but without losing sight of the principle.

This means that for some foodies, political belief is as important as flavour. The condition is, of course, that these foodies have access to the resources which make it possible to make that distinction. People who are hungry rarely put convictions, political or ethical, ahead of access to food, given that food is instinctual and sustains life. These foodies are wealthy enough to be able to make choices about food and they live in a society which allows for political freedom and dissent. Even so, the convictions that these foodies hold are powerful, and more meaningful to them as foodies than other political issues. Their 'situatedness' strengthens their convictions further and the New Zealand landscape or foodscape is again pertinent. That political conviction is as important as taste also means that the distinction gained by these foodies (if any) is based on a self-imposed asceticism: the denial of the enjoyment of a

strawberry out of season for the good of the planet, for example. This is self-imposed abstinence, juxtaposed against their great desire for deliciousness.

For these foodies, food has become, then, a more complex site of behaviour than for non-foodies. It is not only a medium for fuelling the body, nor is it only a medium for pleasure, but also a medium for exercising cerebral activity. Food is, for these foodies, the nexus of three realms of behaviour: pleasure, thought, and care. Arguably these three realms are all instinctual on some level, but this analysis suggests that the foodie approach to food is an abstraction of instinct by the combination of these three realms, where each realm loses its singularity. Here, the abstraction is found in Western culture, which given the location of this research is understandable, but I suggest that it is an abstraction that can occur in Western culture given the situation of relative plenty, and that it may not be present in cultures where there is food scarcity. Whether the prevalence of this abstraction of instinct increases over time due to environmental or social crisis, or matures into a behaviour that is adopted by non-foodies remains to be seen.

Intersection with social movements

These foodies, then, are informed by abstract considerations that are not (yet) present for most people. They bring to bear on food multiple layers of meaning which inform their choices about sourcing and consuming. For them, eating is not a discrete activity undertaken apart from life as a citizen or member of a community, but an immersive aspect of citizenship. Furthermore, they are aware of the interrelated layers of significance that food holds for them. Food is both concrete – an item physically present – and abstract for these foodies. This complexity is, for each foodie, a unique combination of global issues about food production, sourcing, access, and quality, so it is an individualised approach to consumer ethics, rather than a collective one (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). The political complexity that the foodies recognise is the precarious situation that the global food system is in: the unequal distribution, the waste, and the

environmental effects. These foodies do not take their food for granted and choose to behave in ways that are intended to disrupt the globalised, corporatised food system. They address this global complexity in their own lives by acting locally in what is described as 'glocalisation' (Robertson, 1992) which is about the sense-making that occurs when global problems are addressed by individuals at a local level. These foodies have meaningful local responses to the issues they see, some of which are the effects of globalisation. Through their local response they gain a sense of achievement which counteracts the burden they feel as foodies who are attuned to the negative effects that industrialisation brings to food production.

The term 'local' remains problematic because it can and has been interpreted as foundation for both liberatory and reactionary responses to socio-cultural problems (Hinrichs, 2003; Dupois & Goodman, 2005). As Brower (2010) states,

> local food activism typically marginalizes or ignores the fact that possibilities of action at the local level are conditioned and constrained by larger socio-political forces. (p. 82)

Similarly, a criticism of lifestyle activism is that the action taken, such as purchasing from farmers markets, or avoiding cage-laid eggs for example, is a feature of neoliberalism in which individuals feel compelled to act, and do so on a local or domestic scale, but tend not to target their activity at addressing systemic inequalities at the level of government and legislation (Crang, 1996; Guthman, 2007; 2008), instead "devolv[ing] regulatory responsibility to consumers via their dietary choices" (2007, p. 264). It would be easy to dismiss this small scale lifestyle activism as impotent compared to the global need, but that would minimise the sense of liberty that these foodies claim, and what they can conceive of achieving "in measurable time and space" (Allan, 2010, p. 305). The value of their action lies in the reduced environmental effect and in the improved economic effect, let alone the influence it has on others as part of a socio-political transformation. However, the question of validity remains,

because the problems with the global food system are potentially disastrous. If this lifestyle movement activity is not valuable, then its flaws must be exposed before the opportunity to amend the damage to social and the environment in more potent ways is lost.

However, the general shift in conceptions and desires, away from pleasure and consumerism at any cost, brings to mind again Blumer's (1959) notes on general movements, which he describes as moving "in a slow, halting yet persistent fashion" (p. 61) toward a utopian alternative that is fuelled by dissatisfaction with the current state. The foodies in this research may in fact be the beginning of a halting yet persistent cultural shift which begins with a rise in ethical consumerism in what is arguably the most mundane sphere of life, the fuelling of the body, and will move slowly into other spheres.

