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An Oral History of British Food Activism

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Summary Abstract

This thesis is based on seventeen oral history life story interviews with key members of a variety of food activist movements in Britain. A collaborative project with the British Library, the recorded interviews now comprise a public archive on food activism in the oral history collections. The food activist movements cover a wide range of issues, from fair trade, nutrition, animal welfare and anti-GM, to organic agriculture, community urban farms, public health and waste. Through the oral history method, a number of themes relating to food activism are explored. These include, the relationship between food, politics and identity; the dynamics of motivation and emotions, such as optimism and positivity, in activism; the role of image, both personal and organisational, in furthering the cause; and the tensions between alternative and mainstream approaches to food systems change. The thesis contributes to literatures in food geographies, food activism and policy, social movements and oral history life story.

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Acknowledgements

This PhD journey of several years has been a turbulent experience for me, for many reasons both professional and personal. This interdependence between the private and public is partly the sort of nuance that oral history life stories seek to chart and shed light on, reflected in the rich data from my interviewees about their own experiences. I guess no-one gets through five plus years without the curveballs of life swinging across their path, and it has been a test of personal endurance, strength and resilience as much as one of academic intellect.

First and foremost, I must acknowledge and thank the interviewees. Their generosity of time, openness and honesty enabled the recordings to exist, and many went above and beyond, offering welcome and warmth in addition. This made the process all the more rewarding, fostering fond relationships and lovely highlights in my memory. For all the complexities and challenges navigated in their various work, the interviewees so often left me inspired and full of admiration. I have learned so much in the process, and whilst I cringe at many parts of my interviewing (stuck forever on tape!), especially the earlier ones when experience was lacking, I hope I enabled them to tell their stories with the grace they deserved, and in doing so reflect their dedication and contributions to the world of food. Their colleagues/family/friends must also not be forgotten, who often accommodated and helped make the recording sessions happen, and frequently featured in the contents of the interviews.

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Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

The global food system is increasingly debated and studied, as the ethical and sustainability challenges relating to food mount, ranging from human and animal health, the environment, climate change, political-economic systems, poverty and social inequality, and population increase (cf. FAO 2006, 2009; Jessop 2010; Beddington Foresight Report 2011; Global Food Security Strategic Plan 2011-2016; Roberts 2008; Godfray et al 2010). Britain has a significant role to play, with particular pressure on the brink of Brexit (Lang, Millstone and Marsden 2017). Britain has also been at the forefront of changes and alternative systems, pioneering movements such as Fairtrade, organic, food security, animal welfare, community agriculture, and public health campaigns (e.g. Maye et al 2007; Kneafsey et al 2008; Tallontire 2000; Reed 2001).

Based primarily on a collection of life story interviews by the author with key members of the British[1] food movements, the aim of this thesis is to provide an oral history of recent British food activism. By documenting the individual experiences of some of those most heavily involved, it explores the changes and nuances of food movements over the last 30-40 years, enabling a study of the nature of activism, the relationship between food, politics and identity, and how the challenges of social change have been negotiated.

In this introduction, I provide some background, both to the topics and the research project itself. I then provide a guide through the thesis chapters. I also clarify some points around the concept and use of the terms 'activist' and 'activism'.

1.1 Background

The PhD was a co-funded collaboration between the British Library and the University of Sheffield, and emerged partly from an observed gap in the British Library's oral history collections. The project

[1] Being sensitive to the differences, I've tried to be consistent in the use of the word Britain, rather than England or the UK, unless I am meaning the latter two.

involved recording 15-20 life stories of a range of people involved in food activism focusing on their work over recent decades until the present.

The British Library holds a vast and rich collection of national life stories and other forms of oral histories in its sound archives. Whilst food has not been explored using oral history as much as other topics, a great deal of the material that does exist is held in the British Library, where food has been the focus of several collections explicitly and implicitly. Of note, a project called 'Food: From Source to Salespoint' was instigated in 1997 in recognition of how dramatically food production and consumption have altered within living memory, to collect the life story recordings of food producers from across Britain. This project has resulted in over 200 oral history recordings. These histories record the experiences of people who have witnessed and contributed to the many changes in the food landscape.

Additional existing collections in the British Library of relevance to my project include: An oral history of the wine trade; Tesco: an oral history; Pioneers in charity and social welfare; Millennium memory bank; Leaders in national life; Animal welfare activists.[2] Within these collections, where food has been an explicit focus, it has tended to be on the food industry and food producers from the commercial 'mainstream'. Food also often features as a component part of projects with a different focus, due to the in-depth nature of oral histories and the prominence of food in everyday life. What was identified as a gap within oral history, in general and within the British Library's collection, was a focus on 'alternative' food systems and those critical of the food industry, from the more political and activist side, which is a gap that this research on British food activism aims to address. As well as forming the basis of this doctoral research, the oral history life stories that I recorded have therefore been deposited in the Oral History collection of the British Library's National Sound Archive, as a requirement of the PhD studentship. Accessible by the public, the interviews form part of an invaluable resource for future generations.

Crossing disciplinary boundaries (Abrams 2010), oral history has emerged somewhat as a discipline of its own in recent decades, as it is deployed by academics, professionals and amateurs as a valuable method for understanding the past, the interplay between the past and present, and the relation between individuals, organisations, and wider structures shaping society (Frisch 1990; Thompson 2000; Perks and Thomson 2006). It has been used to explore a range of subjects; however

[2] I discuss these in more detail in the methodology chapter, section 3.3

food still features as a relatively small topic within the work of oral historians, despite its potential and as food becomes an increasingly central theme politically and socially (for some exceptions see Jackson et al 2009 and Russell 2003).

Food activist movements are not new in Britain. They have emerged from a long history of events with roots in colonialism and nineteenth century Corn Laws, malnutrition and food adulteration (Woodward 1962; Burnett 1989; Burnett and Oddy 1994; Smith 1997; Schonhardt-Bailey 2006; see Trentmann 2007 for an analysis of the longer history of 'fair trade'; see Lockeretz 2007 for an example on 'organic' and Gregory 2006 for 'vegetarianism'). In the last 60 years in particular, post-war Britain has seen the rise and intensification of food activism, reacting to the productivist agricultural policies that followed the food shortages and rationing during the world wars, and increasingly liberalised global trade regimes (Hirst 1925; Bowers 1985; Byrne 1997; Raynolds 2000; Marsden et al 2006). More recently, concerns were reignited with food scares such as BSE, salmonella, foot and mouth, and the horsemeat scandal (Wales et al 2006; Abbots and Coles 2013; Stassart and Whatmore 2003; Ilbery 2002; de Jonge et al 2004). Movements such as organic agriculture, animal welfare, local and seasonal food provision systems, fair trade, vegetarianism, nutrition/public health, food safety, and food security are all issues that have been addressed by a number of individuals and organisations in Britain who have sought to change parts of the food system (Whatmore and Thorne 1997; Millstone and van Zwanenberg 2002; Tansey 2003; Watts et al 2005; Gregory 2006; Whatmore and Clark 2006; Lockeretz 2007).

It can often be difficult to distinguish when, where and how social activist movements fall strictly on the side of non-governmental and alternative and when they classify as mainstream and governmental, especially as they evolve (Byrne 1997; Jolly 2011; Lewis 2008). Similarly, for activists the relationship between social movements and personal identity is complex and intricate. Oral history work looking at feminism has revealed the extent to which the engagement of women in the political movement had deep impacts on many aspects of their lives and was as much personal as it was public, political and professional (Jolly 2012). This is not uncommon for people involved in social movements, whose lives often reflect and intertwine with their politics, and which oral history aptly explores (see for example Bertaux 1983; James 2000). The relationship between food and identity is complicated and contested, with many arguing that they are inseparable (see for example Caplan

1997; Pilcher 1998), although some have argued otherwise (see Russell 2003).[3] I draw on these themes in this thesis to explore the ways in which interviewees' working within food activism political relation to food impacts on their lives in other ways, and how aspects of their personal life have impacted on their activism. I would also like to explore the disputed areas of food activism between alternative and mainstream, especially where this perception has changed over time. It is on these areas of debate that oral history has notable value.

The oral history method is particularly noted for its ability to break the barriers of the personal/private and professional/public distinctions and explore the blurred crossovers between them, perceiving instead an interwoven fabric which can help to make sense of the relevance of the past in the present (Passerini 1979; Bornat et al 2000; Thompson 2000; Thomson 2006; Jolly 2011). Advocates of oral history also consider the multiple 'truths', interpretations and experiences of events from different perspectives: "we reject the belief that there is one true reality to become experts about" (Stanley and Wise in Yow 2006: 61, see also Thomson 2006). Many oral historians, including Margaretta Jolly, David Lewis, Daniel Bertaux, Daniel James, and Luisa Passerini, have used and championed oral histories to explore the relationship between personal identity, professional work, political life, and meaning. It can be especially valuable in understanding processes of social change, contextualising the rich detail of individual life stories with broader societal events and changes (Thompson 2000), "illuminating a broader social context through the prism of individual experience" (Frisch 1990: 60).

In its struggle to become a respected form of historical and social research, the practice of oral history was often seen as a form of protest reacting to orthodox practices of historical research (Passerini 1979; Frisch 1990; Thompson 2000). Not only was it using individual voice, subjective memory and personal experience rather than 'official' documentation – considered more objective – but the focus of oral history projects has often been the 'voiceless' minority groups who history has failed to acknowledge, such as women, the working classes, and racial and ethnic minorities, and thereby 'giving voice' (Passerini 1979; Frisch 1990; Thompson 2000, also seen in the work published in the History Workshop Journal). Whilst this is not necessarily as pronounced in oral history work today, my project has an interesting additional dimension, using a method which has been activist in itself in order to study activist movements.

[3] Russell's (2003) oral history research, for example, indicated that working professionally with food at either a political or practical level did not necessarily correlate with a personal relationship with food that is entwined with one's identity and life more deeply than any other person.

1.2 Defining activist and activism

> *"Food has long been a focus for political and social movements in many parts of the world; food is a potent symbol of what ails, a way of making abstract issues like class or exploitation into a material, visceral reality"*
> (Wilk 2006: 21-22)

While the project aims to explore the contested nature of 'food activism', I begin by defining the term as I refer to it within this thesis.[4] Food activism and activists include all those who have sought to mobilise society in opposition to the dominant industrialised system of food production and allied processes of mass consumption. I acknowledge at the outset, however, that notions of what constitutes an activist movement, and in particular 'mainstream' and 'alternative' as applied to agri-food systems, are deeply contested terms (cf. Byrne 1997; Whatmore et al 2003; Guthman 2004; Kirwan 2004; Jackson et al 2007; Kneafsey et al 2008; Takahashi 2009), which is an area I explore in this thesis (see chapter 7 in particular).

Looking within the literature, I draw on two key sources of definitions of food activism. Counihan and Siniscalchi (2014) define it thus:

> "Efforts by people to change the food system across the globe by modifying the way they produce, distribute, and/or consume food" (2014: 3)

> "Food activism takes aim at the capitalist system of production, distribution, consumption, and commercialisation… people's discourses and actions to make the food system or parts of it more democratic, sustainable, healthy, ethical, culturally appropriate, and better in quality" (2014: 6)

Alkon and Guthman (2017) criticise the more 'foodie' type activists for over-emphasizing the politics of consumption, rather than challenging wider global structures. I explore the relationship between

[4] See also this link tracing various uses of the term food activism from the 1970s: https://www.barrypopik.com/index.php/new_york_city/entry/food_activism_food_activist/ (accessed 13/2/2018)

'foodie' and 'food activist' in chapter 6. Alkon and Guthman acknowledge that, "increasingly, food activists… are looking beyond their plates and taking aim at a variety of injustices throughout the food system" (2017: 2).

On this point, I wish to highlight that food activists are seeking to effect change in one or more areas of the food system, not just at an individual level but beyond themselves. This ranges in focal issue, approaches and strategies. For example, I included people working within civil society, charities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), quasi-non-governmental organisations (QuaNGOS), academia, independently, government and social enterprise.

It is worth noting that whilst all the interviewees agreed to being involved and categorised in a collection called 'food activism', they did not necessarily all identity as food activists specifically. None of them were against being called a food activist, but many identified with other terms, such as describing themselves as campaigners. As such, I refer to them all as interviewees throughout the thesis.

1.3 Overview of the thesis

In chapter 2, I review the various literature relevant to this thesis, to help situate it in the wider academic debates. This includes works within the geographies of food, food activism, social movements, oral history and food within oral history. I conclude with my research questions. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and how this has shaped the research and thesis. This begins with looking at the oral history and life story method, contextualising the research, and additional methods and data used. I then cover the sampling and participation process, practicalities of the research, and how I collated, analysed and interpreted the data. As is always important, I reflect on the nuances of the research and my own positionality. Finally, I outline the ethical procedures and considerations.

There are four empirical chapters. The first, chapter 4, is about activism and outlook, examining some of the social psychology of social movements and the interviewees' relationships with optimism, motivation, pessimistic realities, and positivity within organisations. Chapter 5 looks at activism and image, ranging from the perceptions and crafted presentations of a

movement/organisation, including their workspace, to their personal image and the impressions they seek to give. In chapter 6, I examine the relationship between food, politics and identity, exploring the nature of food as a topic of activism, the relationship with 'foodie-ism', processes of food and politicization, personal eating as an expression of politics and identity, an example case of vegetarianism, and considering the extent to which the various food movements are overlapping and united. The final empirical chapter, 7, focuses on food movements and some of their varying approaches, teasing out the tensions and contested relationships with mainstream and alternative.

The conclusion, chapter 8, summarises the key points from the thesis and empirical chapters, and considers the areas not covered and further gaps for research. It also includes a discussion on the limitations and contributions of the oral history method in researching food activism. Rather than analyzing the outcomes of food activism in the UK, as may be seen in a political science approach, studies of particular organisations/movements, measurements of success, or the case studies of various local and international movements across the world, oral history captures the experience as is navigated from the inside. Using a narrative and biographical approach, the method provides a different window with which to look at wider food movement issues such as alternative/mainstream, food and identity, the politics of food, and personal motivation and challenges. This is the approach I take in this thesis.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this literature review chapter, instead of extensively and thoroughly covering the substantive work of all the fields relevant to the thesis, I outline the most relevant and key studies, arguments and gaps from several select bodies of literature. This way, I aim to situate the thesis in the wider academic debates to which it speaks, identify its distinctive contributions, and, consequently, present my research questions. The first body of literature I will look at is on the geographies of food, which is emerging as a sub-discipline in geography. The second is on food activism, addressed from a variety of disciplines. The third body is social movements, from predominantly political science and social psychology. Finally, oral history, and within that, food studied within oral history. The chapter ends by highlighting some key gaps in the literature, leading to the identification of my research questions.

2.1 Geographies of food

The challenges within global food systems touch on a wide variety of disciplines, ranging in particular across the natural and social sciences. As issues related to food or public health, waste, environmental change and socio-economic inequality deepen and become more evident, there is increasing scholarly attention. This is reflected, for example, in the work of Gustafson et al (2016), Lang and Heasman (2015), Godfray et al (2010), Lang et al (2009), Roberts (2008), Patel (2007) and Pretty (2002), amongst many others, which highlight some of the 'wicked problems' (Rittel and Webber 1973) of food. Geography, as an integrative discipline focusing on time-space dimensions and human-environment interactions (Skole 2004; Baerweld 2010), is recognised for its hybridity and inherent interdisciplinarity (Whatmore 2002; Solem et al 2008; Warf and Arias 2009; Baerweld 2010). It is therefore ideally suited to the study of food systems, and Geography has embraced the topic and increasingly approached it in a more holistic way (Winter 2003). The geography of food is an ever-growing sub-discipline looking at the complex global patterns of food production and consumption. In this section, I summarise the key debates within it that are relevant to my research,

rather than providing a comprehensive review of the literature on food geographies and related issues.

The journal series, "Geographies of Food", in *Progress in Human Geography* by Cook et al published 2006, 2008 and 2011, provides a broad overview of the burgeoning literature within the geographies of food. I provide a brief overview of each one here.

The first publication, *Following* (2006) was based on research influenced by Arjun Appadurai's (1986) 'social life of things', David Harvey's (1990) 'getting behind the veil of the commodity fetish', and George Marcus' (1995) 'multi-sited ethnography'. It covers the concept of food speaking and telling stories, through issues of Fairtrade and food safety for example, whereby geographers expose and explore the hidden stories and meanings of food (Freidberg 2003). This has promoted a divergence beyond simply the realms of 'human' and 'physical' geography, but expanded to molecular, bodily, social, economic, cultural, global, political and environmental geography. Cook et al reference Michael Winter's reviews – a Geographies of Food series in the early 2000s – of "various (sub)disciplinary attempts to 're-connect' the production and consumption of food" (Cook et al 2006: 2), through the concept of agro-food geographies. Geographers had been looking at where to draw boundaries on food issues, which is difficult, and had resulted in many sub-disciplines, prompting a search to bridge the limiting divisions between more quantitative agro-food and more qualitative cultural studies. Cook et al highlight how academics addressed the need, challenges and progress in bringing together analyses of the cultural, natural and political economy of food, incorporating both production and consumption. Indeed, questioning the very nature of disciplinary boundaries and focusing instead on a topic in an undisciplined way, leading to 'post-disciplinary' research, following ideas and connections, for example specific food commodities or food groups.

Towards the end of the first publication, Cook et al look at scholars who suggest using the fetishization of a commodity to reshape production and consumption. He notes how food geographers have been challenged by political economy to question consumer agency against wider forces shaping food systems, and "bigger stories of dominance, exploitation, 'civilization', imperialism, racism, anti-unionism, gender discrimination, emotional and physical harm, to say the least" (Cook et al 2006: 5). The growth in trend to reconnect producers and consumers is the focus of many geographers, researching and often promoting alternative food networks, though others are sceptical and critical of the potential to create real change this way. Cook et al discuss the need for, and some growth towards, more qualitative and multi sited ethnographic studies, which

demand empathy with all the actors involved in food production and consumption, and can inspire change. These can also bring together different theories, rather than ignore them. At the end he calls to make academic writing more accessible, both in terms of style and location, so that it can have more use and impact in areas like food.

In the second publication, *Geographies of Food: Mixing* (2008), Cook et al look critically at how bell hooks' concept of 'eating the Other' (1992) was increasingly employed by geographers from the mid-1990s in relation to food. Whilst originally it was meant more as a metaphor than being predominantly about food literally, it served as a useful concept for exploring the various ways food, ethnicity and culture are essentialized, fetishized and commodified, subverting intentions to address racism and inequalities of power. Cook et al note that many examples of geographers' uses of hooks' 'eating the other' demonstrate "the decontextualization that's essential to any commodification of cultural difference" (2008: 823), whereby the mainstream's cannibalistic relationship with its Others present "its twin desire to 'eat the other and [to] keep its border too'" (Bost in Cook 2008: 823). With a couple of examples of key work from Samantha Barbas and Suzanne Bost, and Lisa Heldke's questioning of 'home' food and looking at its historical relationship with colonization, amongst others, Cook et al outline the ways that geographers bridge time and place to reveal the fluid and messy nature of food and culture. Food can form, challenge, defend, define, redefine and express identity.

The final edition of Cook et al's *Geographies of Food* series, *Afters* (2010), is based on blog conversations about the first two reviews from a variety of invited authors. It went beyond geographers to include sociologists, artists, and people from cultural, American and literary studies, looking at what 'food studies' are. The points raised related to concerns about "difference, ethics, materialities, politics and change… mirroring the complexity, diversity and fluidity of the work discussed" (2010: 105).

More recently, Michael Goodman (2016) summarised the latest food geographies in 'post-discipline' research. He looks at how geographers have explored the way that food is 'more-than-food' through the "visceral nature of eating and politics" and the cultural geography of food (2016: 257). He also examines multiple materialisms of food, space and eating, where he cautions the need to simultaneously consider the real politik of food, especially in light of the current issues of food poverty and food justice.

The majority of work in geographies of food focus on the alternative initiatives and the geo-political factors, looking at the forces currently dominating the food system and the reactions aiming to challenge them. One of geography's particular contributions to food studies is in the area connecting consumers and producers – the place, means and people involved in the production process. Emphasis in connection is an asset and tactic often employed by alternative food systems, such as short supply chains, transparency, fairtrade, and various local initiatives. These largely, though not exclusively, fall into the category of 'Alternative Food Networks' (AFNs), of which there has been substantial study within geographies of food.

Winter (2003) highlights this role of geography to reconnect agriculture and food. Through observing shifts towards focus on food chains and consumption, he sets out the need for reconnections and new connections, particularly between farming and food, food and politics, food and nature, and farmers and agency. Kneafsey et al (2008) address this concept of reconnection in their book, *Reconnecting consumers, producers and food: exploring alternatives.* They explore alternative models of food provision through looking at case studies of local schemes of growing and selling (such as vegetable box schemes, farm shops and farmers markets), and the relationships between the producers and consumers. The research provides insight into the practices, identities and motives of those involved, challenging concepts of choice and convenience, and highlighting ethical and emotional spaces of reconnection. They argue that the theme of care between people, communities and their environments has significant potential in supporting more sustainable and equitable food systems (see also Dowler et al 2009).

Other key debates in the geographies of food examine not just the role of (re)connection that alternative food networks can encourage, but teasing out the dualistic divide between alternative and conventional/mainstream, and exploring the very concept of alternative. Key works on this have been published by Whatmore et al (2003); Kirwan (2004); Watts, Ilbery and Maye (2005); Sonnino and Marsden (2006); Maye, Holloway and Kneafsey (2007); Blake et al (2010); Maye and Kirwan (2010), amongst others. Jackson et al (2007) also looked at concepts of alternative in relation to the corporate food system, where it was adopted into their own discourses, further fuelling the debates about what alternative may mean. These studies and debates do, of course, have overlaps with food activism (further discussed in chapter 7).

2.2 Food activism

Global trends within food and agriculture have shifted over the last century to increasingly large scale, intensive production, where the sector has undergone commodification with 'free trade' liberalised markets. Phenomena like the Green Revolution, growth of 'factory farming' and rise in processed foods from the 1950s onwards has led to a plethora of negative environmental, social, health and ethical consequences. It has been met with criticisms, such as Rachel Carson's seminal Silent Spring (1962), and a host of growing counter movements, promoting everything from free range and fair trade to anti-GM and anti-hunger, and seen in groups such as Via Campesina and Slow Food (see for example Rosset 2003; Petrini 2003).

Food Activism has arisen in response to these problems, providing sharp criticism, campaigns on local, national and international levels, and a mass of proposals of alternative food systems. These range from grassroots initiatives, direct responses to particular localised problems, and social enterprises, to sizeable national and international organisations challenging the global status quo. In Britain, the various movements cover both single issues and broader, compound ones. They emerged in the post-World War Two era, predominantly in the 1980s and 1990s, although some as early as the 1940s and others as recent as the 2000s. Some of the key areas are: organic food and agriculture, fairtrade, animal welfare, public health nutrition, food waste, sustainability, ethics, land use and access, vegetarian/veganism, food poverty, food security and famine relief, local food provision, urban food production, community supported agriculture, food education, public sector catering, food safety, intellectual property rights, anti-GM, and consumer rights.

Many scholars have looked at particular food activist issues, organisations or movements (national and international), rather than food activism as a whole. For example, Gregory (2006) looks into the historical roots of vegetarianism, and Windfuhr and Jonsén (2005) address the concept of food sovereignty. The organic movement has had particularly large coverage, for example on its history (Lockeretz 2007), and the challenges and paradoxes it has faced in 'mainstreaming' (see for example Guthman 2014; Goodman 2000; Johnston, Biro and MacKendrick 2009; Michelsen et al 1999; Miele 2001). The Fairtrade movement has also been studied extensively, from its history (Trentmann 2007), to particular products (Doherty and Tranchell 2014 on Divine chocolate); its 'mainstreaming' approach (Moore, Gibbon and Slack 2006); certification and regulation (Raynolds 2012); and big picture aspirations (Raynolds, Murray and Wilkinson 2007). The abundance of local food initiatives

and enterprises have also been studied, often falling in the broad category of 'alternative food networks' (AFNs) (although AFNs can also be applied to international scale movements). Holloway and Kneafsey (2000) for example look at farmers markets and Nost (2014) analyses community supported agriculture. As the growing issue of UK food poverty and food security becomes apparent, academics have studied the rise of food banks and the topic of food justice and food equity, for example Lambie-Mumford and Dowler (2014), Caraher and Cavacchi (2014) and Johnston and Baker (2005). Bridging some of these issues, Caraher and Dowler (2014) looked at the aims of AFNs (e.g. more ethical and sustainable food provision), together with the rising needs to address food poverty in the UK, and diminishing ability for oppositional politics, to explore whether they can transgress.

Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy have contributed to the literature on both geographies of food and food activism, especially in their paper, 'Taking back taste: feminism, food and visceral politics' (2008). Here, they use the Slow Food movement to argue their concept of a visceral politics of food, exploring the links between the materialities of food experiences and ideologies of food and eating. They propose that power can be traced through the body and help to understand the "political (eating) subject" (2008: 461), arguing that food-based movements can and should utilise this visceral politics of food to inspire and mobilise action. I employ this theory in chapter 6 when looking at food and identity. Their work thickens the theoretical scholarship on the relationship between food activism and food, politics and identity, although does not undertake a comprehensive study of food activism as such.

There have been two key books on food activism in the last few years. The first is Carole Counihan and Valeria Siniscalchi (2014), which is an edited, contemporary anthropological book on food activism – *Food Activism: agency, democracy and economy*. It presents and analyses a range of issues and movements within food activism through cases from over ten different countries across the world, at both local and national levels, led by political activists, farmers, restauranteurs, producers and consumers. Consistent with my own approach to recent and contemporary food movements within this research, Counihan and Siniscalchi characterize food activist movements as taking "aim at the capitalist system of production, distribution, consumption and commercialization" (2014: 6). The strength of the book is in presenting diverse areas of food activism from across the globe and from the perspectives of different people, rather than solely political activists. However, it cannot look in detail at every country and there are no case studies nor explicit discussions about food activism within the UK specifically, which my research addresses and contributes to.

Alkon and Guthman also published an edited book called *The New Food Activism* in 2017. The collection is a series of studies around the world, such as struggles against GMOs and pesticides, food cooperatives, and workers' pay and conditions spanning throughout the food system. Critical of the limits of activism that focus on individuals, consumerism and private property, often assumed by 'foodies', they seek to push for more collective forms of food activism. Looking in particular at social, racial and economic inequalities and justice, the chapters focus predominantly on those who grow, cook and serve food. The studies presented are largely, though not exclusively, from North America and focus on small cases rather than overarching global movements, typically on initiatives from those within the food industry who are rising against it. Their concept of activism is aligned with that of Counihan and Siniscalchi (2014) and my own here, which demonstrates consistency in its use.

There are a number of differences to my study of food activism, however, and these two edited books on food activism. This is predominantly in the method and the region, given that neither books use oral history, or focus on the UK, and in fact both look at a collection of examples from around the world. What is also interesting to note is that they both look at more grassroots forms of food activism, often on very specific issues and cases arising from people's livelihoods. As Guthman remarks, "activists" is a broad category, including:

> "the many professionals who are enrolled to work on particular programs of change. Indeed, as demonstrated in the special issue in Antipode edited by Bondi and Laurie (2005) it could be argued that one of today's hallmarks is the professionalization of activism" (Guthman 2008b: 1175).

My interviews were with people who I would generally describe as working in food activism in a professional capacity, rather than in more grassroots ways. Furthermore, whilst the books do explore various types of food activism, they do not directly or substantially discuss the concept or definition of activism in any great depth, besides a few sentences in the introductions. I set out a definition in section 1.2 of my introduction. Through the oral histories, I aim to explore some of the dynamics and understandings of what constitutes food activism, including as part of identity, and briefly touch on interviewees' relationship to the term.

2.3 Social Movements

There are multiple definitions of social movements, but broadly speaking, they can be defined as organized efforts by multiple individuals or organizations, acting outside formal structures to pursue collective political ends and social change (see also Blumer 1995; Diani 1992). In this way, much of food activism falls into the broader category of social movements. The subject is typically studied within political science, social theory, political philosophy and sociology, although falls into the scope of other disciplines too. As explored in Peet and Watts' edited book *Liberation Ecologies* (2004), social movements can be inherently unstable, making them hard to research, and their effects hard to measure (see also Gamson 2015 on impact theory).

The key theories of the 1960s and 1970s emphasized the ability of social movements to mobilize symbolic and material resources. However, these were critiqued for their methodological individualism (Buechler 1995; Klandermans 1991; Scott 1990). The New Social Movements literature of the 1980s emphasized the role of environmental, feminist and peace movements as well as more established ideas about the labour movements (see Slater 1985 on the case of Latin America). In turn, this was then criticized for its association with 'identity politics', which emphasise one strand of identity (gender, sexuality or race, for example) rather than seeking links between them, as coalitions or collective struggles (Scott 1990). Contemporary theories argue that identity is a defining principle of social organisation but there are multiple identities that come into play, therefore the wider cultural, religious, ideological, political and national identities must be taken into consideration (Castells 2004; Kendall 2015; Scott 1990). For example, eco feminism or environmental justice movements reflect this.

The changes in theories of social movements highlight two things about my life history research. The first is the importance of considering pluralistic identities. The second is situating individuals in their wider context, tracing networks of individuals, and how they move between groups, with multiple perspective on the same movement. This can be seen to some extent in table 3 of chapter 3 (section 3.4), showing which people have been in multiple organisations or the same. It was also the reason I set out to have a couple of organisations where I interviewed more than one person, providing a wider perspective – this was achieved in both Sustain and the Soil Association.

Because I explore the individual experience of social movements through oral history, I found it useful to also look at the work on social movements from social psychology. In this field, there has been significant work on the role of emotions and motivations to understand why people engage in, and stay in, social movements. Klandermans (1997, 2015), van Zomeren et al (2008), and

Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013), amongst others, are some of the lead scholars who have researched the importance of a range of factors ranging from personal, social and contextual that are necessary for social movements and action. These include, for example, collective identity, group-based anger, sense of injustice, inner obligation, identity and efficacy.

2.4 Oral History

As discussed more extensively in the next chapter on methodology, oral history is a method that's been employed to research a wide range of issues that have historically been a less dominant voice in history (Passerini 1979; Frisch 1990; Thompson 2000). With a focus on collecting personal experiences within living memory, it accepts and embraces that there are multiple 'truths' and perspectives that tie into particular time-space dimensions.

Oral history life story interviewing is a growing area, especially as it is employed by scholars from different disciplines and incorporated into mixed methods. I outline here a few of the seminal works and key issues within the field, including as secondary data sources, before looking at oral history research specifically on food.

Paul Thompson is considered one of the pioneers of oral history. In particular, he carried out 'The Edwardians: Family Life and Work Experience before 1918' in the early 1970s, which was the first national study using oral history interviews in Britain. He was also responsible for the collection, 'Families, Social Mobility and Ageing: an Intergenerational Approach, 1900-1988' (commonly known as '100 Families'). From these he was involved in various other studies, analysing the oral history method itself, and published the seminal *The Voice of the Past* (1978), with the latest edition in 2000. He also founded the British Library's National Life Story Collection in 1987.

Another central oral history contribution was by Samuel and Thompson (1982) in their edited book *The Myths We Live By*, looking at how memory and tradition are continually reshaped and recycled to make sense of the past from the standpoint of the present. The chapters cover different parts of the world, people and events, exploring the role of narrative and presenting history as a live force in the present.

Luisa Passerini, an oral historian and professor of history, used oral history to complicate theories about working class consciousness during Italian fascism in her article 'Work, Ideology and Consensus Under Italian Fascism' (1979), by exploring some of the gradual changes rather than pin-pointing exact moments in history where resistance suddenly emerged. Her aim was to construct a history of working class subjectivity and to develop a critical history of the category of consensus, with the opinion that subjectivity is misconceived and taken reductively as only behaviour, rather than also feelings, values, and so on.

The different topics studied through oral history have widened, and the research has been executed and disseminated in different ways. For example, Bornat (2000) used oral history to research health and welfare, looking at the method in relation to processes of ageing, reminiscence and therapy, from the perspectives of health practitioners to patients. James (2000) takes a different style, looking primarily at just one life story in depth, that of María Roldán, a labour and Peronist party activist in Argentina. He supplements this with brief examples from five others, and juxtaposed with relevant essays and some background on the place. Through this, he explores Doña María's narrative, a gender analysis of the issues, working-class narratives in general, and probes the dimensions of the oral history method.

Attention was also paid to reflexivity about the method. Frisch's (1990) publication, *A Shared Authority*, considered the extent to which the interviewer and interviewee are co-creators of the oral history. He was interested in the relationship between historical scholarship and public discourse, noting: "what is most compelling about oral and public history is a capacity to redefine and redistribute intellectual authority, so that this might be shared more broadly in historical research and communication rather than continuing to serve as an instrument of power and hierarchy" (Frisch 1990: xx). He advocates sharing authorship and interpretation. Over ten years later, Lorraine Sitzia published the article, 'A Shared Authority: An Impossible Goal?' (2003). Using Frisch's principle of shared authority, she addresses the importance of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, and the importance of analysing it in oral history material.

Yow (2006) also explores subjectivity and the growth of researcher awareness in oral history from the 1970s onwards, influenced by similar trends in anthropology. She rejected the notion that historians and social scientists should and can be objective, and must remain reflexive. As part of this, she draws on psychoanalytic theories and the Freudian concept of 'transference' – transferring one's own former and repressed experiences, in this case between the interviewer and interviewee.

Yow also considers the power relationships and ethics within the oral history process, issues taken up by feminists in particular. The concerns were over "how the dominant position of the researcher – who knows all the questions to ask and by implication all the answers – can subdue the narrator" (Yow 2006: 61). Within this question of power, she also considers topics such as gender, ethnicity, class and age.

Yow's chapter is but one in the formative book, *The Oral History Reader*, by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (1998 first edition, 2006 second, 2015 third edition). This comprehensive and accessible anthology contains over forty articles divided into five sections written by some of the most prominent and experienced academics and practitioners within the discipline. It serves to introduce newcomers to oral history as much as stimulate debate for those already emerged in the field, by covering the main yet broad issues within oral history from its beginnings to the present day, and from theory to practice. The five sections cover: the 'Critical Developments' within oral history (the key debates) in the past 60 years; 'Interviewing' experiences and approaches, including the interview relationship; the challenges of the nature of memory and how to interpret testimony in 'Interpreting Memories'; the practical, ethical and interpretive issues that arise in 'Making Histories' from the oral sources; and 'Advocacy and Empowerment' which looks at the personal and political significance of oral history and its use with certain social groups.

Regarding the oral history method to research social movements, Jolly (2011) and Jolly, Russell and Cohen (2012) have used it to look at the women's liberations movement. Lewis (2008) also argues for the value of the method in social policy and researching people who cross between public and third sectors.

Oral histories are recorded and then often deposited in public archives, at least, more than other types of qualitative interviews. This sets them apart from other qualitative methods, and makes them more accessible as sources of secondary data. The rich nature of oral history life interviews offers great potential to explore a number of issues. However, there are still challenges. The main debates around re-use focus on the need to 'recontextualise' data (Moore 2007), through both considering the original context in which the data were collected and the current context of reuse. As Mauthner et al (1998) insist, researchers play a fundamental role not just in interpreting and theorising the data but also in the process of data construction. Therefore, the need to contextualise is paramount (see also Bornat 2003; Corti et al 2005; Corti and Thompson 2004; Jackson et al 2011). One of the most reused collections of oral history data is that of Thompson's 'The Edwardians' and

the '100 Families'. For example, Elliot (2001) studied the '100 Families' collection to perform a study on smoking. Jackson, Olive and Smith (2009) look at both Thompson's collections, and the Millennium Memory Bank, as part of their study into changing families, food, and family meals.

With regards to the place of food in oral history life stories, the topic inevitably comes up as part of discussions of everyday. However, there is a growing body of research looking chiefly at food through oral history. One of the earliest uses of oral history to study food specifically was Bertaux (1983) whose article looks at artisan bread makers in France. The personal stories of the various bakery owners and workers provided interesting factual information about their daily lives and historical developments in the industry that could not have been known easily from other sources. However, they also revealed the political role that bread making played in France's history and, most importantly, the significance of this to the bakers and their identity, purpose, and self-worth.

More recently, Bishop (2006) has looked at convenience food, Smith (2007) used group oral history interviewing to explore women's memory, food, family and conflict, and Counihan (2013) used life stories to study Hispanic women's perspectives and empowerment through their food stories.

A great deal of food-focused oral history collections are held in the British Library, notably in their 'Food: Source to Salespoint' collection. I discuss the British Library collections in more detail in chapter 3 (section 3.3), but they have largely focused on the corporate and industry side including Dillon's (2015) work on Tesco's corporate history, and Jackson, Russell and Ward's work on the sugar and poultry industries (Russell 2008; Jackson et al. 2009, 2010).

2.5 Gaps and research questions

Looking at these bodies of literature, there are several gaps that I identify. Within geographies of food, there has been substantial scholarship on alternative networks of food, a number of studies looking at particular issues, movements and initiatives, and geo-politics related to food. These have explored the tensions between alternative and mainstream and theorised about the (re)connections that can be embedded in more sustainable and ethical food systems. However, there has not been a great deal of work on food activism in general, food activists and food activist movements.

Furthermore, whilst there has been use of oral history in geographies of food research, activism has not been approached through the oral history life story method.

Similarly, within the food activism literature, which is rather smaller but growing, there is little that is researched using oral history. The field is also predominantly focused on case studies from around the globe, particularly reactive and grassroots movements, with limited study on the increasing 'professional' food activist movements and very little looking specifically at the UK.

Social movement scholarship is dominated by political science, social theory, political philosophy, sociology and social psychology. These disciplines focus on a range of issues with food featuring minimally. Furthermore, the oral history method, with a few exceptions, has rarely been employed to explore the narratives and individual experiences of social movements from perspectives on the inside. This would offer insight into the 'identities' they are keen to incorporate within New Social Movement study. It would also enable situating individual participants into their wider contexts and networks.

The growing use of oral history and life story methods have increasingly forayed into food. However, there is very little on those working in the political, alternative and activist side of food. This is particularly notable in the British Library's expansive collections, and was a core reason for funding this PhD research.

In summary, whilst there has been substantial scholarship within disciplines, on topics and on issues that I aim to address, there has been no significant studies using the oral history life story method to explore food activism in Britain. Bearing this in mind, with this approach, I lay out below the areas I set out to address through my research questions. These guided my research design, data collection, and analysis.

Through an oral history of British food activism, I aim to address the following:

1. How can British food activism be defined?
    a. To what extent are the issues focused on broad and overlapping or narrow and self-contained?

   b. Has the work of food activism produced wider social change, leading to some movements shifting from being perceived as alternative to mainstream?
   c. What has been the impact of food activism and in what ways?

2. What is the relationship between food and identity in the context of food activism?
   a. Is there something particular about food that engages not only the physical but also the emotional, social and political?
   b. How do activists define themselves in relation to food? In what ways does food feature in their lives?
   c. How does food fit into social identities? Such as: environmentalist, humanist/social justice advocate, male, female, parent, rural, urban, religious, healthy, unwell, religious, social class, etc.?

3. What can oral history contribute to understanding the above?
   a. To what extend is oral history a useful method in researching food, activism and identity?
   b. What are the advantages and limits of the method? Particularly regarding the relationship between the private and public, personal and professional?

Chapter 3

Methodology

Here I lay out the research design, providing some background to the methods, why they were chosen, how they relate to the research questions, and contextualise them within the overall research project. I then describe the sampling process, and how I went about the data collection, followed by its collation and the analysis I performed to reach my findings and conclusions. I include a section on some of the reflections and nuances on the methods, particularly oral history, which relate in part to my research question 3, on what oral history can offer to the study of food activism. Finally, I cover the ethical procedures and considerations that guided and informed the project.

3.1 Background on Oral History and Life Stories

As indicated in the thesis title, the principal research method used for the data collection was oral history, specifically a life story interviewing approach. Atkinson attributes the evolution of life stories to a combination of oral history, ethnographic and other field approaches, and defines it as the following: "life story interviewing is a qualitative research method for gathering information on the subjective essence of one person's entire life that is transferable across disciplines" (2002: 22). It is principally led by the person being interviewed, who tells the story about their life (up to the present day) as completely and honestly as possible, depending on what they remember and what they want others to know of it (Atkinson 1998: 8). Life story interviews are the primary technique of oral history, whereby the oral historian guides the respondents through their stories (ibid). The oral historian often has a particular topic of interest driving their research, and supplements the interviews with additional sources of information and data to construct and present the analysis.

Oral history has emerged as a sub-discipline of its own in recent decades, as it is deployed by academics, professionals and amateurs as a valuable method for understanding the past, the interplay between the past and present, and the relationship between individuals, organisations, and wider structures shaping society (Frisch 1990; Thompson 2000; Perks & Thomson 2006).

Crossing disciplinary boundaries such as history, human geography, psychology, sociology, anthropology and linguistics, oral history is diverse (Abrams 2010).

Historically, oral history has been seen to 'give voice', described as 'history from below' by recording accounts from the marginalised whose lives might otherwise be 'hidden from history' and shut out of the historical record (Thomson 2007; Rowbotham 1973; Thompson 2000). Given this, it is seen somewhat as an activist, grassroots method in itself, 'giving voice' to less mainstream accounts. It is therefore a saccharine twist in this project that such a method is used to research food activism, providing a record of less mainstream accounts of the food sector by those at its core. This could be contested, given that the interviewees were already politicised people with a voice and platform, even if not the biggest platform, and were therefore not entirely voiceless and powerless. Some interviewees did question this. However, in consideration of the already existing oral history collections on food in the British Library, these recordings contribute a series of substantially more marginalised voices (see Table 1 below).