The first research question dealing with *a priori* purposes to foodie activity has now been largely answered. To answer the second research question regarding the ways that local foodie practices intersect with political movements: taken together, the actions of these foodies do indeed contribute to a lifestyle movement (Haenfler, Johnson & Jones, 2012) that is about reclaiming individual and community autonomy over food. A lifestyle movement is a contemporary form of movement which bears little resemblance to social movements of the past (Larana, Johnston & Gusfield, 1994; Maffesoli, 1996; Melucci, 1996). Lifestyle politics is criticised by radical activists who question the validity and efficacy of their actions in the greater social context, unable to see how meaningful change can be created outside of the traditional sphere of politics. By contrast, lifestyle movement participants are cynical about the role of governments in creating the problems and the ability of traditional political actors to address these (Bennett, 2003). In response, lifestyle activists are bringing politics home to their own sphere of influence, creating "transformative social spaces" (Johnston & Baumann, 2010, p. 5) and "expressly redesigning the ordinary matters of life" (Chaloupka, 1990) to demonstrably live according to their values (Portwood-Stacer, 2013). The activity of the foodies

in this research aligns closely with Haenfler's three defining aspects of lifestyle movements. They are:

- consumption choices as tactics
- the central role of personal identity work
- diffuse structure

These foodies are acting in politically-charged ways when they make choices that serve to alter – however minimally – the hegemonic state of mass production and processing of food (Mahoney, 2015). Their action is tactical because it is considered, conscious activity which supports their ethical standpoint. As the analysis shows, the foodies "customise their participation" (Haenfler, 2006, p.71) to fit their particular passion. Haenfler argues that these choices are tactical in the sense of a movement because of the knowledge that others are also consuming deliberately. These foodies are politically literate but choose to act at local levels for local gain. The work they do is reflexive and informs their individual identity as well as being cumulative work alongside others doing the same.

Often my participants refer to caring for others or caring for the environment as being a key driver in their day-to-day food life, but this is because their mode of identity as an ethical citizen is at stake. The food which is the focus of their activity is credited with cultural capital, and the meaning ascribed to it develops reflexively with their identity (Reimer, 1995; Miles, 2000; Chaney, 2001), suggesting the concept of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). But lifestyle activism is the outward expression of individuals who desire to address the injustices and potential crises of the world. The foodies are not organised radical activists, but instead have loose connection to a variety of sources which inform their actions, including other foodies, media sources and local resources which provide a macro-micro context for action. It could be that lifestyle movements are a product of the information technology age alongside globalisation, because information technology functions in a way that enables individuals to 'connect'

with the problem and feel closer to those who have the power to make legislative change.[36]

The sample of foodies in this research is too small to demonstrate conclusively that a larger foodie lifestyle movement exists, but they do, however, exhibit characteristics of lifestyle movement *actors*. What can be concluded without a cognitive stretch is that these foodies inhabit a conceptual space where thought and action around food comprises a form of 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This community of practice is, uniquely for each foodie, a mix of co-located, virtual (Dube et al., 2005) and mobile forms (Kietzmann et al., 2013). This idea dovetails neatly into the concept of the situated eater discussed earlier in this chapter, because the situated-ness of the individual is key to the value and success of a community of practice. Unlike the examples of communities of practice in Lave and Wenger's work, however, the perimeters of the community of practice of foodies are nebulous and undefined. So it is a community that forms and re-forms (and neatly, with a reformative goal) around a consistent, core set of values. This is an example of the collective identity which is an *a priori* condition for a social movement before any formal structure is apparent. There are parallels, too, with Muggleton and Weinzierl's (2003) 'post subcultural protest formations', which have influence upon both political and cultural spheres. The foodie community, or formation, shares a common language of food-related jargon, but use of appropriately foodie terms is not a signifier of belonging or otherwise. Indeed, a friendly and encouraging inclusiveness characterises the foodies in this research. It appears that if the core values are mutual, foodies will gladly share their knowledge with others, which in turn raises awareness of the political nature of food as they see it. So, distinct from customised, individual action, there is, as Haenfler writes, belief in the strength in non-coordinated collective action. Their daily commitment or

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[36] It is an assumption; though not a finding of this research, that information technology has performed a significant role in the growth of knowledge of food issues for these foodies.

"enactment of values" (Powell, 2002, p. 170) serves to bolster the ideology of the diffuse, uncoordinated movement.