The agency the subject has over the interview means that oral history is deemed a very collaborative, co-constructed, empowering and participant-led method (Frisch 1990; Perks and Thomson 2006). This is reflected in the comments from many of the interviewees, and I made a conscious effort to include space in the life stories for the interviewees to shape the content and adjust it as we progressed. For example, I started each life story by asking them to outline what they would want included in a story of their life. I also regularly checked, both on and off record, between tracks/sessions whether the interviewees had anything to add, corrections, further reflections, memories, etc., allowing them the chance to rectify or augment things previously said. Additionally, before closing the life story, I ensured the interviewees were ready and happy to finish, if there was anything else they would like to add, and asked them if they had any thoughts or messages to share for future listeners in decades to come. Finally, we reflected on the process, including their perceived value and experience of the life story, our relationship and how that shaped the interview, as well as the extent to which they felt a sense of ownership and collaboration of the story. For example, Philip Lymbery and Kath Dalmeny each concluded:

> *"I think [the process] has been very collaborative, I mean, I've never felt, maybe I should, but I've never felt uncomfortable, or not knowing what we were doing, or why"*
> (Lymbery, Track 6)

> *"[It's been] very collaborative, because, you've been so kind and open to listening and going back to things, and picking up themes. Uh, I have deliberately come in not trying to control it in advance, because, otherwise you just end up giving your talk, haha, your sort of powerpoint slide about Sustain. I was surprised that it was quite so personal, so going into family history and things like that, uh, but that's fine… so it doesn't feel like control has been an issue at all, we've explored together"*
> (Dalmeny, Track 6)

In this way, oral history life story process, more than other qualitative interviewing methods, was reflexive and iterative.

Oral history life story interviews typically involve between 7-12 hours of interviewing, often recorded over several sessions. To an extent, each one follows a similar structure, beginning with a description of the individual's personal life from childhood, and covering topics such as family, home, community, education, relationships, work, hobbies and interests, adult life, and later life (Thompson 2000). Certain areas can then be revisited and explored from different angles and in greater depth. For more on the practice of oral history interviewing methods, on power dynamics during interviewing, and other methodological and ethical challenges, see Frisch (1990), James (2000), Sitzia (2003), Yow (2006), Jackson and Russell (2010).

3.2 Context to the research method

The PhD was co-funded by the British Library, who wanted to create a collection on food activism to add to their oral history archives, as discussed earlier in introduction section 1.1. Therefore, from the outset and as a requirement of the PhD studentship, the interviews were intended to form both the basis of the thesis data and be deposited in the oral history collection of the British Library's public sound archive. This meant that the life stories needed to be recorded and have permission to be deposited and used in a public archive (see Ethics section below). The British Library suggested between fifteen and twenty recorded life stories in total.

The fact that the life stories were recorded and would be accessible to the public for decades to come did, of course, shape the dynamics of the interviews. I will discuss this shortly with regards to nuances and other considerations and reflections.

As noted in the introduction, food as a research subject remains a relatively small topic within oral history, despite its potential and increasing political, social and environmental interest. This was a gap that the British Library particularly noted with regards to its own archives, especially on the political, activist and alternative realms of food, which prompted this research project. By the nature of the detailed accounts provided in life stories, food often features due to being a part of everyday. However, this is rarely focused on explicitly, unless it is a particular area of interest for either the interviewer or interviewee, an issue in using oral history as secondary data (Thompson 1975). Yet, this is why food, and particularly food activism – being about politics and social change – potentially lends itself as an apposite research theme in oral history. Where oral history is already apt at examining the relationship of blurred lines between public and private, professional and personal, it is perhaps even more so when exploring the political side of, and someone's life work on, a substance that one ingests into one's body daily.

Considering the above points, the aim of this thesis is to chart the history of recent British food activism through oral histories of such activists. The personal life stories of these recordings form the base from which to map and understand the changes, developments and impacts within British food activism over the last 30 or so years, by documenting the experiences of some of those most heavily involved. In addition, the data provides the opportunity to explore, through narrative, people's relationships with food, politics, and identity. I also reflect on the method itself and the extent to which it serves research into food and food activism.

3.3 Additional methods and data

Besides the main oral history life story interviews conducted as the primary data, there were a number of oral history recordings already in the British Library collections that were relevant to the research project. As part of the preparation and scoping during the first year of the PhD, I mapped the sound archives to find which existing collections and interviews may be applicable. The main

projects are archived under the National Life Stories and the Oral History collections.[5] This was important for several reasons: to rule out any prospective interviewees already interviewed in other collections; to get a better understanding of where the food activism collection would fit into the sound archives; to listen to other styles of interviews in preparation for conducting my own; and to identify any interviews that could be used as secondary data. This final purpose was particularly important both for gathering further data on relevant topics/from key figures and also for exploring the extent to which oral history is valuable as a secondary source of qualitative data.

The collections and sub-projects elicited as potentially relevant which I searched further were as follows here in Table 1.[6]

Table 1: Food related sound archives of the British Library

Project Title	**Collection Title**	**Number of interviews in project**	**Catalogue Number**
Food: From Source to Salespoint	Oral History (OH): Food and Drink	335 (ongoing)	C821
Oral History of the Wine Trade	OH: Food and Drink	82	C1088
Tesco: an Oral History	OH: Food and Drink	39	C1087
Pioneers in Charity and Social Welfare	OH: Social Policy and Social Movements	37	C1155
WRVS Eastbourne Heritage Project 2005	OH: Food and Drink	51	C1243
Millennium Memory Bank	OH: Food and Drink	5,000 +	C900

[5] The collections can be viewed here on the British Library website: https://www.bl.uk/subjects/oral-history and https://www.bl.uk/projects/national-life-stories and https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/oral-history (accessed 12/2/2018)

[6] The sound catalogue can be searched here: http://cadensa.bl.uk (accessed 12/2/2018)

Family Life and Work Experience Before 1918	OH: Food and Drink	969	C707
Oral History of the British Press	National Life Stories Collection, General (NLSC)	26	C638
National Life Stories General Collections	NLSC		C408, C464, C642
Leaders of National Life	OH: Social Policy and Social Movements	59	C408
National Co-operative Oral History project	OH: Social Policy and Social Movements	142	C739
Animal Welfare Activists	OH: Social Policy and Social Movements	25	C894
	Down to Earth: an Oral History of British Horticulture	80	C1029

Within these collections, I then searched each one using in particular the following key words (and variants of them):

> Agriculture – bio – campaign – environment – fair trade – famine – farm – farming – food – gaia – GM – genetic modification – nutrition – organic – pesticide – conventional – diet – public health – sustainable – vegan – vegetarian. The names of target organisations as well as individuals were also searched.

The key word searches were largely dependent on the summaries written for each recording, required by the British Library but not always there.

After charting the key collections and interviews, which culminated in a list of sixteen potentially relevant oral histories, four in particular were identified – listed below with the collections they are held in:

- Peter Melchett, National Life Stories General Collections
- Tim Lang, Food: From Source to Salespoint
- Joyce D'Silva, Animal Welfare Activists

- Michael Barratt Brown, Pioneers in Charity and Social Welfare

Each of these interviews were listened to in full and incorporated to some extent into the analysis and manual coding of the primary data. Though I don't use direct quotes within this thesis (I don't even use quotes from all my own interviews), they provided useful experience in using oral history as secondary data and thereby testing its ability and value as secondary data source.[7]

In addition to oral histories, I employed elements of ethnography in the research. The disciplinary overlaps and borrowing within oral history make this highly suitable, and many oral historians recommend utilising elements of ethnography in the research process (Thompson 2000; Yow 2006). Having come from a social anthropology background, such methods were familiar to me and I highly valued the 'real life' insight they provide in addition to interviews. Of course, the research was not a full ethnography – I did not spend an extended period of time doing participant observation. However, the ways that I implemented it were to spend as much time as possible with many of the interviewees between the recording sessions, for example breaks between tracks to have meals and refreshments, and many times recordings took place in their homes and/or work environments. These were often not particularly intentional snippets of participant observation, but convenient and natural opportunities that presented themselves and would have happened anyway. Furthermore, especially during the first year whilst compiling the list of potential interviewees, issues and organisations, I attended public events, such as conferences and workshops, where the interviewees were in attendance as part of their professional capacity. Not only did all of this help in the sampling process, but it aided developing relationships, building trust and rapport with potential interviewees, which is integral to a more open, relaxed and honest oral history (Berteaux 1983; Thompson 2000; Yow 2006). I discuss the impacts of this more in section 3.7 below on nuances and reflections.

In order to capture this information, I kept field notes in a log about the interactions with interviewees, particularly from interview sessions, which provides additional supplementary data for the analysis. This not only provided added observational data, but also prompted an important reflective component to the study, which is integral to qualitative research (Merriam and Tisdell 2016; Rose 1997; Yow 2006). Sometimes these were simple observations regarding their office/home, presentation and manner, which were highly informative for chapters 5 and 6.

[7] For discussion on the secondary use of oral history and qualitative data, see Bornat (2003) and Corti and Thompson (2004). Regarding the importance of re-contextualising the data in particular, see Jackson et al (2011); Moore (2007); and Bishop (2006).

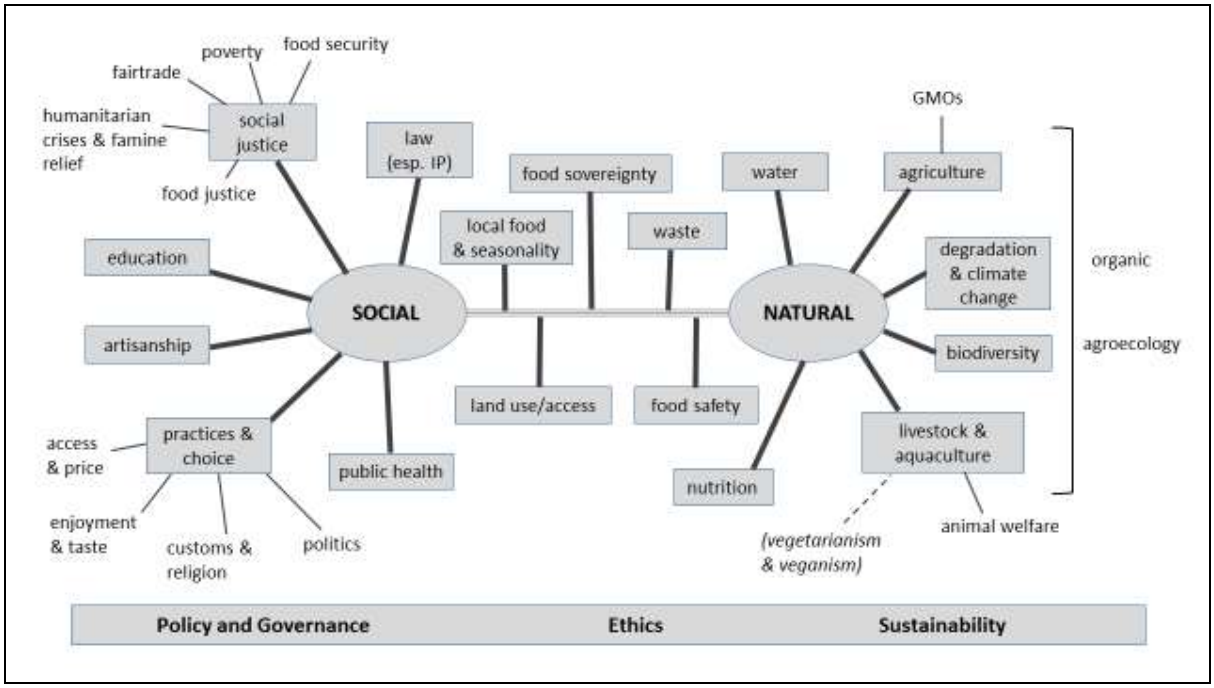
Sometimes the log served to reflect on and note the wider context of the interview, for example if one of us was late or seemed stressed, if there were interruptions, if there were topics they freely discussed with me off record but not on, how well we knew each other before starting. These interactions enabled me to build a larger and clearer picture of the whole person beyond what they revealed on audio recording destined for the public domain, and take into consideration the fluctuations of each interview session. Of course, sometimes this was less possible. Some interviewees conducted the sessions at the British Library only and declined spending any time together, even a tea break, outside of the sessions. This was also interesting to reflect on, analyse and compare, and was also the sort of thing reflected upon in my log notes.

3.4 Sampling and Participation

In the year of my MPhil (2010-2011), preceding the interviewing, I identified the principal areas of food activism to be covered, and investigated key organisations and/or individuals relating to these. The scope was always intended to cover the wide range of issues and activities, from social and economic to environment and health, large and small scale, and maintain a reasonable balance of representation between them, rather than depth of just a handful of organisations/issues. I was also conscious of achieving an equal representation of men and women, and in the end interviewed nine men and eight women. The alternative food movement in the UK is highly racialized, with little diversity and dominated by white people (see the works of Slocum 2007 and Guthman 2008a on the whiteness of food movements). This was evident when I looked at the potential people I'd identified, and more so when I systematically looked for non-white interviewees in the UK, who were few and far between. I expand on this somewhat in the discussion section of the conclusion, in chapter 8.

To provide visual representation of the wider British landscape of food activism, I have developed a heuristic device which maps the principal issues that were identified to include in the archive. This diagram, which has two versions (figure 1 and figure 2), represents some of the thought process involved in the sampling, from the early stages of planning and design, right through to the end of the data collection phase. Both diagrams require some explanation, and should be viewed as simplified, rather than comprehensive, representations.

Figure 1: Diagram of key British food activist issues



The first diagram, figure 1, charts roughly where food activist issues fall on a social or natural continuum. There are innumerable ways to plot this depending on all kinds of criteria (for example, geographical focus of issue, change over time, position along food chain), and the aim is not to reinforce a social-natural dichotomy – as can already be seen, few fit neatly. Some inherently cut across both social and natural, represented in the bar at the bottom. The complexity of the food system and the activism within it, especially over time, is hard to represent in a static diagram or as simplistic as a social or natural focus. This diagram should therefore be used with caution, and can be taken as one proposed representation that is broad and simplified. It could also be added to and expanded on in different ways, for example with links indicated between issues, to show the messiness further. What it serves here in this form is to broadly map the key issues focused on within current British food activism that provided the backbone criteria for the identification of who to interview, ensuring that most of the issues were covered in the oral histories. The second version (figure 2 below) includes the organisations and individuals who were represented in the archive by the end of the data collection, and where they fit (as best possible) on this first diagram.

Table 2 (below) is taken from my MPhil Upgrade Research Proposal in 2011, and shows the main organisations and individuals I planned to target and which issues and movements they related to. This was extensively discussed with both my supervisors and had various revisions. It was then

further discussed and debated with peers, academics and examiners during the upgrade process, resulting in several iterations.

Table 2: Proposed people for life story interviews

Person	**Organisation**	**Activist movement/issue**
Patrick Holden, Craig Sams, or Helen Browning	Soil Association	Organic food and agriculture production
Kath Dalmeny, Jeanette Longfield, Charlie Powell, or Christine Haigh	Sustain	Sustainable food, local food systems
Philip Lymbery	Compassion in World Farming	Animal welfare
Harriet Lamb or Barbara Crowther	Fairtrade Foundation	Fairtrade, sustainable international development
Hugh Fearnley-Wittingstall	Chef, Landshare, independent food campaigner, 'fish fight', TV personality	Allotments/local food/community, 'real' food, slow food, fishing
Simon Fairlie	Independent writer (Chapter 7/The Land, The Land Is Ours), smallholder farmer, The Ecologist	Land rights, sustainable agriculture, climate change, community agriculture, vegetarianism, anti-vegetarianism
Geoff Tansey	Food Ethics Council, independent writer/campaigner/consultant, World Development Movement	Intellectual property, agricultural biodiversity, food security, sustainable development
Felicity Lawrence or Joanna Blythman or Sheila Dillon	Independent food journalist BBC Food Programme journalist/broadcaster	
Deirdre Hutton	Food Standards Agency, Sustainable Development Commission	Food safety, sustainable development, consumer rights
Pete Riley	GM Freeze, Friends of the Earth	Anti-GM, environmentalism
Vicki Hird	Friends of the Earth, Sustain, campaigning and policy consultant	Sustainable farming, land use, water, food security
Guy Watson	Organic farmer, Riverford Organics	Organic agriculture, vegetable box schemes, slow food
Colin Tudge	Biologist, writer and author, 'Real	Agroecology, food sovereignty, economic

	Farming' (campaign and conference)	democracy
Jeremy Iles or Ian Egginton-Metters	Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens	Local food systems, allotments, community projects, education
Jeanette Longfield or Tom MacMillan	Food Ethics Council (overlaps with Soil Association and Sustain)	Local food systems, community projects, food justice, animal welfare, sustainable agriculture
Betty McBride or Prof Sir Michael Marmot	British Heart Foundation	Public health, labelling and marketing, nutrition
Catherine Gazzoli or Jane Clarke	Slow Food	Slow food
Richard Swannell	WRAP/Love Food Hate Waste, Envirowise	Food waste, environmentalism
Brendan O'Donnell or Josie Cohen or Jenny Ricks or Belinda Calaguas	ActionAid	Sustainable development, land rights, food security, fairtrade
Tina Fox	Vegetarian Society	Vegetarianism, animal welfare, health/nutrition, environmentalism
Philip Bickley, Rosamind Raha, or Alex Bourke	Vegan Society	Veganism, animal welfare, health/nutrition
Liz Dowler	Academic, sociologist, consultant/ advisor, Food Ethics Council	British food poverty and security, nutrition, food rights, food justice
Brian Wynne	Scientist, academic, independent writer/consultant, government advisor	Genetically modified food

The list in table 2 was a guide and I expected it to change and adapt throughout the course of the interviewing, depending not only on availability and willingness, but to increasing knowledge of the movements, people involved, and the range of food issues being captured, ensuring that different food activist causes were represented. I expand on this below. This means that some individuals and organisations were on the list but not visible here because they appeared in versions between the earlier Table 2 and final Table 3.

In the selection of the proposed sample, and as I moved ahead with interviewing, I was keen to include people from both long-established organizations, such as the Soil Association (founded 1946)

and Oxfam (1942) with more recently founded organisations like Sustain (1999) and the Food Ethics Council (1998), reflecting the changing content and priority of issues over time. I wanted some who had operated as individuals speaking in their own right (Geoff Tansey, Colin Tudge) complemented by people who were representatives of organisations and government departments (Food Standards Agency, Fairtrade). On top of this, I was careful to include people who had moved between organisations (such as Deirdre Hutton, Vicki Hird, Pete Riley) as well as those who had remained almost entirely in one (e.g. Philip Lymbery). I sought interviewees from across the whole agri-food chain (from farming organisations, trade and health to chefs and consumer groups); from both food-specific organisations (like the Food Ethics Council, Slow Food, Vegan Society) and wider groups with links to broader issues (like Friends of the Earth/the environment, WRAP/waste and British Heart Foundation/public health); and covering a range of professional roles, such as scientists, campaigners, writers and journalists. The goal was breadth, which was often reflected in interviewees – as can be seen in both tables 2 and 3, most people did not fit neatly into just one organisation or issue and there was plenty of overlap.

Once I neared/entered my data collection phase, I gradually began contacting a few of the people on the list. Some of them I knew already through being involved in food movement activities, others I did not know directly but knew someone who did know them, and some I had to approach 'cold'. Wherever possible I tried to use some kind of contact, and tended to raise the possibility of being interviewed through a conversation in person or by phone first, before sending a more formal and standardised invitation letter. I also consistently used email (a British Library account) for all official and most other correspondence in order to maintain and track communication history easily. The formal invitation letter outlined the project and highlighted the importance of it being for a public archive in the British Library, as well as forming the data for my thesis. It was accompanied with a British Library leaflet on depositing oral history recordings into the public archive, and the Recording Agreement that they would be asked to sign at the end of the process. A copy of the letter template and the information they each received are attached in appendices 1, 2 and 3.

As can be seen, there were more than 20 names on the table, so more than I had capacity to interview. Bearing in mind that the aims of the British Library were to have a broad representation of issues in the collection, it was important to maintain balance and not let any organisations and/or movements dominate the collection through the people interviewed. The list of identified potential interviewees was adjusted throughout the year, with some becoming less of a priority as I successfully completed a life story and felt that the particular area they discussed, and represented

to some extent, had been captured sufficiently. In a few cases, people were unable or unwilling to participate (four in total) who had been identified as contributing significantly to a particular movement, and so I sought an alternative person who had worked on that issue and fulfilled the criteria. For example, representatives from WRAP were keen but ultimately unable to participate, and there was no other organisation/individual in the collection who significantly focused on waste. Therefore, I sought alternatives, trying Tristram Stuart (Feedback) and Kelvin Cheung (FoodCycle). Additionally, new people were identified as my knowledge and understanding expanded, and as I rebalanced the list against who was being/had been interviewed. Part of this process included snowball sampling by asking those already being interviewed on their opinions about who should be included, or through people they mentioned during sessions, which helped me identify other key people I could include[8]. For example, I hadn't identified Helen Crawley (public health nutrition) until later in the data collection process, by when I'd come across her at various events, seen her name in documents and references, and had a suggestion to interview her from another interviewee. Similarly, Jeanette Orrey from Food For Life was suggested to me, and it made me aware of a gap relating to school food, catering and public procurement, and more recently emerging topical issues within food.

Adding more people and issues to the list meant that, therefore, on the whole, more were identified and added than were removed, and my final list hovered around thirty throughout the year. I had to accept that I would not be able to interview them all and had to decide when to have a cut off. This was partly due to time limits and data saturation (Fusch and Ness 2015), and partly driven by whether a broad enough range of food movements had been explored collectively through the life stories of interviewees.

Oral History by default takes an individual and therefore somewhat narrow focus on a topic, being the account of one person. Whilst this has many advantages and is to be embraced, as is explored through the data and chapters, there are also drawbacks and criticisms. I address this in the discussion section of chapter 8. I therefore tried to balance this somewhat by ensuring that, whilst covering a broad range of food movements through one individual per organisation/movement, in some cases there were multiple interviews with representatives from the same issue or organisation, to provide more than one version and 'thicken' the analysis. This was achieved in the

[8] It is worth noting that many of the interviewees knew each other, due to the relatively small world of the UK food movements. I discuss this a little more in chapter 6, section 6.7.

case of the Soil Association, with Francis Blake and Patrick Holden both interviewed, and Sustain, with Jeanette Longfield and Kath Dalmeny both interviewed.

The final list can be seen in Table 3 below, with those approached but declined in grey italic at the end. To provide more context, I have also included details about when and where the recording sessions took place, some background to each interviewee (including year of birth), which are all displayed publicly in the archive, as well as some information about the movements/organisations they have been involved with. I provide general background information about each organisation in Table 4, as displayed publicly on their websites.

Table 3: Final list of completed life story interviews (in order of interview start date)

Person **Year of birth**	**Organisation**	**Activist movement/issue**	**Interview period and locations**
Geoff Tansey 1950	Food Ethics Council, independent writer/campaigner/consultant	Intellectual property, agricultural biodiversity, food security, sustainable development	19.11.2012 – 17.01.2013 Interviewee's home, British Library, interviewee's friend's home
Philip Lymbery 1965	Compassion in World Farming	Animal welfare	28.11.2012 – 06.06.2013 Compassion in World Farming Offices
Kath Dalmeny 1970	Sustain	Sustainable food, local food systems	29.11.2012 – 02.05.2013 British Library, interviewee's home
Simon Fairlie 1950	Independent writer (Chapter 7/The Land, The Land Is Ours), smallholder farmer, The Ecologist	Land rights, zero-carbon agriculture, community agriculture, anti-/vegetarianism	30.11.2012 – 29.01.2013 Interviewer's parents' home, interviewee's home/public centre
Pete Riley 1952	GM Freeze, Friends of the Earth	Anti-GM, environmentalism	20.12.2012 – 17.07.2013 Interviewee's home, British Library
Jeanette Longfield 1957	Sustain, Food Ethics Council	Sustainable food, ethics, local food systems, food justice, animal welfare	28.03.2013 – 08.05.2013 British Library
Francis Blake 1953	Soil Association	Organic food and agriculture production	02.04.2013 – 22.07.2013 Interviewee's home (also interviewer's childhood

			home)
Patrick Holden 1950	Soil Association, Sustainable Food Trust	Organic food and agriculture production, true cost accounting/sustainability	17.04.2013 – 19.02.2014 Sustainable Food Trust offices, British Library
Jeanette Orrey 1956	Food for Life	School food, catering/canteens	29.04.2013 – 29.05.2013 Interviewee's home
Deirdre Hutton 1949	Food Standards Agency, National Consumer Council, Sustainable Development Commission	Food safety, consumer rights	30.05.2013 – 09.07.2013 British Library
Helen Crawley 1961	First Steps Nutrition, Caroline Walker Trust, academic (City University)	Public health, Nutrition	14.06.2013 – 22.08.2013 Interviewee's home, British Library
Jane Landon	National Heart Forum / UK Health Forum	Public health, labelling and marketing	14.08.2013 – 30.08.2013 British Library
Julie Brown 1963	Growing Communities, Friends of the Earth	Local food systems, sustainable production, community agriculture	27.08.2013 – 28.08.2013 British Library, interviewee's home
Harriet Lamb 1961	Fairtrade Foundation, World Development Movement	Fairtrade, sustainable international development	06.09.2013 – 07.09.2013 Fairtrade International offices, interviewee's home
Marcus Thompson 1945	Oxfam	Famine relief, international development	24.09.2013 – 16.12.2013 British Library, interviewee's home
Kelvin Cheung 1983	FoodCycle	Food waste, community, social enterprise	28.10.2013 – 29.10.2013 Interviewee's home
Hugh Fearnley-Wittingstall 1965	Chef, TV personality/campaigner, Landshare, writer	'Real' food, slow food, sustainable fishing, local food/community, restaurants	04.12.2013 – 10.12.2013 Interviewee's home
Joanna Blythman	*Independent journalist and writer*	*Food and the media, food journalism*	*N/A*
Richard Swannell	*WRAP*	*Food waste*	*N/A*
Tristram Stuart	*Feedback, independent*	*Food waste,*	*N/A*

	writer	*environmentalism*	
Tom MacMillan	*Food Ethics Council*	*Sustainable food production, agriculture, animal welfare*	*N/A*

Over eighty percent of those I asked agreed and completed a life story interview. Few (four) declined, of which three due to time demands. For such a time consuming commitment, this is considered a high response. In large part, I believe this is due to the prestige of the British Library and prospect of having one's life story and contributions to a movement recognised and represented in a public archive. Whilst the 'public' part may have been somewhat daunting[9], it was also likely a compliment and an honour, as several remarked upon being asked, or in reflections afterwards. It was also likely seen as a good opportunity to further promote the causes and issues for which they were fighting and deemed important, again echoed by some of the interviewees in their acceptance and reflections. I was aware of these factors before approaching people and, upon advice from my supervisors, emphasised this in the official invitation letter.

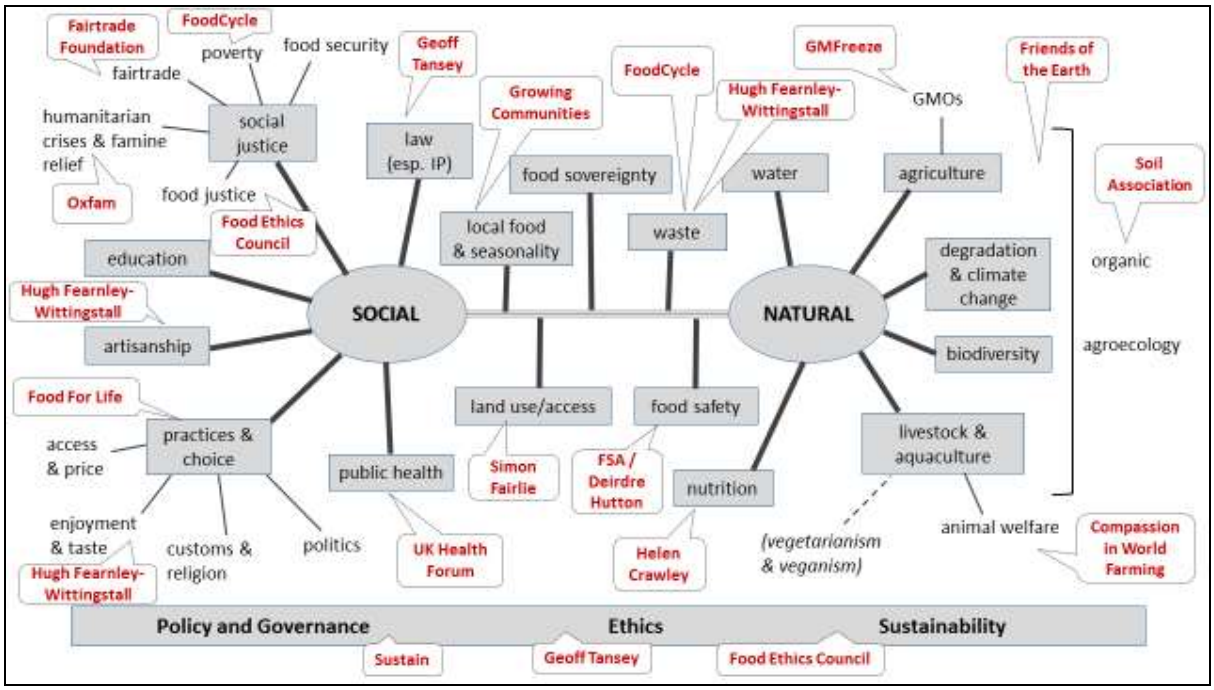
Returning to the heuristic device, below in figure 2 the diagram now shows the organisations (in some cases, individuals) represented in the archive following the life story interviews. As I moved through the data collection phase, I constantly re-evaluated the representation from the interviews in the sample and adjusted where I felt necessary and able. Again, this is a simplistic representation that cannot capture the messiness of the food system and the rich activism that has addressed it and evolved over time.

Whilst most are inserted as organisations, indicating their focus, some appear as individuals, either because they have worked independently, or not been predominantly in only one organisation. Some also appear multiple times, reflecting the different work they have done over their careers (for example Geoff Tansey and Hugh Fearnley-Wittingstall) or the multiple focus of the organisation (for example FoodCycle). Some individuals and organisations could appear many more times, for example, Simon Fairlie could also be attached to local food & seasonality, vegetarianism & veganism and degradation & climate change. Growing Communities and, especially, Food For Life, amongst others, both aim to address multiple issues across social and natural, and could be attached to about half of the issues, and nearly all address education to some extent, but I had to draw some boundaries. What is not captured effectively is the ways that movements have adapted and changed

[9] Indeed some of the invitation responses reflected this, whilst others appeared more confident.

over time to collaborate and address more issues, explored later in the thesis. For example, Fairtrade has increasingly incorporated environmental sustainability, and Compassion in World Farming now regularly collaborates with the Soil Association, though this was far from the case in its early days (see chapter 5), and National Heart Forum renamed itself to UK Health Forum to reflect its widening interest and scope within food.

Figure 2: Diagram of key British food activist issues with interview representation



I could not find a way to adequately include the ages of the organisations in the diagram, which would go in some way towards showing the changes over time. I have, however, included the year each was founded in the general information about key organisations provided below in table 4, and ordered them by age (with the oldest first).

Table 4: Overview of key organisations (in order of age)

Organisation and website source	**Descriptive information on website**
Oxfam https://www.oxfam.org.uk/what-we-do/about-	Oxfam is a global movement of millions of people who share the belief that, in a world rich in resources, poverty isn't inevitable. In just 15 years, extreme poverty has been halved. 15 more years and we can end it for good.

us (last accessed 20/2/2018)	To spread that change and make it last, political solutions are also needed to tackle the root causes of poverty and create societies where empowered individuals can thrive. We will always act, we will speak out, and we won't live with poverty. We respond fast in emergencies, and stay to help people rebuild their lives. We work on long-term projects with communities determined to shape a better future for themselves. And we campaign for genuine, lasting change. Founded in 1942 1984 – After the horror of the famine in Ethiopia shocks the world, supporters donate £12.5m in four months – enabling us to provide urgent help to thousands of people. Issues we work on: • Food • Water • Health and Education • Women's Rights • Business and Poverty • Conflicts and Disasters • Aid and Development • Citizen's Rights • Climate Change • Poverty in the UK Oxfam Great Britain is a member of Oxfam International, a confederation of 19 independent national organisations working in more than 90 countries
The Soil Association https://www.soilassociation.org/about-us/our-history/ (last accessed 20/2/2018)	The Soil Association was founded in 1946 by a group of people who were concerned about the health implications of increasingly intensive farming systems following the Second World War. Their main concerns were: • The loss of soil through erosion and depletion • Decreased nutritional quality of food • Exploitation of animals • Impact on the countryside and wildlife.

	It started out on a single farm. The Soil Association now certifies 70% of organic food in the UK. The first organic standards were established in 1967. The certification scheme was launched in 1973. In the mid-1980s, a number of supermarkets began to stock organic food, bringing the movement into the mainstream. However, the number of organic farmers remained small until the launch of the Organic Aid Scheme in 1995 (UK Government assistance for farmers during the difficult two-five year organic conversion period). As this support for farmers grew, so did the Soil Association. Most organic food – around three quarters – is sold in supermarkets. But as more people become concerned about freshness and food miles, the amount of organic food sold through box schemes, farmers' markets and independent shops is growing. Now, organic land accounts for nearly 4% of all agricultural space in the UK. Organic farmers receive on-going support in recognition of the environmental benefits they deliver, encouraging more to manage their land organically.
Compassion in World Farming https://www.ciwf.org.uk/about-us/ (last accessed 20/2/2018)	The leading farm animal welfare charity Compassion in World Farming was founded 50 years ago in 1967 by a British farmer who became horrified by the development of modern, intensive factory farming. Today we campaign peacefully to end all factory farming practices. We believe that the biggest cause of cruelty on the planet deserves a focused, specialised approach – so we are relentlessly focussed on ending factory farming. We are immensely proud of what we have achieved so far: • Our award winning undercover investigations have exposed the reality of modern intensive farming systems and brought the plight of farm animals to the attention of the world's media • Our political lobbying and campaigning has resulted in the EU recognising animals as sentient beings, capable of feeling pain and suffering. We have also secured landmark agreements to outlaw the barren battery cage for

	egg-laying hens, narrow veal crates and sow stalls across Europe • Compassion in World Farming's Food Business team is working with some of the world's biggest food companies - retailers, producers and manufacturers. The companies we work with are a key part of the drive towards a more ethical and sustainable food supply. Our Good Farm Animal Welfare Awards are already benefitting millions of animals each year. 442 million animals are set to benefit each year as a result of our Good Award winners' policies.
National Consumer Council http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C17937 (last accessed 20/2/2018)	The National Consumer Council was established by the Government in 1975 to give an independent voice to consumers in the UK. The Council was a non-profit making company limited by guarantee, which was largely funded by grant-in-aid from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). On 1 October 2008 the National Consumer Council was merged with Energywatch and Postwatch to create the new consumer organisation Consumer Focus.
UK Health Forum http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk/who-we-are/ (last accessed 20/2/2018)	Our vision: Our vision is of a society where public policy and effective regulation supports the social, economic and environmental conditions in which everyone has equal access to good health and the opportunity to enjoy a life free from disability or preventable death caused by non-communicable diseases. Our mission: Our mission is to operate as a centre of expertise, working with and through our members to contribute to the prevention of the avoidable non-communicable diseases - coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity, cancer, respiratory diseases and vascular dementia. Our work: The UKHF has a long and distinguished track record in evidence-based and consensual policy development and advocacy. Combining in-house expertise with the specialist perspectives of its members, the UKHF is uniquely placed to contribute to the public health policy agenda, nationally and globally.

	Our history: On 5th April 2013, the National Heart Forum became the UK Health Forum. Our new name reflects the wider focus of our work today, both within the UK and internationally, across the range of preventable non-communicable diseases that share common risk factors and determinants. The organisation was established in 1984 following the recommendation of a group of 80 scientists, medical practitioners and lay representatives for the establishment of an "active authoritative body at the national level to speak out for policies directed at the prevention of coronary heart disease" and to maximise the contributions of not-for-profit sector organisations.
Fairtrade Foundation https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/What-is-Fairtrade/Who-we-are (last accessed 20/2/2018)	Fairtrade is a global movement with a strong and active presence in the UK, represented by the Fairtrade Foundation. Fairtrade is a movement for change that works directly with businesses, consumers and campaigners to make trade deliver for farmers and workers. The international Fairtrade system (which the Fairtrade Foundation is a part of) represents the world's largest and most recognised fair trade system. We are a global organisation working to secure a better deal for farmers and workers. The Fairtrade Foundation is an independent non-profit organisation that focuses on four key areas of work in the UK: • We provide independent certification of the trade chain for products and license the use of the FAIRTRADE Mark on products • We help in growing demand for Fairtrade products and empowering producers to sell to traders and retailers • We find new ways of working with our partners to support producer organisations and their networks • We raise awareness of the need for Fairtrade to the public and the significant role of Fairtrade in making trade fair The Foundation was established in 1992 by CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Traidcraft, Global Justice Now, and the National Federation of Women's Institutes. Member organisations now also include Banana Link, All We Can, National Campaigner Committee, Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, People & Planet, Scottish

	Catholic International Aid Fund, Shared Interest Foundation, Soroptimist International , Tearfund and Commitment to Life / United Reformed Church. The Foundation is the UK member of Fairtrade International, which unites over 20 labelling initiatives across Europe, Japan, North America, Mexico and Australia/New Zealand as well as networks of producer organisations from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.
Growing Communities https://www.growingcommunities.org/about-us (last accessed 20/2/2018)	Growing Communities – it's more than just carrots. Changing the food system since 1996. Growing Communities is a community-led organisation based in Hackney, North London, which is providing a real, practical alternative to the current damaging food system - changing what we eat, how we eat and how it's farmed. Over the past 20 years or so, we have worked to harness the collective buying power and skills of our community to reshape the food and farming systems that feed us. Our organic fruit and vegetable bag scheme and the Growing Communities Farmers' Market aim to provide more secure and fairer markets for the farmers, growers and producers who we believe should be the foundation of a sustainable agriculture system. If we are to create the sustainable re-localised food systems that will see us through the challenges ahead, we need to work together with communities and farmers to take our food system back from the supermarkets and agribusiness. Our pioneering and award-winning urban farms in Hackney and Dagenham produce fantastic local salad, fruit, veg, jams and sauces, while also training local residents, including children and lone parents, in food growing and production. We also consider the bigger picture and work to create wider change: articulating our vision, advocating in support of our aims and replicating our projects. We have helped other groups around the UK to set up similar veg schemes to ours. Together we are the Better Food Traders.

	We monitor and meaure everything we do against our key principles to track our impact on the food system and to ensure our activities and practices are fair and transparent. Growing Communities is a not-for-profit company with a constitution and a voluntary board. See https://www.growingcommunities.org/key-principles for their 'key principles'
Sustain https://www.sustainweb.org/about/ (last accessed 20/2/2018)	Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture and promote equity. We represent around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level. As an alliance, Sustain literally is its membership. Membership is open to national organisations which do not distribute profits to private shareholders and which therefore operate in the public interest. The organisations must be wholly or partly interested in food or farming issues and support the general aims and work of the alliance. Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming was launched at the UNED-UK hosted Healthy Planet Forum on 17 June 1999. It was formed by merging The National Food Alliance and the Sustainable Agriculture Food and Environment (SAFE) Alliance, both of which had been established for over 10 years.
The Food Ethics Council https://www.foodethicscouncil.org/about-us.html https://www.foodethicscouncil.org/about-us/the-history-of-the-	Our vision is of a world where everyone eats healthily and sustainably, enjoying food that is produced and traded fairly and humanely. We are a charity, and our work is not for profit. We are not affiliated to any political party or religious organisation. Our Council members are all leaders in their relevant fields, and appointed as individuals. They bring a broad range of expertise to our work, from academic research through to practical knowledge of farming, business and policy.

food-ethics-council.html (last accessed 20/2/2018)	To build fair and resilient food systems that respect people, animals and the planet, by working with food businesses, government and civil society to address ethical concerns at the heart of decision-making about food and farming. Our particular contribution is to promote ethical considerations in relation to decisions about food and farming and to facilitate deliberative thinking and bold action for a fair food system. Ethics refers to the values, principles and codes by which people live. Acting ethically means taking values seriously and asking 'what should I do, all things considered?' Professor Ben Mepham, Founder Director, was appointed Executive Director in 1998. In 1996, he edited Food Ethics (Mepham B. 1996 Ed Routledge), apparently the first use of this term. A crucial step was securing a 3-year grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. We published reports, which were launched at the House of Commons and well-received.
GM Freeze https://www.gmfreeze.org/home/about/ (last accessed 20/2/2018)	GM Freeze is the UK's umbrella campaign on GM food, crops and patents. Formed in 1999 as the Five Year Freeze, we became a not-for-profit registered company in 2005. Our members include large national charities, small specialist organisations, scientists, farmers, retailers and grassroots campaigners. GM Freeze is run by a small staff team and a Management Committee elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. What we do: GM Freeze is working to help create a world in which our food is produced responsibly, fairly and sustainably. We consider and raise the profile of concerns about the impact of genetic modification. We inform, inspire, represent and support those who share our concerns. We campaign for a moratorium on GM food and farming in the UK. We oppose the patenting of genetic resources.