These foodies do not articulate a desire to be lead figures in a revolution but to do what they can within their lifeworld, and find that to be sufficient to satisfy their desire for change. They envisage a world where the problems need not exist and position themselves as contributors to the better world. Therefore, these foodies are idealists and optimists, believing that their contributions combined with the contributions of others can repair what most people either accept as being irreparable, or do not give thought to at all. At worst, their contribution offsets the damage they themselves cause. Their optimism is a reflexive part of the pleasure that they receive from engaging with food on the tangible and cerebral levels. In terms of utopian desire, which traditionally features the tension between individual gain and the betterment of society (Sargent, 2001), my participants aim to realise a better life for both themselves and for society (and the planet), which is a profitable basis for achieving real change.

To summarise and explicitly answer the first research question, yes there is underlying purpose to the foodie phenomenon, however 'operating principle' is a more accurate concept, a profoundly fundamental one which is present before 'purpose' can be articulated. These foodies do not comprise a group, though a few are known to each other. However, the foodies could, or would, unite around these principles for living. So the cluster of closely related principles identified in this research are held severally, but in common by the foodies who took part. The principles are:

- ethical consumption (in both senses, as consumer and eater)
- situated connection with food
- demonstrable care for planet and/or the inhabitants

The purpose, then, for the foodies living by these principles is to achieve a healthier, more harmonious food future. These foodies are actors in a

contemporary form of social movement, and work to assert their identity and resist colonisation of their private lives by the processes of globalisation and big business. Lifestyle politics is evidence of civic engagement which contradicts the suggestion of a shrinking public sphere (Bennett, 1998). These individuals bring elements of politics into everyday life, contributing to reflexive identity formation, and the foodies feel part of an informal shift in culture within which they can induce social change (Dobernig & Stagl, 2015).

Habermas (1984) believes that the lifeworld usually goes unquestioned, that it is constructed unconsciously and made up of experiences and subjectivity. However, the lifeworlds of the foodies in this research are the product of interrogation, critical thought and reflection. They have engaged intellectually with food and questioned the normative assumptions that underpin daily life around food provisioning, production and preparation. My findings suggest that in relation to the foodie lifeworld, my participants are self-consciously and purposefully negotiating and delineating their choices. This suggests an extension of the concept of lifeworld and significant crossover with lifestyle politics which could be a profitable line of enquiry for further research.

Foodie Faith

A finding of this research is that the foodies I interviewed place far greater importance upon food than non-foodies do. Indeed, it has become a central tenet around which they live their lives. I suggest that in addition to their political convictions, it has become a quasi-religious meaning system (Brinkerhoff & Jacob, 1999) in that it supplies structure, bringing perspective and routine to their lives in the same way that the practice of religion does for believers. This meaning system borrows elements from religion, including faith in principles, righteousness, opportunities for salvation, humility, and liberty within set boundaries (Robertson, 1970). The foodie perspective is that food transcends the mundane. It is as much for the soul as it is for the body. The foodie approach can be interpreted as a guiding ideology that helps to

rationalise the foodie's impulses around food and limit excess and poor decision making.

There is a reflexive element which applies pressure to the foodies to behave according to the principles they ascribe to, and which aids in the avoidance of hypocrisy. The result is a reassuring absence of guilt as long as they are true to their principles. This faith they ascribe to enables the faithful to live a good life, in the sense of good values, good ethical behaviour, and good outcomes for themselves. The faith they have in the nurturing powers of food is backed by experience of the benefits to themselves and the people they provide for. Second, they also have faith that a better food future is possible and that their role is to stay steady and faithful, doing what they can, until that better world is achieved. To some extent, these foodies have achieved a kind of salvation already, having become attuned to the issues and begun to act to make their own, and others' food lives closer to the ideal. Conversely they feel humility that they are but one small part of the solution, but this is tempered by the pleasure gained from food. Indeed, that pleasure is so great and holistic, being physical and cerebral, that it could be considered a form of transcendence.

In their manner of sharing and educating others about food, these foodies proselytise the 'right' way to live in relation to food. There is a sense in the interviews of them having found "faith" in the rightness of food done a certain way, and being motivated to spread the word through modelling or assisting others. This verifies Haenfler's view that lifestyle movements are "reformist rather than revolutionary" (Haenfler, 2006, p. 62) in the way they seek to catalyse social change. Association with other foodies strengthens the faith, and opportunities to share the faith with outsiders allow the faithful to try their hand at conversion. There is the suggestion of an underlying message that you, too, could lead a better life if you let foodie-ism in. In practical terms there is in foodiness, as there is in the practice of material religion, a weight of ritual that must be done right: the right way to cook steak, the right way to scramble eggs. These are core skills that define the foodie from the uninterested or uninitiated.