Food Standards Agency https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/food-standards-agency https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/about-the-fsa (last accessed 20/2/2018)	Created in 2001, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is responsible for food safety and food hygiene across the UK. It works with local authorities to enforce food safety regulations and its staff work in UK meat plants to check the standards are being met. The FSA also has responsibility for labelling policy in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and for nutrition policy in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Responsibility for nutrition policy in Wales lies with the Welsh Government. FSA is a non-ministerial department, supported by 7 agencies and public bodies. We are the Food Standards Agency, an independent Government department. It's our job to use our expertise and influence so that people can trust that the food they buy and eat is safe and honest. Our work touches everyone in the country. We all eat. Approaches include: • using science, evidence and information both to tackle the challenges of today, and to identify and contribute to addressing emerging risks for the future • using legislative and non-legislative tools highly effectively to protect consumer interests and deliver consumer benefits – influencing business behaviour in the interests of consumers • being genuinely open and engaging, finding ways to empower consumers both in our policy making and delivery, and in their relationship with the food industry
Food for Life https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/about-us (last accessed 20/2/2018)	Food for Life Catering Mark was founded in 2007 Transforming food culture for all Food for Life brings schools, nurseries, hospitals and care homes, and their surrounding communities together around the core ethos of healthy, tasty and sustainable food. Our programme is about making good food the easy choice for everyone – making healthy, tasty and sustainable meals the norm for all to enjoy, reconnecting people

	with where their food comes from, teaching them how it's grown and cooked, and championing the importance of well-sourced ingredients. We work with schools, nurseries, hospitals and care homes, helping them build knowledge and skills through a 'whole setting approach'. This engages children and parents, staff, patients and visitors, caterers, carers and the wider community to create a powerful voice for long-term change. Food for Life is a Soil Association programme.
FoodCycle https://www.foodcycle.org.uk/ (last accessed 20/2/2018)	We serve community meals across the country. We support people who are hungry and lonely by serving tasty lunches and dinners every single day in towns and cities across the country. Many of our guests struggle to afford the basics to eat and many will eat alone without company or conversation. Our growing number of incredible volunteers across the country serve over 850 meals a week using surplus food (cooked in spare kitchen space). Our vision: A society where no one is hungry or lonely Our mission: To unite and nourish communities using surplus food Founded in 2009
The Sustainable Food Trust http://sustainablefoodtrust.org/about-us/ (last accessed 20/2/2018)	The Sustainable Food Trust is a registered charity that was founded by Patrick Holden in 2011 in response to the worsening human and environmental crises that are associated with the vast majority of today's food and farming systems. His observation was that, for all of the hard work of food and environmental organisations over the last half century or so, there were still a number of major barriers preventing large scale uptake of sustainable food production and healthy diets. These include the lack of an enabling policy and economic environment for sustainable food production and consumption; a tendency towards reductionist and siloed thinking amongst scientists and some campaigning organisations; and a myriad of conflicting messages, often perpetuated by those with vested interests, leading to considerable confusion amongst consumers and policymakers alike

	about what to eat to be healthy whilst at the same time supporting just and sustainable food systems. Our vision is for food and farming systems which nourish the health of the planet and its people. Our mission is to accelerate the transition to more sustainable food and farming systems. To achieve this, we work catalytically on a global scale to influence and enhance the work of other organisations, rather than replicating existing initiatives.
First Steps Nutrition http://firststepsnutrition.org/about-us.html (last accessed 20/2/2018)	Registered in 2012, First Steps Nutrition Trust provides nutrition information and resources to support women who may become pregnant, pregnant women and parents of children under 5. The Trust offers evidence-based, objective information that is not sponsored by food manufacturers or retailers and which can be trusted as clear and accurate. The Trust is a registered charity and all the work produced will be freely available to all. Sign up to the newsletter to get regular updates about our work. Everyone who works at First Steps Nutrition Trust feels passionately about the need for better information and support for good nutrition – and good food – from pre-conception to five years. First Steps Nutrition Trust is virtual, with no offices or full-time staff, and is supported by generous individual donations. All the work we do at First Steps is open access for use by anyone working in public health, particularly midwives, health visitors, nursery nurses, children's centre staff and those working in health and social care in Local Authorities. First Steps works with and supports a number of organisations including Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative, The Institute of Health Visiting, HENRY, Baby Milk Action, The Baby Feeding Law Group, Sustain, Eating Better, The UK Food Poverty Alliance and Food for Life.
Geoff Tansey	About: In 1968 I studied soil science (BSc) at Aberdeen University. Then, history of and

http://www.tansey.org.uk/ (last accessed 20/2/2018)	social studies of science and technology at Sussex, UK, (MSc) and Case Western Reserve Universities, Ohio, USA (Rotary Foundation Graduate Fellowship). In the mid-1970s, I helped found and edit the journal Food Policy, then worked freelance for a year before going to Turkey late in 1978, as a technical cooperation officer with then Ministry of Overseas Development, helping set up an agricultural extension and communications centre at Ege University, Izmir. From mid-1981, I've worked freelance as a writer and consultant. Over the years, I've worked on various agricultural development projects e.g. again long and short-term in Turkey, and short-term in Albania, Mongolia and Kazakhstan. As a writer I've travelled widely and contributed to many specialist magazines and newspapers and various journals. In the late 1980s / early 1990s I was an honorary visiting fellow at the Food Policy Research Unit at the University of Bradford. From 1996-99, I was honorary visiting professor of food policy at Leeds Metropolitan University. Currently, I'm an honorary research fellow in the Department of Peace Studies at Bradford University and at the Centre for Rural Economy, Newcastle University.

3.5 Practicalities of the research

Given that life stories not only cover details but also the breadth of someone's life, the interviews can be very lengthy and are usually conducted over several sessions. In total I undertook seventeen oral histories during the period November 2012 to February 2014. They were on average about 9 hours long each, with the shortest at 3 hours 18 minutes, and the longest at 15 hours 46 minutes. All of the interviews were recorded with the aim of forming a public archive.

With regards to the actual interviewing, this took place in a number of ways. To minimise the disturbance on interviewees' lives and ensure that they were comfortable, I was very flexible about when and where to conduct the sessions according to their preferences. All the life stories were completed over more than one day. The setups varied from the British Library (either in a private meeting room or recording studio), to the interviewees' workplace, or the interviewees' home or

other private residence, and sometimes a combination of all of these. Some sessions were as short as a couple of hours, and others lasted a whole day. Some life story recordings were completed over two consecutive days, others one session a week for a month, and others were completed over several months (the longest being ten), meeting irregularly throughout that period. This was determined by whatever was most practical for both of us and where they wanted to meet that they felt most at ease. For some interviewees, it was strictly during work hours and in their offices, for others, this was during evenings and weekends and at their home. For example, at the time, Harriet Lamb was based in Germany (this was an exception, all the other interviews took place in the UK), so the most convenient option was to do the whole thing over 48 hours; the first session being Friday afternoon in her offices, the second being Saturday at her home. Whilst a few of the interviewees had very strict time limits (for example, Deirdre Hutton and Hugh Fearnley-Wittingstall), with others we left it open and arranged each further session depending on whether we felt we had finished or not.

All these different setups undoubtedly influenced the life stories, to an extent due to the types of relationships that I formed with the person, but also the dynamics of each session, such as whether it felt more formal or informal, or whether we felt pressured for time or not. I consider this in more detail in section 3.7 of this chapter on nuances and reflections. As part of that, to keep track of the varying contexts, I kept a record of not only the date and time, but the location, notes (what I refer to as field notes, as above) on our interactions surrounding the recordings, and reflections on how I perceived myself and the interviewee from session to session. In this way, I employ Geertz's *thick description* (1973), to provide a more full context for the outsider to understand and analyse the conclusions to which I come. I use these field notes in addition to the life stories themselves in the data and analysis.

On the conducting of the interviews themselves, as a prompt I used a broad interview guide or schedule (see appendix 4). I adapted this from similar documents from other projects, notably the "Sisterhood and After" collection in the British Library sound archives, as well as from example ones in oral history books and resources. This ensured some continuity between the oral histories and aided me in checking I covered all the main elements of their life story (for example, family, childhood, religion, education, politicisation, etc.), not only important in relation to food activism but also key themes considered important in the discipline of oral history as noted by Thompson (2000).

Each interview generally started the same, whereby I asked the interviewee to summarise the key parts of their lives and/or messages they would want included in their life story. This not only helped me to ensure I captured this in the duration of the interview sessions, but set the tone by putting the content and autonomy in the interviewees' hands, and demonstrating the collaborative nature of oral history. Following this, I usually started with their name, where and when they were born, their parents and grandparents. The interviews took a roughly chronological order. However, there was freedom to follow the flow and jump between different stages of their lives and/or discuss by theme rather than period of time. Indeed, the great advantage of qualitative, and especially life story, interview research, is that a more natural conversation style is adopted and the interviewer and interviewee are able to explore particular topics and events as they emerge (Thompson 2000; Merriam and Tisdell 2016; Atkinson 2002). This can put the interviewee more at ease as the format takes a more natural and relaxed style. It also means that there is space for unintended or unexpected issues to arise which sometimes turn out to be more revealing and significant than the research questions, hypotheses, and common beliefs.

Before the first interview session, I would do some research on the interviewee (sometimes with a copy of their CV) as well as the organisation and/or issues they predominantly worked on and their involvement in them. The intention was to strike a balance between knowing enough to ask informed questions and ensure key events or periods were not missed out, and not knowing too much that I forgot to ask about key events or periods or failed to enquire in more depth because I already knew about it. Therefore, I purposefully refrained from doing excessively extensive research in order to more easily remain inquisitive and subjective.

3.6 Collation, analysis and interpretation of the data

With the vast amount of rich data produced from the oral histories (circa 150 hours), and as is standard practice with qualitative research analysis, I conducted thematic analysis using methods outlined by Strauss (1987) in *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, coding within and between transcripts and moving between 'in vivo' and more analytical (axial) codes. With this, I deduced and developed themes and related back to my research questions to guide the formation of the chapters. For example, one of the 'in vivo' codes, which came directly from participants' own language, was the term 'everyday' (see chapter 6). This was used multiple times by several of the

interviewees when discussing the nature of food, for example when compared to other topics of activism, and their personal interactions and relationships to food. From initial interviews, continually reviewing the data, and more thoroughly coding it later on, I deduced a number of axial codes. For example, in chapter 4, with the theme of outlook, there were codes around positivity, optimism, pessimism, depressive realities, perseverance, faith in change, etc. Some of these were taken directly from language used, whilst others were grouped into codes more analytically, such as the observance of interviewees using examples of successful historical events that created change, which related to a need to reinforce belief in the possibility of change and persevere in the face of adversity.

As part of the requirements of the British Library sound archives, I produced a 'summary' of each oral history for their catalogue system CADENSA. This is a shorter and briefer version of a full transcript, providing an overview of topics, conversations and memories, and noting key people or events. Listening back to the recordings in order to write the summaries was a valuable process whereby I simultaneously performed a first round of open manual coding, highlighted key quotes and was able to do a substantial part of the thematic analysis from this. I then performed more focused coding and transcribed some sections fully, also useful for incorporating into the thesis. By listening, noting, re-listening, and comparing between life stories, I was able to draw out the key themes and sub themes. I was also comparing this with my field notes, grey literature and other materials available publicly (such as on websites of organisations and leaflets from particular events).

Besides open and focused thematic analysis to draw out the key issues, I employed particular themed lenses to perform some further rounds of analysis, for example, childhood experiences of food, gender, class identity, and politicisation, whilst referring periodically back to my research questions. In this way, although I did not include them all in the final thesis, I explored a range of themes, ensuring that I wasn't missing out on important debates, along with the central themes that resulted from my coding.

The data covered a broad range of food topics as part of the archival requirements, which, along with the large quantity, did not necessarily make for easy analysis. Therefore, whilst all the interviews were incorporated into the coding and thematic analysis as outlined above, I have not used quotes from every one of them in the write-up of the thesis, but chosen a range of extracts from a smaller sample which illustrate the themes consistent with the archive. With the focus on the

individual and the vast quantity of data generated by each interviewee in Life Histories, this is quite typical. Interviewees are therefore each mentioned at relevant points, even if not quoted. As transcribing requires substantial time resources, I transcribed sections from a range of interviews, which have been used as the main quotes in the thesis. Coding and thematic analysis was conducted on the rest based on the summaries and notes from the interviews and when listening back. For relevant sections of interviews without direct quotes, to ensure all interviewees have been represented, I have indicated throughout the thesis how they add to the themes. For example, when discussing Kath Dalmeny's comments on optimism, I also refer to similar comments by Pete Riley and Helen Crawley about their struggles and approaches. Similarly, in the discussion on politicisation, I focus on the lengthy comments by Philip Lymbery and Jeanette Longfield, but also include examples from Helen Crawley and Jeanette Orrey.

Two of the interviews (Geoff Tansey and Jane Landon) were closed for a number of years in the public archives. I included them both in the analysis, however, in order to honour their requested privacy, I have not used any of the contents of their interviews in the thesis. I have used predominantly longer quotes from the data throughout the thesis. This allows me to make the most of the richness of the data afforded by oral history life stories. I have presented quotes from interviewees in italics throughout the thesis for ease of navigation.

Through the thematic coding process, I identified four significant themes that have become the empirical chapters (4, 5, 6 and 7). A number of other themes were also noteworthy, and I played around developing chapters on them and integrating them into other sections. However, in the end, the quantity and quality of the data on them did not compare to the substance of the other four. In addition, some added little to the current literature. I also experimented with the structure of the thesis, and whether to cluster the themes into two or three empirical chapters. By the end, each theme felt substantive enough to warrant its own chapter, and all are similar sizes. I considered a separate chapter on oral history, particularly relating to research question 3. However, the issues were integrated and addressed somewhat in the four empirical chapters and I felt that any remaining points would work better as a discussion within the conclusion.

3.7 Nuances, Reflections and Reflexivity

As with any qualitative social research, one must be reflexive and aware of one's subjectivity as the researcher and the impact one has on the participants (Bertaux 1983; Rose 1997; James 2000; Yow 2006). This is especially so in considering the ways that researchers play a fundamental role not just in interpreting and theorising the data but also in the process of data construction, as argued by Mauthner et al. (1998). As stated, "The issue is not, I believe, whether the individual historian should appear in his books, but *how* he should appear" (Duberman (1974) in Yow 2006: 56). There are also many ways of communicating beyond speech and any number of factors that have an impact on one's behaviour from day to day. This wider context and reflexivity is what I aimed to capture in my field notes, and I further expand on it here.

Probably unsurprisingly, I have a deep interest and passion for food and food systems, and the challenges faced within them. Regarding my positionality, this is what interested me about the PhD project. Whilst it shouldn't have dramatically affected the research and analysis, I do believe it's important to state, and I add further background here. I grew up on a small organic farm in Somerset, my father, Francis Blake, had established the farm and then joined the Soil Association as a paid staff member soon after I was born, and remained its longest serving employee until his retirement this year. My mother, whilst not working directly in food, has a keen interest in the relationship between food and health, is a fabulous cook, and is a committed partner with my father in their semi-self-sufficient lifestyle. Food was a central theme in our household and has been a significant influence on my career. Not only mine but my brother's – who is a campaigner for Friends of the Earth Europe on issues of food, agriculture and biodiversity. We didn't fall far from the tree! Food systems issues and food activism, therefore, are not an entirely alien world to me.

Whilst I knew few of the interviewees well before the research began, I did know some as acquaintances through attending events and conferences. What's more, many of them knew my father or brother (often through work), and I utilised some of these connections to contact prospective interviewees. These factors mean that many of them no doubt had a preconceived idea about me and I definitely got the impression that they saw me as 'one of them' – informed about the issues and passionate for change (although perhaps less 'active' as them). Whilst I did not pretend to be someone I was not, I also did not discourage or dumb down this affinity – there were often many things I shared with them and understood. I was also aware that, besides making it more enjoyable for both of us (I greatly enjoyed meeting them all and interviewing them), this generally aided the interviews themselves, putting the interviewee more at ease. This can be seen at times in the quotes I use in this thesis.

I noticed the dynamics depending on my prior relationship with each interviewee. Some were naturally more reserved than others, of course, but I also noticed I myself often struggled to relax into the interviews if I had no rapport with the interviewees, which was usually developed before. The difference of a few conversations at an event, meeting to discuss the project, or just a cup of tea and chat before we began would often make an enormous difference to both of us. I also observed and felt that it tended to all flow better by the end of each interview, when we knew each other more.

Interactions outside of the interview recordings provided additional observations to what was being said on public record. This would range from disclosing or discussing information that they didn't want public, offering deeper insights into particular issues both personal and professional, to being able to see their lifestyle first hand and share, for example, meals with them and talk about food and other topics beyond the interviews. These helped me to gain a more complete picture of each interviewee, and often how they related to each other where there were friendships, histories and working relationships. Whilst some of these observations inform my findings, for obvious ethical reasons, I do not include details or things disclosed to me in confidence off-record (specifically, consent was only given for the recordings themselves).

The location and timings also would affect things, partly because it would promote/discourage time spent outside of interviews, partly because it would set an atmosphere. I found visiting someone's house often the most relaxing and informative, as I was afforded a glimpse of their lives and wider identity, which sometimes prompted further questions about specific things I observed. Frequency could also disrupt this. For example, if the interview sessions were very spread out and open-ended, it was more challenging to keep the momentum and easy to forget what had already been covered and mentioned – I would have to call out repetitions more frequently. On the other hand, where time was tight and compressed, for example two short sessions over a couple of days, it felt pressurised and a little rushed, and harder to be as explorative of emerging topics.

There was a prestige associated with the British Library and the knowledge that the oral histories were destined for a public record, for which the interviewees had been selected to represent particular issues. This was likely an influencing factor, to a greater or lesser extent, in many of the interviewees accepting to participate, in terms of their own egos as well as their dedication to furthering the causes and messages of their work. This differs from oral histories not intended for

wider, public consumption, and this awareness would probably have affected some of the responses as a result. Indeed, some remarked upon this when we discussed it. It is also worth bearing in mind that, as Schrager (1998) argues, people shape and repeat their narratives so that rarely are the things told the first and only account of them. Somers (1994) also argues that identities are narrated for a specific audience and reflect narrative devices like plotting.

Oral history life story interviews, especially for a public archive, are not quite like other qualitative interviews in a number of ways which makes them feel less naturalistic. Aside from the length, depth and narrative approach, the logistics can be quite different. We had to take great care in minimising additional sounds that would obstruct or compromise the recording. For example, each interviewee and myself had a microphone clipped on which was very sensitive, so we had to take care not to catch it, adjust our positions too much, move away from the recording equipment or slurp drinks, etc. It also meant that I had to remain as quiet as possible when they were speaking, including normal, minor conversational noises of acknowledgement, such as “yeh”, “mmm”, “umhmm”, and laughing, which can feel rather strange and discouraging for both parties. I became very good at compensating with animated facial expressions! But these factors do add to the sense of formality that can sometimes be reduced in other types of qualitative interviews.

Finally, I think it is important to comment on one interview in particular, which was with my own father, Francis Blake. Whilst on paper he fitted the profile quite well as a prospective interviewee, I initially rejected the idea based on the fact that we were family. However, several of the other interviewees commented that I should interview him, and I began to consider how it would also provide an interesting comparison methodologically. Of course, we both were aware that I know him and his life story relatively well already, so I had to be particularly vigilant in ensuring he fully covered and explained things (which he actually made easy). What was useful was that I could prompt him to discuss particular themes or stories that I knew were relevant but which he may otherwise have forgotten or not considered so relevant. It also provided an interesting insight into what people disclose on record and in private – the public versions they portray of themselves. For example, there were a few stories which I had heard many times and thought were fairly public, but which he refrained from disclosing fully or at all. This is particularly interesting given the claims of oral history life stories to break down the barriers between the personal, private, professional and public, although they still held fairly strong in this case. Overall, it was an enjoyable process and I learnt some new things about my father too.

3.8 Ethics

The research was informed at all stages by the University of Sheffield code of practice on research ethics and by the British Library's protocols (see relevant forms in appendices). Ethics approval for the research was granted by the University of Sheffield in August of 2011.

As part of the invitation to participate, interviewees were provided with information regarding the project (including oral history interviewing and the intention for a public archive), the British Library sound archives (including copyright and depositing) and a copy of the oral history recording agreement that they would need to sign (see appendices 1, 2 and 3). The intentions of the project were made clear and the freedom to withdraw at any point. The British Library recording agreement was the chief form of consent that was requested, and was signed after each oral history was complete and decisions about its disclosure made.

Given that one of the explicit purposes of the oral history interviews was to form a public archive, the standard participation consent protocols of anonymity were different. Any recording submitted to The British Library is expected to be made public sooner or later. Having said that, interviewees can close access to parts or the whole interview for set periods of time, for example, *Track 3 to be closed until 2025*, or *the entire oral history to be closed until 2050.* This was stipulated in the signed recording agreement, submitted with the sound files to the British Library.

Aside from a few particular sections, only two interviews were entirely closed for a period of time. These were Geoff Tansey and Jane Landon. As a result, I have not used data from their interviews in this thesis, as mentioned above regarding the analysis. This is both out of respect for their desire for privacy and for the sake of simplicity, especially in the event of publication of any materials from the data.

With regards to wider sources of data, such as observations, these were collected as field notes which are held securely and not available publicly. I have used them to some extent in the thesis but where they may be used for publications, I would check with the interviewees first. Any other data is taken from publicly available material, such as on the world wide web, grey literature, or other oral history recordings in the public archives at the British Library.

As is typical with much qualitative research, especially collaborative, participatory and ethnographic methods, the process of consent is based on principles of building relationships of trust and continual negotiation, revisiting and consideration of consensual participation (see for example Lipson 1994).

Chapter 4

Activisms and Outlook

In this chapter, I address a component that the interviewees expressed relating to being activists. How do they remain positive as a small voice in the face of adversity? This chapter looks at food activisms from their position as social movements, which of course overlaps with the concept and definition of activist. There are various definitions of social movements, ranging from rudimentary, disorganised and underdeveloped to much more sophisticated, organised operations, spanning the community to international levels. To clarify, in this thesis, I define social movements as organised efforts by multiple individuals or organisations, acting outside formal structures to pursue collective political ends. It is also useful to look at Blumer's definition:

> "Social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises to establish a new order of life. They have their inception in a condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living." (Blumer 1995: 60)

The food activist movements, whilst becoming a more significant and influential voice, remain relatively small against the size and clout of the food industry and government. Activists to some extent are idealistic, in imagining the world a different way. What is it that drives them and keeps them going despite their often slow battles and minor successes? Although perhaps naively, I hadn't initially considered that their positive or negative approaches to life would be a major factor or worthy of particular focus, and I hadn't specified it in my interview guide. However, it quickly became a recurrent theme, which I then ensured to weave in to each oral history, if it didn't arise already, which it frequently did. Perhaps because I myself often feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of challenges facing food systems, I was struck by how many of the interviewees were seemingly innately optimistic. Of course, not all were, indeed a few had redirected some of their work having felt somewhat defeated. But for all, regularly confronting their faith in change played a part in their lives and work.

The chapter addresses the interviewees' outlook on life in relation to their work on challenging problems within food, specifically their relationship with optimism. This ranges from where they find

their motivation and drive, how they reflect on historical struggles, their big dreams within their fields, and maintaining optimism. With regards to the research questions, this chapter addresses question 1, and to a lesser extent question 3. It looks at some of the ways that the movements have developed.

4.1 Activism – optimistic in the face of pessimism?

> *"Well obviously I'm an optimist!"*
> (Harriet Lamb, Track 2)

> *"I think as a campaigner you have to be an optimist, you have to be able to envision a better way, see the problem, envisage how it could be and be optimistic that you can actually change things and make it happen"*
> (Philip Lymbery, Track 2)

In this section, I look at the interviewees' relationship with optimism/pessimism and their belief and drive for change. Perhaps an obvious point, but for many of them, being optimistic and, specifically, believing the change they were working for is possible, was crucial to their work. Although not straightforward, this belief gave them purpose and drive in the food movement, as well as kept them motivated and persevering; it contributed hugely to their dedication. This is not to say that they were all blindly positive or unrealistic, or even optimistic in the same ways and to the same extent as each other, or that their faith in change wasn't challenged and didn't waiver frequently. Ultimately, however, belief that change was possible and was the way forward was important and formed a foundation, a buffer with which to handle the setbacks and challenges that confronted their conviction.

I draw predominantly on the literature about social movements here, in particular the contributions from social psychology. Whilst I covered some of the key debates from the political science literature in chapter 2, social psychology is useful when looking at the individual life stories. I will provide an overview of the relevant findings and theories from this literature, before expanding on them with in-depth examples from my own data, from a variety of the interviews.

The language and narratives used by the interviewees when discussing their work revolved around several themes. One was positivity and optimism, expressed through expressions revolving around belief, inspiration, success, life philosophy, possibilities, hope, dreams and being worthwhile. This was somewhat balanced out with rationalism and struggles of depressing realities and managing negativity, pessimism, doubt and cynicism. Another theme was a sense of journey, as is somewhat also discussed in other parts of the thesis, focused on change and conveyed through notions of steps, goals, fuel and [things] happening. There were also themes about meaning in what they do, which relates to ideologies of justice, and was articulated through notions of a cause, significance and satisfaction. Finally, there were recurrent combative images employed to describe the work and challenges, sizing up the scale of problems and portrayed through language of battles, fighting, fires, fixing and solving problems, finding solutions, determination, winning and giving up/losing.

Many of these themes are present in the wider literature, and I also look here at some of the phenomena occurring within social movements that were evident amongst the interviewees. Motivation to participate in socio-political action is a central topic of study within social movements. Klandermans' substantive work (2015, 1997 amongst others) from social psychology on the role of motivation and collective identity within activism expands on the interlinking and interdependent roles of ideology, inner obligation, identity and group-based anger to catalyse social movements and action (see also van Zomeren et al 2008).

A significant part of the appeal of food activism, as seen in activism in general, was the challenge of the problem, pursuing change and a sense of injustice. Indeed, Jeanette Longfield stated "we're motivated by that sense of injustice and things being wrong" (Track 8). Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013) draw on the body of research in the field and identify five determinants for participation in collective action, which they argue should be considered dynamically as interacting factors. These are: 1) Identity or grievance – individual level, an inner moral obligation relating to values, justice and equity, a perceived grievance to the self (see van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2007). 2) Instrumentality or efficacy – weighing up whether it's feasible and worth pursuing change to improve circumstances of a perceived grievance. 3) Ideology and social identity – being part of collective/society, political ideology, a sense of inner social obligation, acting on behalf of a collective (see Sturmer et al 2003). 4) Emotions – shared emotions with a group, the key emotion identified is anger (van Zomeren et al 2004; Gamson 1992), but others are often present, such as hope (Taylor 2013). 5) Socio-political embeddedness – taking into consideration the wider socio-political context.

4.2 Finding motivation and drive

The challenges tackled within the food movements, and having faith in change being possible (to greater and lesser extents), was a great cause of motivation. There were frequent comments and discussions about how the interviewees kept their drive, or battled with it. This is highlighted well by Harriet Lamb:

> *"Yes I believe it's going to happen because it's already happening, I mean that's what keeps me inspired and positive is constantly seeing successes… ok not the whole of world trade, but steps along the way, just last night…[story]… taking a step forwards towards change and I always find that's the fuel, if you like, of the fire in my belly to keep going… [examples]… when we started people laughed at us… I spent the first 10 years being argued at by economists about why we would never break through in the mainstream according to their theoretical models… [story]… and it's kind of so easy and so cheap to find the problems, it's so much more difficult, but so much more worthwhile, to find the solutions… so I think we are breaking through… I think it is phenomenal, but we are constantly dissatisfied because clearly we are still right at the beginning of the work we need to do… it's always inspiring meeting [farmers and the public]… when you see the scale of the problems, of course in some ways it's depressing… but it actually just makes me more determined"* (Track 5)

The use of so many positive terms reflects Lamb's focus, for example, *believe, inspired* and *success*. There is also reference to a sense of journey and progress, as well as measurable activity, that was common, such as *change*, what is *happening*, being *at the beginning*, the *steps* along the way, the *solutions*. The challenges are not shied away from, as she puts the work in context, when she remarks on the large *scale of the problems*, the *constant dissatisfaction* and the *depressing* reality. However, this is in fact what drives Lamb on, and the small victories that she uses as her evidence, as she employs the evocative concepts of *fuel* and *fire* relating to her *determination*.

Lamb was not the only one. Amongst others, Philip Lymbery, too, was somewhat fixated with challenges and change, and it sustained his motivation for the work:

> *"[I've] always wanted to see a problem and solve it actually, I've never really been satisfied with, oh it's just the way it is, well actually, it doesn't have to be that way, does it, ah yeh but you'll never change that, you know actually I don't believe that, I think anything can be changed if you try hard enough, so that's the founding philosophy of my life actually. [I would very, very much call myself an optimist], yeh, I think as a campaigner you have to be an optimist, you have to be able to envision a better way, see the problem, envisage how it could be and be optimistic that you can actually change things and make it happen"* (Track 2)

Like Lamb, Lymbery focuses on the *problems* to be *solved* and the presence of *(dis)satisfaction*. He remarks clearly on his *belief* in *change*, which is part of the underlying *founding philosophy* that guides his life – the buffer to help tackle the large, complex problems. Both Lamb and Lymbery comment on the reactions and defences of other people, challenging what they do and the viability of the change they seek, yet it only spurs them on. Furthermore, Lymbery not only comments on identifying as an optimist, but in particular employs the concept of *envisioning* a different, *better way*.

The challenges posed to the food movement, and desire for change, were important factors in the interviewees' motivation, even, or especially, amongst those who were not so sure of their optimism and faith in change. Kath Dalmeny explains:

> *"The only guaranteed way that things won't happen is if people don't do something about it… I'll nearly go to optimism on [achieving sensible managing of fisheries], but it would feel foolish to try, because that slightly relieves you of the impetus to carry on trying, and you have to keep on trying… if we're a determined set of people that wanna fix this we could, because, hey, we put people on the moon, etc. you know it is possible for the human race to do sensible things if it tries, it's completely different to feel optimistic about whether they will"* (Track 6)

For Dalmeny, it was the difficulty of the challenge and doubt over its possible change that gave her purpose – *impetus to carry on* – to *fix* the problems. She questions her optimism, going as far as to call being optimistic *foolish*, and instead maintains the focus on *doing something*. Dalmeny also refers to *determination*, a recurrent theme in many of the interviews. Whilst not quite the positive *vision* that Lymbery refers to, Dalmeny considers what is *possible* and embraces the inherent challenges and uncertainty in making that a reality.

Julie Brown struggled with how positive and realistic she felt about achieving the big aims of her project, yet this didn't deter her:

> *"What I want to do, is it significant enough? And what the hell else would I do that was gonna be more significant? You know if I still want to be trying to be in this game of changing things, and I suspect that even no matter how low or tired I get, I think I just can't not be in it… I'm very determined, the other side is that I'm very stubborn, I don't give up… I assume I'm still hopeful because I'm still working"* (Track 7)

Again, the focus is on *change* and *determination*. For Brown, she returned frequently to this concept of *significance*, referring to the meaning the work provided in her life, and if it was *enough*. Whilst incurring more self-doubt, *enough*, like others, related somewhat to measuring the level of change and impact. Brown also ponders her optimism, concluding, though still unsure, that she must be *hopeful* by virtue of still working in food activism.

Jeanette Orrey struggled initially on a more personal basis, lacking confidence and doubting her own abilities and qualifications. As she was increasingly noticed, won awards and consulted for expertise, she at times felt out of her depth, amongst celebrity chefs and colleagues with higher degrees. However, she persevered, realising that she had the unique insight of 'on the ground' experience, and regularly infuriated and baffled by how clear the problems were and the lack of consensus and action to address them.

4.3 Calling on History

In justifying their faith in and dedication to change, the interviewees would regularly recount success stories from within their career, and embed their visions in a historical context with examples of big social and political changes from the past.

I again start with an extract from Harriet Lamb's interview:

> *"It honestly seemed impossible at the time we were fighting for national minimum wage, you felt you were fighting an uphill, an unwinnable battle, just like earlier ending apartheid was completely unwinnable, and in the end both of those changed so dramatically that it's very interesting, it's also very important if you're involved in activism to have that sense of history and how you can change things and how things do change and improve"* (Track 2)

Harriet not only compares some of her earlier campaigns (pre-Fairtrade) to enormous historical movements like apartheid, but directly remarks on the importance of having that sense of history in order to maintain one's faith in change happening. Again, there are references to *battles* and *fights*, struggles to *win* and *change*. Lamb, amongst others, regularly referred to injustice throughout her oral history, and it is interesting to consider Gamson's (1992) work on the role of emotions, particularly anger. He remarks on its relationship to combat and attack: "injustice focuses on the righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul" (1992: 32). Lamb even uses the phrase *fire in my belly* later on in her interview, as referenced above.

Similarly, Jeanette Longfield recounts a list of impressive achievements to maintain her optimism in the viability of change:

> *"There are days where you think, why am I bothering, this is hopeless, it doesn't last long… well look, women got the vote, slavery ended, we can put people on the moon, the Berlin wall came down, the Arab Spring, I mean, it all just kind of pops in to my head, what do you mean nothing changes, look!"* (Track 2)

She acknowledges that there are times of doubt, but this doesn't plague her as much as it does some others. Longfield very clearly uses the historical examples as evidence to herself of change being possible, and subsequently continue with her work. The themes of *hope* and *change* are again central, as she navigates her motivation and rationale.

Like many others, Philip Lymbery used multiple stories as examples of why and how being optimistic about change is important and rational. This extract immediately follows the previous quote above from track 2, where I asked him if he describes himself as an optimist. He had already stated why it was crucial for a campaigner (to see a better way and make the changes happen). Without prompting he went on to recount a story that justified the logic for this:

> *"Going back to the thing about getting the Treaty of Rome changed, the founding treaty of the European Union, I remember people in 1990 and 91 saying to us that that was bonkers, you know even people in the animal community, I remember talking to a guy, albeit in Spain, saying hey will you join us in this campaign, we need to get signatures on this petition, we need a million signatures, and then we're gonna take them to Europe and demand this change, and he literally fell off his chair laughing, he thought it was completely mad, but, we talked him back from that position, and he did get involved in the campaign, which is good, 'cause he can now look back and see that he was part of changing something that was worthwhile, so, yeh I think that optimism can be infectious and uh, lead to a snowball effect that can bring real change"* (Track 2)

This more recent story of one of Compassion's own victories demonstrates to Lymbery that, despite the seemingly overambitious plan and strong lack of faith and support from even within their own movement, they achieved the desired change. Of note, he remarks on the need to persuade by *talking* someone *from* their position, which maintains the sense of movement and change, but sounds softer than the action itself, which was *demanding* the *change*. There are also contemplations about measurement and value with *worthwhile*, and the importance of optimism in itself because of its ability to spread.

In the interviews, the interviewees didn't simply recount the history of their work, including defeats and wins, as part of their oral history. With both larger historical examples and more recent internal ones, they really highlighted the successful campaigns in a way that proved to them the worth and potential of their work. The successful stories dominated, with little or no prompting. Moreover, for some, the unsuccessful projects were seen as still incomplete challenges, rather than failed and finished. I elaborate on this next.

On this use of history, whether it is realistic or not, Tilly observed that social movements often portray a united group and fuel their activities by, "bunching in time and space, from their drawing on shared references to previous mobilizations and challenges" (1993: 16). Gamson and Meyer also distil how, by framing collective action as opportunity, movements "deny the immutability of some undesirable situation and the possibility of changing it through some form of collective action", where people are defined as "potential agents of their own history", which "necessarily implies the existence of opportunity… they believe they matter, that they are making history" (1996: 285). They are suggesting the attractive idea of being an agent of change and making history is presented. This

fits with interviewees making use of historical references to raise inspiration, hope and momentum. It is also fundamental to oral history, seeing people as agents of change, part of wider social movements, and combing the personal and political.

4.4 Optimistic Dreams versus Pessimistic Reality

The optimism that was often present is not to say that the interviewees were not realistic; they knew all too well the complexities and challenges. For the most optimistic, the great challenges only seemed to spur them on further, whilst for others it affected them differently. Ultimately, facing the rather pessimistic reality was unavoidable, and I look here at several different examples of how the interviewees navigated it. First, Harriet Lamb from Fairtrade, who continued to aim high and remain undeterred regardless of the obstacles. Second, Kath Dalmeny from Sustain and Julie Brown from Growing Communities, who dealt with their doubt about the depressing outlook and sought to maintain enough positivity to continue. Third, Simon Fairlie, who had somewhat given up because he saw the forces too big against him and his capacity to effect wider change.

Harriet Lamb struck me as particularly positive, yet she was also perceptive and politically astute. She frequently described the complexities and challenges, yet always seemed to bring out something positive, and her dedication and ultimate belief in change was clear.

For example, when discussing the tea trade, on which she remarked, “really we feel we’ve never made it in tea… we haven’t had a breakthrough” (track 5, 36:45). Lamb describes the particular difficulties within the tea trade:

> *“The other thing we must work together on is, we haven’t got a hope in hell otherwise, is about driving change for workers on plantations, particularly in sectors like tea. I mean, the workers on tea estates… they get poverty wages… it is a complete scandal, but there’s no way any one scheme can change that alone, no way, because there’s no way all the schemes together can change it because you need the trade unions, the governments of those countries, the NGOs and all the companies and all the schemes, the only hope we’ve got, and actually I would say you need the consumer, being ready to pay more, because… the wages of the workers are regulated by the collective bargaining agreement, which is set at a sector*

> *level… no tea estate is allowed to go outside that because then you undermine the collective bargaining agreement… so that's completely boxed us in in trying to make sure that workers get paid more, to be honest we're stuck… somewhere more has got to be paid to the plantations so they can pay a living wage, and that is an example of a problem where we will not make any change alone, it's only if we come together. However, and indeed, I'm happy to say that we in Fairtrade have pioneered some work about how will you work out what a living wage is, and how will we make progress towards it, and we've done that first round of trying to think this through… collaborated… decided to join with that… so we will have one way of measuring how we think people are making progress towards a living wage, 'cause we won't get there, it'll take us time to get there, we won't get there overnight, nobody will pay it overnight. But rather than make no progress, we want to say, well let's say how we can make progress towards a living wage."* (Track 5)

The recurrent themes within the food activist movements are evident here. The sense of journey and progress against a force underlies the concepts of *driving change*, being *stuck*, requiring *time* and arriving *there*, indicated as the destination on the other side of that change. Furthermore, here Lamb highlights the importance of *collaboration* and working *together* against complex, entrenched problems. She also reiterates *hope*, which is never far from her radar.

Soon after, during the same track, when discussing problems, scandals and criticisms that the Fairtrade movement has faced, Lamb returns to tea:

> *"The consequence is we're working with a lot of plantations that have very low percentages of Fairtrade, and the workers are very, very poor, and we haven't got a breakthrough… [descriptions of attempts to tackle it]… so we are always, always trying to think how can we do this better, how can we do this differently… [descriptions of common problems the press pick up on, complexity of challenges, mentions corruption and child labour]… If it was easy to put justice and fairness at the heart of trade, hey, we would've been done by now! Someone would've done it centuries ago and we wouldn't need fair trade, it would've been solved, so this is a really difficult and long, complex journey that we're on and we're right, we feel we are right at the beginning. Kinda' sounds a bit pretentious sometimes but we sort of feel we're like the battle against slavery... so we're very clear, this is not the work of 25 years, this is the work of centuries…When it's going well it's really, really exciting. And on the other, ahahaha, when you see the scale of the problems, of course in some ways it's depressing,*

> *and it's always kind of like a slap across the face, but it also just makes me more determined… I mean it just makes me so angry that in such a rich world with so much wealth we can allow that kind of poverty to exist, I mean that just makes me more determined to do it."* (Track 5)

The first thing that I noted from these quotes was that Lamb admits to failure (so far) and went on to describe some of the many, multi-layered problems, which made it incredibly difficult to reform, one of the most difficult for the organisation. The second was that, despite this, she described positively their latest plan to tackle this, the success of it so far and, therefore, clearly demonstrating that it was not a defeated and closed problem but an incomplete challenge.[10] Finally, she put the depth of the problem into perspective, comparing it with the fight against slavery, being both realistic about the scale of it as well as highlighting the need for patience in the face of such a momentous challenge. Lamb was realistic, yet her ambitions and dreams were enormous. For her, the greater the challenge, the more excited and determined she was.

The sense of battling journey remains prominent here, underpinning the words *breakthrough*, *really difficult and long complex journey*, and *we are right at the beginning*. It is a concept that exists commonly amongst many of the interviewees and is evident in their language. This visualisation serves to provide direction and hope in the face of the challenges, where there is an end goal in sight to focus on, and a means to reach it, albeit through long and difficult processes. In this quote, by remarking that it is the *work of centuries*, Lamb admits that it is likely beyond her lifetime, and definitely beyond her professional lifetime, yet she remains *determined*.

Not all, of course, were quite so unabashedly optimistic. In times of doubt, and even in good times, some interviewees struggled to maintain their optimism. Whilst examples such as Harriet Lamb, Philip Lymbery and Jeanette Longfield demonstrate how history is used to relieve pessimism, uphold hope and validate seeking change, others are more cautious. Here I look at how doubt and scepticism is dealt with.

Kath Dalmeny was wary of a simple binary of optimism or pessimism, and discussed a more realistic "possibilism" concept. She that believed change was possible, rather than believing it was likely to

[10] It is important to acknowledge that Lamb is also excellent with public relations and knows how to win people over with the narrative of Fairtrade. This is demonstrated here in the way she almost sells how they're tackling the tea problem: "However, I'm happy to say that here in Fairtrade we have pioneered work…"

happen. This didn't mean, however, that she questioned the work, the faith in change and the value of the struggle:

> *"There was a very nice phrase that somebody used… where they chucked out the words optimist and pessimist, they said… it's not that rational to be an optimist or a pessimist at the moment, but you can be a possibilist, and I quite liked it, I wouldn't call myself a possibilist, it's a bit, you know, it's a bit silly, but if you are a possibilist then you are investing in the possibility of things getting better, and you put aside pessimism, because if you actually try to face yourself up as a human being to climate change, you get depressed, on the day where I did try that, I had a bit of a, oh my god how do you ever fix it?!... investment in optimism… just leaves you swinging backwards and forwards between pessimism and optimism 'cause you keep coming up against statistics or changes or stupid political acts or intransigent policy makers, your optimism would not survive that process, so if you're a possibilist you just keep on investing in the possibility that things might get better, and it's much more of a relieving approach… so you can't guarantee that what you're doing is right and will fix everything, but you can guarantee that if you didn't, then that's one more step towards it going wrong"* (Track 6)

Dalmeny employs *rationality* and shares her navigation of the tension between being optimistic for change and pessimistic in face of the reality. She does not shy away from the *depressing*, overwhelming, relentless nature of the challenges, yet does not give into them either. In so doing, she commits to continuing, to making things *better* and progress another *step* in the right direction of the journey towards positive change. Pete Riley echoed similar sentiments. Helen Crawley (public health nutritionist) also struggled with the likelihood and degree of change, but held the conviction that the importance of the work was worth it, that incremental change was better than no change, that doing nothing was not an option, and she identified the contributions she was able to make contextualised in the bigger picture.