'Evangelist' is too strong a term, but there is an element of the preacher in these foodies, as they share their values with the uninitiated. This is reflected in media too, where there are published 'articles of faith' in magazines, books, and food television (televangelism) such as *Jamie's School Dinners,* which serve as dogma used to bring about conversion. Happily, there are many texts, or written interpretations, available to the faithful but inexpert foodies who wish to increase their knowledge and become thereby better foodies than they were before. Texts such as Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Pollan, 2006) or *Jamie's Food Revolution* (Oliver, 2009) become important artefacts that both show the way and keep the foodie honest. Cultural entrepreneurs and cultural products such as these are vital to emergent lifestyle movements, as they construct an enduring discourse around the pivotal issues, or "tools for intellectual self-defence" (Portwood-Stacer, 2013, p. 36). These artefacts may also contribute to an 'epiphany' of sorts. When read, they illuminate the struggle between what is and what could be. The result of this is that the authors become like prophets, lauded as speakers of a version of the foodie *truth* and develop a committed following by achieving mastery of change rhetoric to reinforce the overall meaning system that the foodies inhabit.

As the analysis of interview data shows, foodies experience personal satisfaction from engaging with food on a cerebral level. Their satisfaction lies in the enactment of their belief system, in the activities and behaviours that reflexively reinforce their faith. Their sense of self-worth is increased but this is different from pride. The interview data do not reveal evidence of pride in the sense of self-adulation, but in an increase in the foodie's feeling of value; value regarding the positive effect they have, or the change made. Indeed they revel, even luxuriate in the knowledge of their adherence to their beliefs. Food is sensuous, and made even more so when it is overlaid with a rich meaning system that taps into the foodie's outward expression of self. The sense of satisfaction that foodies gain from becoming deeply foodie is pleasurable alongside the other inherent pleasures of food. As with religion, the rules of the foodie faith are not

so limiting that adherents cannot become misguided or make mistakes. In some senses the foodie's occasional divergence into low-capital foods (an indulgence in fast-food, for example), while in opposition to the foodie ethical code, is an opportunity to return to the faith all the more strongly. This testing of the faith and taking risks is a demonstration of the foodie's liberty within boundaries.

Parallels with Arts & Crafts – an observation

My undergraduate degree is in design and fine art, and I was inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th– early 20th centuries centred on figures such as John Ruskin, William Morris, and Charles Rennie Macintosh. Proponents of the Arts and Crafts movement held anti-industrial views, citing a preference for natural materials and craftsmanship rather than mass production or processing of a material rendering it unrecognisable from its natural form. The movement was not just about aesthetics, but had at its core an urge for social reform which (re)placed people at the heart of creativity in direct opposition to the mass production of goods made possible by machines. While skilled workers were losing their livelihoods because of industrialisation, the Arts and Crafts movement aimed to make high quality and well-designed handmade objects desirable again.

Having had the opportunity at this stage to reflect on the findings of this research, I find that there is for me a strong sense of parallel between the goals of foodies and the goals of the Arts and Crafts movement, particularly around the distrust of industrialisation processes. Theirs is a utopian vision of a fairer society where individuals create (grow, produce) goods (food) from scratch, which are beneficial (fulfilling, nutritious) to themselves but also impact positively upon local economies. Failing that, foodies are living in line with a philosophy which espouses ethical consumption and personal wellbeing, just as the exponents of the Arts and Crafts movement did.

Further research

In terms of implications for practice, there are pressing reasons to make significant change to food access and production worldwide, to address large scale issues such as hunger and environmental damage. As a result of this research, which provides insight into a small number of foodies, it is clear that any person or group wishing to mobilise the potential inherent in the foodie lifestyle movement to bring about these changes must understand the nuanced motivations that foodies experience in their lifeworlds. This research reveals that foodies are largely content to act on a local or domestic scale. Therefore, they are not necessarily motivated to be in the spotlight or act in radical ways to address systemic problems, and the onus remains with 'Big P politics' in the area of economics, obliging powerful corporates to begin to change.

In reflecting on my PhD journey I have identified a number of avenues for further research. First, more research could be done into the alignment of lifestyle politics and lifestyle movements, and the shift from lifestyle movement to social movement proper which acts at the legislative level. It would be useful to know how and in what circumstances there is tangible effect of lifestyle movement work, and how lifestyle movement participants interact with radical activists.