Julie Brown also avoided the terms optimism, positive and pessimism. She struggled with proclaiming herself an optimist and her faith in the success of her work. Again, though, this didn't deter her. In discussing hope, positivity, optimism, and what keeps her going, she comments:

> *"I've given up trying to work that out… it's not helpful… I've had flashes of thinking… in my wildest fantasies I think, actually we will be able to do something and it will be significant,*

> *the reality at the moment is what I do, what we do, what Growing Communities do in Hackney is significant, it is significant, and what I have to accept as an individual is that's significant enough for me… I don't know how it's gonna play out… [humanity] couldn't survive in the worst case scenario, so there's no point even thinking about it, what I'm working towards is the best case scenario you know, which is something where we do rise to this, we do manage to sort out alternatives… I worked out how many groups we have… [how many Growing Communities would need] to get 10% of the food markets… the thing about Growing Communities as opposed to working at Friends of the Earth or something like that is it's, it creates, there's huge positives and benefits that come out of it for me and my family and my community, so it's creating something real and positive… I wanna have a meaningful life, not only, so not only do I get a job that is important, feels important and significant and meaningful to me, I think that's really important to people to have meaning in their life, um, but I get great food, haha, and friends and community and all of those other things."* (Track 7)[11]

Like Dalmeny, Brown doesn't find the binary of positive or negative helpful, especially as she considers the scale of the problems. Instead, she focuses on smaller, tangible steps with the potential to play a role in wider impacts, countering *inaction* by doing *something*, which would be worse, and taking steps that are built on a *best case scenario*. She struggles with whether it's *enough*, and balances it with what gives her *meaning*. In this case, the work was creating an example living alternative food system (discussed in more depth in chapter 6). Brown believed it was important that her project worked as part of addressing some of the problems of the food system, and her ultimate aim was for it to be replicable and to dominate a place, however small, in the *solutions*. When doubting whether it was *enough* in the grand scheme of things, she backed it up with the local and personal benefits it brought.

A frequent question is why people continue to engage in social action even when their aims are rarely effectuated. Dalmeny, Riley, Brown and Crawley all question this of themselves, and yet they carry on. It is worth considering Drury and Reicher's (2009) work, who argue that "participation generates a 'positive social-psychological transformation'… participation in protest strengthens

[11] There are some small overlaps and repetitions from this quote with later quotes used in chapter 6. I have kept them both as they provide rich data that have contributed to the analysis of several different themes.

identification and induces collective empowerment" (in Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013: 897).

In the case of Simon Fairlie, who was somewhat an anomaly amongst the interviewees, he declared that he wasn't really a campaigner and identified least with activism. He was more interested and involved in being part of the debate, writing, researching, critiquing, publishing ideas. This absolutely reached to the practices of living an alternative life on a personal level, but less involved in trying to bring about wider change and persuade others. He didn't seem as enamoured with broader societal changes as the rest, and interestingly was more pessimistic.

> *"**Simon**: I do less lobbying now really because I haven't got the time for it, and because it's, um, you're, in England you just have to keep on banging and banging and banging away at it, I mean there are other people doing it as well but it's thankless really in England because nobody pays any attention, um, little changes… but… large scale building firms who monopolise all the allocated land, and uh there's no mainstream body arguing for anything different, and I haven't got the clout to start a mainstream body, and uh, so, but, maybe things change a little bit, little by little.*
> ***Lauren**: do you feel quite pessimistic about the possibility of that change coming about in planning issues?*
> ***Simon**: Um, yes really"* (Track 5)

Fairlie reflects on the relentless work of lobbying and struggles to see the rewards in visible change. In remarking that he personally doesn't have the *clout*, he indicates that he doesn't believe he is capable of creating the change he wishes to see happen, and that his role is not best fitted there. To some extent, Fairlie had given up his more activist work that featured earlier in his life, such as in land rights, because he didn't see, nor feel, there was much chance of things changing. His belief in wider societal change was diminished, and his other projects, which were more focused on provoking discussion and demonstrating examples, was more of a priority for him.

McAdam et al state that people who feel aggrieved must also feel optimistic that acting collectively can redress the problem (1996: 5). This relates to the literature on efficacy and instrumentality, identified as a key component to participating in social action. It must be perceived that change is both possible and worth it in order to engage, and that in itself would fuel hope, as well as attracting people who are more likely optimistic in nature. As Gamson and Meyer put it:

> "When movements attempt to assess opportunity, they do so with a systematic optimistic bias, exaggerating opportunities and underestimating constraints. This bias is built into the functional needs of movements which need to sustain a collective action frame that includes the belief that conditions can be changed" (1996: 289-90).

4.5 Institutional Positivity

Not surprisingly, the positive outlook and conviction was not only personal, but often important to the fabric of organisations. The interviewees I interviewed were often instrumental in embedding this positivity into the organisations where they worked. Below I use a variety of quotes from interviewees across different organisations to demonstrate this.

Both Jeanette Longfield and Kath Dalmeny commented on the importance and value of Sustain's positivity, and how it played out practically in campaigns. Reflecting on what Longfield had learned about successful campaigns over her years of experience, she explains:

> *"What else have I learned? So, language, the importance of language, heavens above… my rather clichéd example now is, we used to talk in the early days about banning junk food advertising to children, which is what we wanted then, and we still want it now, but banning things is language that makes people feel uncomfortable, defensive, illiberal, um, it's not helpful… people don't like to be anti-things, so if you say smoke-free, people think, yes of course smoke-free, how reasonable, how sensible, how lovely. If you say, protecting children from junk food marketing, how could anybody possibly be against it, how sensible, reasonable, of course I'll sign up to that"* (Track 3)

Later on she describes the tandem campaigns of good school meals and the ban on junk food advertising:

> *"This is quite a nice complementarity, on the one side, bashing the junk food industry, on the other side, being very positive about the benefits of really good quality school meals, so that*

> *we could fairly paint ourselves as not being a completely negative campaign, we are for high quality school meals and good food education in schools"* (Track 6)

Longfield emphasises the importance of language in communicating positivity, as a way to engage the public, policy makers and government. The example of *free* rather than *anti* demonstrates this explicitly. She also highlights how this plays into people's emotions and perceptions, with the aim to make them *feel comfortable* and, consequently, open to change. Even where criticising the ills of the food system, Longfield remarked on the important to balance this with providing a positive action to counter it, something that people could get behind instead and not feel hopeless. The way Longfield describes how campaigns are presented reflects a narrative approach to engage people, which is a common strategy and characteristic within social movements. As Polletta and Gardner explain regarding social movements and the use of narrative, "stories can serve as a crucial resource to activists… to gain support for the movements' claims… Activists use stories to mobilize participants, enlist supporters and influence decision makers" (2015: 534-535).

It is not just in the language and framing of campaigns that the interviewees made conscious decisions about being positive, it was also often part of the culture of the organisations. Kelvin Cheung, of FoodCycle, recounted the importance of having a positive founding team when they were setting up the organisation:

> *"Some people didn't believe and they got cut out of the picture, there's always gonna be believers and at the beginning those who hesitate… you just gotta kick them out and keep the dream alive"* (Track 2)

Cheung found this particularly important as he was founding FoodCycle, with the added challenge of starting something completely new. The intolerance of *hesitation*, and prioritisation of having people that *believed*, demonstrates again the central place of optimism and faith in change present in activism, but also the existence of doubt and its management. The comment about keeping *the dream alive* is particularly evocative, and reflects the concerted effort to cultivate an organisational culture with goals, positivity and conviction similar to the individual attitudes discussed above.

To compare a much older and bigger organisation, similar attitudes were displayed in the Soil Association. Reflecting on the rapid growth in the organic movement in the 1990s and whether he was surprised, Francis Blake remarked:

> *"It was definitely how it should be, of course, I mean, I'm an optimist, and I think everybody working in the organic movement more or less are optimists because, uh, you know you have to be in a way, to, to see such a large challenge, see what's wrong with the existing system and try to… change things… there's a cause to work for and a goal in sight… there are plenty of cynics in the organic movement but they all, there's always an element of optimism in there somewhere because there has to be to… fight the battle and think it's worth it"* (Track 8)

Once again, the existence of doubt, realism and negativity is there and has to be navigated, with Blake acknowledging the *cynicism* that is prominent. Yet his point is that to a greater or lesser extent, everyone involved in the organic movement must be optimistic, they ultimately feel it is *worth it*. As is consistent with the data, he notes a *cause* and a *goal*, he mentions the overwhelming nature of the *large challenges* and the need to envision a different way – *a goal in sight* – and employs language of combat with *fight* and *battle*.

In the Fairtrade Foundation, Harriet Lamb describes clearly her contribution to the culture of the organisation when she started there, instilling a positive attitude and raising ambition:

> *"The first thing I did when I got to the Fairtrade Foundation, they'd got themselves sort of down into a bunker, they were sort of negative about everyone and everything and defending themselves against the bad world and internal battles… everyone was cross… I think the first thing I did was sort of throw open the windows and say come on guys and lift the mood to get people out there again to get them engaging positively with the company… that was probably my biggest first contribution… the second was probably to raise the level of people's ambition, I was always very clear, I'm only interested in Fairtrade if we're gonna make it mainstream… [if not, and on the importance of being mainstream] you also then can't have a wider ripple effect either, so not only do you affect less farmers and workers directly but you're not taken seriously, you can't have any wider impact on trade structures, trade policy, people's thinking, company thinking… re-inspiring confidence"* (Track 3)

Lamb employs images of height and movement along with attitude and approach, describing the organisation's mood as *down* and *negative*, and her role as *lifting* and *raising* to create the lacking *positivity* and *ambition*. She drew the focus away from the *bad world*, which implies the

overwhelming forces they were aiming to change, and towards a *wider effect* and *impact*, to ultimately shift both internal and external *thinking* and *re-inspire*. Her comments on being *taken seriously* is a theme addressed in the next chapter section, and the focus on *mainstreaming* is developed in chapter 6.

The positive attitudes enabled the food movements and individual interviewees to be more ambitious with their aims in the face of such challenges. The optimism was in fact necessary for them not only to keep going, but to set their targets at all, and the greater the optimism, the bigger the ambitions.

4.6 Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I have looked at the narratives of optimism and positivity within food activism, specifically, negotiations of remaining positive in the face of the overwhelming injustices they seek to change. This also speaks to the wider literature on activism and social movements more generally, reinforcing some concepts and adding new data and themes. The size and array of complex issues within food systems that is tackled by the various interviewees and their organisations is sobering. It is admirable how they maintain motivation and hope, and keep working away with often small, incremental progress towards their end visions. Indeed, it is imperative in order to continue what they do. However, I have also shown that this is not a straightforward relationship. This chapter has also addressed my research questions about the characteristics and developments within British food activist movements.

The data evidences the ways in which the interviewees maintain and fuel their belief and dedication, often through building on previous successes and using historical events and movements as proof that change is possible. The data also allows insight into the ways the interviewees navigate doubt, uncertainty and the sides of their work that confront a depressing reality, which for some is an ongoing internal conversation, and for others has gradually pushed them away from more ambitious forms of activism and social change. Finally, the oral histories have provided examples of how organisations themselves need to construct positivity and an inspiring identity, and the role of the individuals and members involved in creating that.

The themes in this chapter contribute to theories of new social movements and social psychology. They relate to both personal and shared/group identities, and emotions and efficacy, which have all been identified as important pillars in participation of social movements. The social psychology work on social movements has been useful in making sense of some of the emotions, rationales and outlooks shared in the interviews, afforded by the personal and individual accounts of oral history, and how these fitted into wider food activism. This thesis expands on social movement theories to the area of food activism specifically, providing a new body of work in a particular subject of social movement. The data and analysis provides evidence for social movement theories relating to motivation and collective identity, particularly institutional positivity, as well as the friendships within and across food movements. The theoretical determinants for collective action and motivation are seen in real life accounts, including personal identity and perceived grievance, ideology and social identity, shared emotions and socio-political embeddedness. These are explored further in chapter 6, when looking at identity, the self and the political and practical sides of food. I argue that the use of historical successes (in evidencing the possibility for change, maintaining momentum and justifying perseverance) add a new dimension to the determinant of efficacy. Finally, whilst generally supporting the social psychology theories of social movements, this chapter also challenges them and adds nuance. The participation by the food activists is not straightforward or linear, whereby once the various determinants are in place, collective action ensues. In the oral histories, the interviewees shared their journeys in food activism, which went through many phases and peaks and troughs. Many confronted, struggled with and doubted their optimism for change at different times, some to the extent that they had somewhat withdrawn.

Chapter 5

Activisms and Image

In this chapter, I address another component of activism that was expressed during the interviews. How might their image help or hinder their aims?

As the world of food activism has changed and developed over the decades, its voice has become more prominent and more influential. As discussed in chapter 6, there have been shifts from occupying a minority, alternative position to more mainstream spheres. The words 'activist' and 'activism' themselves can conjure up images of radical 'hippies' and direct action, such as marches and blockades, tearing up genetically modified crops in fields, and media grabbing public stunts. Whilst some of this continues, in reality many activists are suited up in offices behind computers and spend time in meetings such as with industry and government. Their focus and aim to change parts of the food system require many approaches, with being 'taken seriously' often an important factor in achieving that change.

The chapter looks at image, in regards to their own personal presentation, the impressions they seek to give of their organisations and how this relates to their messages and aims for change. With regards to the research questions, this chapter in particular addresses questions 1 and 3. It looks at some of the ways that the movements have developed, particularly in their image and perception as alternative or mainstream. It also considers the method of oral history life stories in exploring food activism and identity.

5.1 Introduction

> ***Lauren****: To what extent do you feel that the food movement as a whole… has been put in this box with hippies and radical campaigning and protesting and so on?*
> ***Jeanette****: In a way it's inevitable, because if you're gonna do things like dig up GM crops… you want to get media attention, you get media attention, but then people think that's what you're about, nobody's gonna put boring committee meetings on the front page… but we*

> *don't have to revel in it, we can do other things to counter that image, and yeh, we're doing more of it but still not enough.*
> ***Lauren**: Do you feel it's damaged the movement at all?*
> ***Jeanette**: Maybe, maybe.*
> (Jeanette Longfield, Track 8)

As I was meeting the interviewees, interviewing them and seeing them in different contexts, I paid quite close attention to their image and presentation. In part this was because I found I moderated my own clothes, and to some extent, persona, for every interview, depending on where each interview session was taking place, whether I'd met the person before/how well I knew them, and how formal or informal they were. Though subconscious at first, I knew that I was doing this to try and make them feel at ease and be more comfortable and open with me in the interview, and in part felt that if I matched their level of formality/informality, they would see me as more similar to them.

Quite early on, and subsequently, I started to notice the different ways the interviewees dressed and presented themselves, physically and in their personal and professional personas. In the space of only a few days I met with and conducted the first sessions with Geoff Tansey in his home, with Philip Lymbery in his organisation's office, with Kath Dalmeny in the British Library and with Simon Fairlie in my parents' house in Somerset. Not only did the circumstances in which we met vary widely, but these four also varied dramatically in their approach to their work and also in their presentation. For example, Lymbery was cleanly shaven in a corporate style full suit and tie, and Fairlie fully bearded, in his typical worn, holey clothes and evoking a sort of fairy-tale tinker. Within the first session (track 2) Lymbery had already remarked on trying to distance the organisation from the 'hippies' that were associated with food activism. In the second session (track 3) we discussed in greater detail many aspects of image, association and presentation.

This got me reflecting on one of my initial research questions, about how many of the issues that these organisations and individuals campaigned for, had changed over the years from being perceived as (and often being) outlying and radical to much more accepted and moving towards the mainstream. As the significance of this became more evident as I progressed through my data collection in the interviews, I started ensuring that discussions on image and presentation were raised and explored, which continued to provide valuable insights. This varied from the appearance of the organisation as a whole, including its work space, to conscious and calculated decisions about

clothing, or as a minimum awareness of it. I deal more directly with the relationship between alternative and mainstream in chapter 6, but there are overlaps here.

In this section, I use a variety of examples from the data of different interviewees, including extended quotes to illustrate some points with more depth. I also draw on concepts of performance, looking the part, self-presentation and impression management by Goffman (1956), Butler (1990), McDowell (1997) and Skeggs (1997). There is also a key theme in this section about looking and being taken seriously, which can be seen as a counterbalance to social movements being perceived as small, informal and disorganised (see della Porta and Mattoni 2016). Changes to this have been observed in recent decades, with the rise of 'NGO-isation' formalising the work of movements (see Alvarez 2009 and McCarthy and Zald 1973), and which has been central to many of the organisations of the interviewees studied here.

5.2 Size matters

Some of the interviewees were very conscious and calculated about how their organisation came across, trying to portray for example a serious, professional, conventional and powerful image. To appear powerful, one method employed was to make themselves look bigger, and obscure their size, which in reality is often very small. This relates somewhat to the 'efficacy' theory within social movements study, where it must be felt that there are sufficient resources and political opportunities for change to feel feasible, particularly as a group (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013). I propose here that as part of that efficacy, the interviewees manipulated their resources and opportunities to increase their otherwise limited influence and make the change they sought more likely.

Kath Dalmeny provides a good example. She used to work for the Food Commission, which was very small, and remarks:

> *"We never let anybody know [how small we were] at the time! Hahaha!… We made a pact between ourselves that we would never let any industry come to the office, 'cause then they would see that there was just 3 of us"* (Track 5)

They felt it was important to convey that they were bigger and more powerful than they actually were. Saying that industry would *see* there were just three of them if they visited implies that it was not apparent already how small they were, that were this to be known it would jeopardise achieving their aims, and indicates how small they were compared to what they were fighting against. Even the larger activist organisations are still relatively small compared to most government departments and major global food companies.

I observed also that Pete Riley, whose official job title was Campaigns Director, was the main, almost only, person behind GM Freeze (whilst collaborating with many other groups in a membership structure). Again, you would never know this unless you knew him/the organisation well, and I was afforded insight not only through the content of the oral history interviews but by visiting him in his home to conduct some of them there. At the time, the postal address of the organisation listed on the website was actually his home address – a small terraced cottage in the rural village of Silkstone Common in South Yorkshire. The 0845 phone number went directly to his house, from where he worked, and nearly all the material and media correspondence was done solely by him. The website[12] had no section describing the structure or who works for the organisation, making it difficult to work out the size of it, and by keeping everything quite obscure, it actually gave the impression of a larger, more influential organisation. At the time, they described themselves as the following on their website:

> "The GM Freeze campaign is supported by a wide alliance of organisations sharing the public's deep concern about the speed at which genetic modification is being introduced into food and farming"

and,

> "The GM Freeze campaign brings together individuals and organisations who share the public's deep concern about genetic modification in food and farming….
> Our Board includes representatives from The Soil Association, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland, GeneWatch UK, EcoNexus, GM Free Dorset and the Organic Research Centre at Elm Farm."[13]

[12] It is more transparent now, https://www.gmfreeze.org/home/about/ (accessed 15/1/2018)

[13] http://www.gmfreeze.org/ in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

By naming some larger and better-known organisations that support them, describing themselves as a 'wide alliance', as well as using the word 'board', conveys the image of an organisation that is much larger than the work of essentially one person, even if supported by other organisations. Furthermore, naming 'the public' makes it sound even larger and sends out a message that they are representing an entire nation. Like the Food Commission, this appeared to be important as such a small and modestly funded group of people trying to exert influence over such a large and powerful industry.

These portrayals of size and clout hint at one of the tensions and challenges of food activism and the sense of efficacy – to some extent they need to try and match (if not physically then in influence) the beast they are against in order to effect change. As exampled in Guthman's (2014) study of organic agriculture in California, this is a tricky line to tread. In trying to envisage and bring about a different agrarian order whilst being in a minority, emulating that system to gain leverage brings the risk of becoming it without changing it.