If circumstances allowed, it would be interesting to return to the foodie participants to further interview them to explore the 'faith' aspects of their foodie lifeworlds. Nevertheless, I intend to return to the data that was gathered for this project, which is extensive and rich, and explore the potential for further analysis of the political nature of the foodie lifeworld. A large scale project that explores the political significance of food to consumers would provide some useful baseline information with which to explore food-related action in greater depth. In addition, much research into food activism remains based in the privileged realm where the actors in this form of political engagement tend to be (relatively) wealthy, educated people. As Wahlen and

Laamanen suggest (2015), more research is needed into political lifestyle practices and implications for low capital individuals. Stemming from this, there is further work to be done around identities of lifestyle movement participants and the crossover into purposeful members of subcultures, which extends Haenfler's work into lifestyle based subcultures.

An analysis of the shift in corporate support for environmental and other ethical concerns would assist in clarifying the relationship between movement activity and corporate social responsibility policies. A discursive exploration of the argot of the foodie lifestyle movement would be revealing of how language delineates a foodie from a non-foodie. And in the New Zealand context it would be interesting to have insight into the food lifeworlds of diaspora living in this country, particularly Pasifika.

A final personal reflection

In this final section of the thesis I look back over the research and become aware of the 'journey' I have taken to reach this point. I did not know what I would find but the road I began down, which was an exploration of identity construction by women foodies, became a different path as I pursued my interest in contemporary social movements, and arrived at an ungendered study of foodie behaviour in New Zealand. My research findings, including the location of the foodie in the New Zealand socio-cultural sphere, and that foodies are politically and ethically engaged with food and therefore participants in a lifestyle movement, represent an original contribution to knowledge.

The recognition, by these foodies, of the tensions in food is remarkably insightful in a culture that makes thoughtless consumption of processed, convenience foods so easy. The foodies' politicisation of food combines far-reaching ideas and the humble day-to-day stuff of life in powerful ways. I now see that foodies can be influential consumers and citizens working at ground level to help create an alternative food future. However, the political

positioning by corporates that occurs in the food industry has led to the situation where individual consumers feel compelled to act. They are assuming responsibility without the power necessary to alter the structure of industrial, corporatised food environment. Meanwhile the global problems of food insecurity, famine and environmental damage remain at a scale that is appalling, given the situation of plenty and wealth that some parts of the world enjoy. These foodies deal with that tension the best way that they can, and balance their dissatisfaction with the food industry by taking great pleasure in eating and bringing people together over food. They see food as a powerful signifier and axis around which the world could pivot. I remain dubious about the magnitude of the change that can be achieved by foodies and believe that there will also need to be 'Big P' political involvement to reverse the injustice and environmental damage that occurs.

When I began this research I made the assumption that I was a foodie. But now that I have finished the research, I know that I am not. On the political level, I buy free range and locally (from New Zealand) where possible. Since my son was born I have become much more aware of the need to teach him to grow food in the garden, which is an activity I am passionate about. In contrast, the taste of food, its preparation and the time I spend cooking is much less important to me now than it was before having my son. Meeting food producers at the local market, while a pleasant way to spend an occasional Saturday morning, is relatively far down my list of priorities these days. If it is not the research itself that has changed me, then I have nevertheless changed during the period of years that this doctorate has taken. As I reflect on this, and all the ways I am not a foodie, I feel great admiration for the foodies; for their utopian vision, and the care and energy they commit to living thoughtfully in line with their convictions.

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Appendix I: Indicative Interview Questions

So how long have you been a foodie? (How did you get into being a foodie?)

When did you become aware of the term 'foodie'?

Is there a difference between 'foodie' and 'gourmet'?

Was there a person in your life, or a foodie icon who inspired you at the beginning?

Which famous foodies do you like best now? Why?

Where do you prefer to shop for food?

Are some places better than others? In what way?

How do you know someone is a foodie?

Describe the ways that make you a foodie?

How significant is food to you in your everyday life?

What ambitions do you have as a foodie?

What do you admire about other foodies?

Are there feelings associated with being a foodie?

Is there status in identifying as a foodie?

Is food a lifestyle or aspect of your lifestyle?

What other aspects make up your lifestyle?

If you could choose a lifestyle, or choose a way of life, what would it be?

Is there a political aspect to your foodie life?

Is food political for you? In what ways?

What is the relationship between your political self and your choices about food?

What feedback do you get from others regarding your foodie-ness?

Are you around others who recognise the link between food and politics?

How important is networking with other foodies to you? What do you talk about?

Are there any tensions about being a foodie?

Complete this sentence: "Being a foodie is ...."

Listen for and explore key ideas:
- growing own food
- environmental concerns
- use of fossil fuels
- poverty/equality/food access
- fair trade chocolate/coffee/bananas,
- organics,
- eating local, eating seasonal
- animal welfare
- genetic modification