5.3 The workspace

For Philip Lymbery, image was not just personal, but professional. He made a deliberate and considered decision about the physical offices of Compassion in World Farming, which was important in conveying and presenting a serious and respectable organisation dealing with mainstream issues. He explains:

> *"**Philip**: I've worn a suit and tie, almost religiously, because, it's not what people would expect from someone in the animal welfare community, it's what someone would expect from someone who was, you know, a mainstream part of the establishment, so if you wanna be part of the mainstream establishment, you want your views to be adopted mainstream, well, start taking a mainstream approach to get it there, um, yep.*
> ***Lauren**: Just in terms of an outsider view when I've come into the offices, that's very much the image that I've got… When do you think that became the norm for the organisation, or has it always been the norm? Can you identify any particular moments or shifts where that changed? Or was it always the case?*

***Philip**: What is your impression of the office?*

***Lauren**: I mean it's quite a normal office, it's almost any organisation you go in, it's very structured, very clean, very organised, everyone's very smart, I mean, you know, it could be almost anywhere in the country… all manner of issues.*

***Philip**: Yeh, good, so I joined Compassion in 1990, I joined as the campaigns assistant… it was a small organisation then, I started off in an organisation of 8, maybe 10 people at most… it moved from being in the small office space above a health food shop in Petersfield to its own dedicated office, but again in Petersfield… in 2000 I left Compassion, I came back in 2005, and the organisation was in that same office, had grown considerably, it was probably twice as many staff when I picked it up then, maybe 40 odd staff, and I really felt jam packed, over crowded, the office had become looking in need of attention, and I felt that it wasn't in keeping with where I felt the organisation needed to be, I was looking to reposition the organisation another notch towards the centre ground, another notch toward the mainstream, and part of that package was getting an office space that I could be proud to take anyone, be they a journalist, or be they a politician, or be they from overseas or from the local community. Not ostentatious, you know, I didn't want chandeliers, high ceilings, what have you, that would be entirely wrong, what I wanted was an office that was, you know, good, clean, spacious, professional, that we could put some lovely photographic images of farm animals, making farm animals a poster child really. So, it was a conscious decision in 2005 that we would move to another office, it just so happened that that other office, the best office space we found, was here in Godalming, which is about a half hour, 45 minutes closer to London than Petersfield, but doesn't give us the London penalties in terms of rates, so gives us a better penetration in terms of um recruitment, but without the consequent overheads of being in London, so it was a conscious decision, and we moved here in 2006. On paper I thought we were gonna move to Woking… one foot out of the station and thought, no, this just doesn't feel like home for Compassion, but yeh, we settled here in Godalming, which is not that far away.*

***Lauren**: What was it about Woking that wasn't quite right?*

***Philip**: Probably it just felt a little bit too urban, more urban than I'd expected it to, whereas Godalming here just feels right for a farm animal charity, to be in a smaller town, which is, you know, more connected to its countryside surroundings."*

(Track 3)

This example leads me to two points. The first is that it demonstrates how a desired image is crafted and presented to create a particular impression. This relates to Goffman's (1956) theory of performance and impression management. The 'front' that the actor (in this case, interviewee) plays out includes a manner and, as exampled here, appearance. This can be at an individual as well as a community level, and in this case, like the stage and props of a theatre, expressed in the location, building and internal offices.

Secondly, by consciously invoking the opposite, the example highlights what Lymbery wants Compassion to try and escape and distance themselves from – small, alternative, outlier. Lymbery uses terms such as *professional* multiple times throughout his interview, as well as *centre ground*, *reasonable ground*, *look a certain way*, *clean*, and *spacious* to describe what they're working towards, and the image they're trying to portray. This suggests that what he's trying to get away from is the opposite; an unprofessional, disorganised, small, underfunded, unkempt organisation, viewed as an *outlier*, with a radical agenda. This is despite the fact that he's aware his stance and aims are quite radical, and in fact, because of that – he is trying to balance promoting radical ideas to mainstream audiences. Also of note is the word *reposition*, highlighting Lymbery's role in shifting the organisation towards the mainstream.

In the same track, Lymbery stated that "image does matter" because there have been misconceptions and bad images given to people fighting for the issues Compassion addresses because of the way they present themselves, and they therefore tend to have to over-compensate to be taken seriously (Track 3). This is consistent with his view that the more radical you want to be, the more mainstream and conventional you need to come across.[14]

The relationship between space and identity is a central area of study within human geography (see Keith and Pile 1993). Dale and Burrell (2008) address the particular relationship between spatial constructions of the workplace and constructions of identity (personal and organisation identities), and how they feed into each other, as demonstrated in the above quote. The quote recounts the different and changing phases of Compassion over the years, shaped in part by Lymbery's vision and his increasingly influential position within the organisation. This reflects the dynamic of space and time, constantly shaping each other with neither static, as argued by Massey (2005). For Lymbery, he

[14] In the above extract alone, Lymbery uses the word *mainstream* five times. I address themes of mainstreaming more thoroughly in chapter 6, and therefore will not elaborate on it here.

took conscious steps beyond just his personal appearance, broadening to the offices of Compassion, in order to create the atmosphere and image of the type of organisation he wanted to present. This, he believed, was an important part of them achieving their radical aims.

5.4 General appearance and impression

Philip Lymbery was not alone in valuing the general presentation and impressions given to those beyond the food movements communities. Jeannette Longfield was concerned at some of the styles in which alternatives may be seen. This quote demonstrates it well:

> *"There's a bit of a hair-shirt tradition I think in the sector as a whole and in campaigning, and I suppose because we're motivated by that sense of injustice and things being wrong, maybe that's just the way we look at the world, sometimes, I don't know, I find it a bit frustrating as you can tell, 'cause, unless we paint the alternative in beautifully attractive tones, why would anybody wanna go there?! … even in Capital Growth there's um, I think maybe it might be a class thing, I don't know, maybe this is just my class prejudice, there's a kind of shabby-chic middle class thing that, you know if it's too tidy it's a bit naff, there's a different aesthetic that, and some of the pictures of community gardens that we've put on our website, I look at them and I think, frankly that looks a bit shabby, and I just feel in my bones, again on the basis of no statistical evidence whatsoever, that people from a working class background, or from a lower-middle class background, who take pride in appearance and neatness and tidiness and cleanliness and all that kind of stuff, you know the working class woman in a terraced street scrubbing her front step kind of approach, would look at some of the stuff that we do, oh isn't this beautiful and shabby-chic kind of way, they'd look at it and think, it looks like a mess to me, and I think, shabby-chic's fine, for yourself – we're not doing this for ourselves, we need to be appealing to people who have a different aesthetic, and some of the gardens need to look neat and tidy and beautiful, you might think that looks a bit repressed and too British or too neat, fine, we can have some that look a bit like that as well, but not all of them, come on! And yeh, even, and again it's not as bad as it used to be, but when we're trying to promote what a good diet would look like, and you think, if my mum looked at that she'd think it looked like something that the dog dragged in, it's got to look nice, not always look a bit hippie, tree-hugger, even though hippies are lovely and I like trees.*

> *But, hush my mouth for sayin' it, but, the Daily Mail sells a lot of papers for a reason… getting that middle England, respectable, neat, tidy, conservative, even if only conservative with a small 'c', to think that the stuff that we're campaigning for is stuff that chimes with them, that feels right, is really important. So sometimes, you know, we just talk to each other and you think, no, no, we're not the ones we need to convert, we're already agreeing with each other, come on!"* (Track 8)

Similarly to the previous section, there is a sense of appealing to the masses, and moving away from, even rejecting, the stereotypical activist and their followers – the niche – in order to succeed in creating change. Jeanette Longfield understands this more along class and political lines. She identifies a divide, referring to fellow 'activists' in food movements as 'us' by using *we*, *ourselves* and *each other*, and the rest, therefore, as 'them', *people who have a different aesthetic*, *the ones we need to convert*. By using terms like British and middle England Longfield implies that 'they' are the general public, the more typical and comparatively more conservative majority of the population. This relates to the shared group identity and sense of community inherent in social movements (van Zomeren et al 2008), but also highlights the tension in simultaneously needing to engage the 'other' for wider social change. She believes this 'other' – the general public (and to some extent, political establishment) – is who the work needs to appeal to, this is the mainstream which the food movements must crack in order to create that wider social change. Longfield also employs imagery and seeks to create visions that are appealing and sellable, with phrases like, *paint the alternative in beautifully attractive tones.* There are also core sentiments of persuasion and religion, with the use of terms like *convert*.

Similarly to Lymbery, Longfield is concerned about getting away from the image of the stereotypical activist, not because she is against what they stand for, on the contrary, but because it seems the 'mainstream' does not identify with this. Longfield herself, like several of the other interviewees, feels somewhat unsure of her own social class and political identity, which I discuss in chapter 5. Having grown up in what she described as a fairly typical, conservative and more working class family, she felt she then became more middle class because of her university education and adopting liberal and radical values. This is indicated when she refers to her mother in the above passage, musing that she would, like most, not find appealing the sort of alternative 'good diet' that the food movement portrays. This perhaps makes her even more aware of and sensitive to the differences between the 'mainstream' general public and the 'alternative' of the food movements, and the challenges of them agreeing and identifying with each other.

5.5 Consciously looking (and sounding) smart

In Butler's (1990) seminal work on the performativity of gender, she argues that, rather than conforming to a singular, fixed, binary identity, gender is a fluid variable in a person which changes and adapts in different contexts, and interacts with other identities such as social class, so that a person forms and chooses their identity within a regulatory framework. It is performatively constituted by the "expressions" said to be its results (1990: 25), it is a performance that shifts form depending on the circumstances. I believe this can be applied to the image and identity that the interviewees perform and express, where not only gender, class and politics feed in, but also a desire to appear serious, professional and mainstream.

The most obvious and material way to present a particular image is in one's personal presentation, in particular, clothes. All the interviewees had thought about their appearance to a greater or lesser extent. What's interesting is how in practice they modified it, or not, and whether they achieved the image they intended to.

Obviously this depended somewhat on the context in which I saw the interviewees each time, and this ranged from their own homes to the British Library and their organisation's offices, where that existed. I also attended various events in which they were present in their professional capacity, such as being a panel member at a conference, and more private and personal engagements, such as social gatherings. However, generally speaking, in considering consistency of image and context, I observed some trends. The smartest in a conformist way, i.e. traditional corporate style suits, were Philip Lymbery, Deirdre Hutton, Jane Landon and Jeanette Orrey. I would describe the majority of the rest as fairly formal and professional looking, but with an air of informality and alternative, to varying degrees.

By now it is probably no surprise that Lymbery takes his appearance seriously in order to demand respect from 'the establishment'. Indeed, he is known within for movement for his formal appearance too. Jeanette Longfield commented that, "he looks fantastically respectable" (Track 5). This is mostly driven by a fear of being associated with 'hippies'. He explains, whilst describing Compassion in World Farming in the earlier years and their relationship with the organic movement:

> *"Organic farmers had yet to connect actually with Compassion in World Farming and the animal community, and to be honest the organic farming who I remember in the early 90s… being wary of aligning ourselves actually with the organic movement in those days, because I felt we were running a really reasonable position, and what we didn't wanna do was to compound those, give ground to those, who might want to see us as hair-shirt, sandal wearing hippies, you know, we wanted that reasonable ground and, wasn't absolutely convinced at that time, I wasn't sure, through ignorance more than anything, that organic farming was gonna deliver on animal welfare, wasn't sure that organic farming wasn't driven by a kind of a, you know, a hippie-ism, wasn't sure that it was gonna work with our mainstream proposition that we were developing at that time, we were still on the left wing, I think, at that point, but never the less, we could see where it was going. But what I soon learned, was that organic farming was not the only fit for us but was a very good fit for us, as one embodiment of what the solution is to factory farming, a solution that produces fantastic food, protects the environment, protects public health and a, looks after animals, you know, as good as anyone."* (Track 2)

Despite the two movements' very similar values and objectives, and later collaboration, there was deep suspicion based primarily on the image of the typical organic supporter of the time: *hair-shirt*, *sandal wearing hippies*… *hippie-ism*. Whatever the truth in this is and the opinion about hippies, for Lymbery it was very negative and detrimental to Compassions' work. Interestingly, he didn't believe hippies would prioritise and practice good animal welfare, which indicates some of the diversities, lack of common identity and disjointedness between the movements. This description highlights how the relationship between the various food activist movements have changed and, I argue, somewhat improved over time with regards to collaborating as a larger, united movement across the various issues. I address this more in chapter 6.

For Lymbery, presentation went further than just the office and his clothes. He was also very conscious about his accent, which was from Luton where he'd grown up. Here he discusses what moving out from the Luton area was like:

> *"**Philip**: I became more aware of [my accent], more self-conscious of it, and where I'd come from really when I moved to Petersfield… for the job, that was in 1990 [aged 25]… Leyton Buzzard, whilst it's not inner city London by any means, and I enjoyed living there actually, it*

> *is part of the sort of urban sprawl which is part of the Luton overspill… yeh so being a bit nearer to the countryside… when I came to Compassion, you know I lifted my head up, in Leyton Buzzard you know, if you didn't go off to university and do a degree then you were probably fodder for the factories, or you'd have a career in the local butcher's shop… so it was quite a restricting environment… getting out… was really enlightening…*
> ***Lauren**: And did you feel that, I mean, have you changed your accent since then, do you think?*
> ***Philip**: Yes, yes… it wasn't conscious… but I knew that I was doing it…*
> ***Lauren**: What did you feel was important about [changing your accent]?*
> ***Philip**: I felt it was important to allow me to communicate with the kind of people, the kind of audiences, that I needed to, to persuade and influence, you know, I think that the way that you come across to a room full of MPs, we used to talk to a lot of MPs in the 90s that year when I was at Compassion, the way that you sound on the media, you know, it's very important, and I wanted to be more persuasive and more influential, and, so, you know, it comes down to things like, people used to, people used to uh, have a bit of a chuckle in the office at Compassion because if I got a radio interview, I'd go home and change and I'd put a shirt and tie on, and they'd say well no-one can see you on the radio, you know, but of course they can hear you, but my view was, if you wanna do a professional job then dress professionally and it's the same way in terms of trying to make sure that you sound and you come across in a way which is going to have the greatest influence, you know, this is without me throwing the baby out with the bath water, without becoming someone else completely, it's simply about how you present yourself."* (Track 3)

Starting his career in animal welfare campaigning was a huge turning point in his life. The way he describes Leyton Buzzard as a *restricting environment*, amongst other terms and examples, whilst not with dislike, does convey dissatisfaction and a sense of not being taken seriously or respected. The fact that he changed his accent to accommodate the move away from his hometown and into his new life also implies a sense of inferiority. The *kind of people* he wanted to listen to him were, he perceived, rather different to him. Lymbery also reiterates several times that this was important for the messages he was trying to get across, the ultimate goal in the activist movement, his mission to improve animal welfare, through effectively *communicating*, *persuading*, *influencing*. He somewhat implies that adjusting his presentation is simply a necessary sacrifice to get the worthy job done, to have the most impact, which is the most important thing. The anecdote about the radio is touching and amusing, and he tells it as such. It reflects his transformation into being a *professional*

representing animal welfare and being taken seriously by the people he needed to influence. Although on the topic of gender, this has parallels with Skeggs (1997) on working-class women gaining respectability. Similar sentiments were also discussed by Jeannette Orrey, who recounted some of her feelings of inadequacy, especially regarding education, in her earlier years when Food For Life was establishing. However, for her it was with colleagues, in addition to those she was engaging with externally, such as politicians, the media and celebrity chefs, at first doubting her authority and being able to be taken seriously.

Deirdre Hutton similarly takes quite a firm view on image. She is even more clear and strict about her reasoning, and debates where this is more necessary for women:

> *"**Lauren**: Have you always dressed very professionally, have you ever had to modify the way that you dress to be taken seriously, and perhaps even more so as a woman?*
> ***Deirdre**: Oh, absolutely, there is no good, as a woman, not dressing the part if you want to be taken seriously, and maybe that'll change, I don't know, but if you think about the fact that, um, I was making the sort of breakthroughs into a senior level 20 years ago, um, it is actually, you, you dress the part, and I think it's fair to say that I've reinvented myself a number of times, and I think women are good at that you know, and certainly when I first started working in London I, I very much changed the way I dressed and you learn how to present yourself in a way that makes people take notice, so there you go, yes you do, and there's no question, in my mind, I know women who are very bright, but they don't look the part, and they won't get the job, um, and you can tell them, but if they take the view that this is how I am and if nobody, if people won't accept me the way I am then tough, then, sadly, it is going to hold them back, um, and I hope that changes because, but you know, if you're a bloke you've got to dress the part, nobody's going to employ you as a lawyer if you come in in jeans and t-shirt, you know, so we all of us, we all of us play the game."* (Track 2)

By recalling how she changed her own presentation, and giving examples of women who *don't look the part* not getting *the job*, concluding that it is going to *hold them back*, she proposes to some extent that presentation determines the success of one's work, and is almost disapproving of others who don't earn the respect they require due to how they dress. For Hutton, particularly as a woman, presentation is key to demanding attention and failure to comply and *play the game* almost does a disservice to one's work.

Hutton was predominantly a public servant throughout her career, working from the edge of government for a range of Quasi-Non Government organisations, and had been referred to as "Queen of the Quangos" in the press.[15] This places her as somewhat different from the majority of the other interviewees, who tended to work predominantly within the campaigning third sector. This perhaps meant that there was more expectation for her to dress formally, although on the other hand it could be argued there was less need for her to demonstrate her serious position. Nevertheless, like many of the others, and perhaps particularly as a woman in a high position, she invokes performing a role with her phrasing of *dress the part* and *play the game*. In the work context, Hutton 'performs' a certain role and identity (Butler 1990, Goffman 1956), which serves to ensure status and respectability (Skeggs 1997). Whilst in a different sector, there are similarities with the women in the banking sector in the City, who also 'look the part', as shown by McDowell (1997), confronting additional obstacles because of gender.

I met and interviewed Harriet Lamb in the Fairtrade International offices, though in the afternoon at the end of the week when most had gone home, and then again in her home over the weekend. I also saw her at an evening party of a colleague of hers, to which she had gone directly from the office. Conducting the first session at the offices, Lamb was quite casually dressed in what might be described as 'ethnic' inspired clothes. She hung out her swimsuit and towel in the afternoon sun to dry (she'd gone swimming in the morning, she informed me) and then left to cycle home at the end of the day. She remarked at one point (track 6) that she bought all her clothes from second hand and charity shops. She has also been (and was open to being) interviewed and featured extensively by the media, with many images of her appearing in public. In some of these public images she looks smart, formal and business-like, although nearly always with something nodding to alternative, such as a feature scarf, necklace or earrings. In others, she appears relaxed and informal with an earthy, natural and more alternative appearance. My point is she is very versatile, but allows herself to be portrayed as all these personas. What she had to say about appearance was also insightful. Here she is discussing working with big businesses and corporations:

> *"At the beginning, I sort of slightly felt I had to hide who was the real me, I would never have admitted to them, and would never have talked about, the fact I have such a strong*

[15] See for example: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/transport/6575541/Dame-Deirdre-Hutton-queen-of-the-quangos.html (accessed 1/12/17)
https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/dec/22/queen-of-quangos-deirdre-hutton-emerges-as-bbc-chair-contender (accessed 1/12/17)
https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/quango-queen-in-line-to-head-bbcs-new-board-w7qjbwmrw (accessed 1/12/17)

> *campaigning background, that I have been sued for libel by McDonald's or whatever… I would have kept that completely quiet, and I've definitely done things like I always try to be the smartest person in the room, because I'm not gonna have them writing me off as an NGO woman the minute I walk in the door, so then I will have a smart suit, even if they're not, even if they're dressed down, uh, which is quite often the case, I can often see that they've taken off their jackets and ties 'cause they're talking to an NGO, hahaha, and I've put on my smartest suit, hahaha, 'cause I'm talking to a company, it's quite funny, we're both trying! So, um, but over time I've realised, my entire value to them is that fact that I am a campaigner, and that I bring a different perspective…"* (Track 4)

Lamb stresses the importance of creating an appropriate image that won't compromise her work, and managing that image, amplifying or minimising certain parts of herself and her history accordingly. The point about both parties adjusting their clothing speaks to the performative element of their professional identities. Lamb also highlights the importance of being *smart*, and how it could hinder her work otherwise, relating back to the point about being taken seriously.

Lamb describes clothing in more detail:

> *"**Lauren**: You were mentioning just earlier about suits and dressing up, how you dress in a suit, I mean, do you, do you think very hard about each meeting? Right, this is gonna be suitable for this situation, this is gonna be suitable for that?*
> ***Harriet**: Yeh I would definitely think about it, yeh, I wouldn't say I think very hard, I wouldn't claim that I have um, the world's most amazing wardrobe or something, um, but actually I was never interested at all in clothes, I was actually sort of against all that, I thought you shouldn't have too much and too many, and definitely I felt once I got this job I needed to, uh, create the right impression at the beginning, and I needed to have smarter clothes than I had before I had this job, that I did need the suits. I even had a pinstripe suit, which I always feel is a bit like wearing, you know, sort of feminists wearing Dr Martens or something, trying to appropriate something and say, um, but, so I thought, definitely I need to get it right, yep. … You only get one chance to make a first impression, and people, of course you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, of course you shouldn't and people shouldn't judge you by that, but you do, and I just want to get straight in there and not waste any time and give the right impression that we are a serious outfit, and I think you have to do that, personally in our case, um, because people will otherwise treat you as a sweet little NGO, and a niche, and*

> *patronise you and look down on you and, whereas think about really serious business as something different, and so I don't want to waste time on something as marginal in my scheme of priorities, as what I wear, um, and I actually think, um, also you, I personally find that if I have got on something that's smart, uh, that I feel good in, uh, this is really, this is stupid as well but that also you maybe are wearing some heels, honestly, I feel more confident and more able to command attention, which may all be stupid, but it's, it's the truth, so rather than change all that and say hey, I'm gonna go in my shorts and my, um, whatever, I would rather, I'd rather be fighting with people on the real issues… my decision is, as long as I'm in Fairtrade and I want to capture people's attention immediately, it does matter, later on of course, once you've, once you've begun to work together and to respect each other, hey, who cares, by that time it doesn't matter any more, but it's the beginning, it's those first times when you need to make an impression, then I think it really matters, but I would actually always still try to be smart later on."* (Track 4)

Like Lymbery, Lamb is aware of the potential negative stereotyping she may face as a campaigner and being from an NGO and its associations. The terms *serious* and *smart* come up against the *right impression* and *commanding* and *capturing attention*, suggesting that without that suit, it would be more difficult to be gain *respect* and be taken *seriously*, get to the *real issues* and ultimately advance the cause. Like Lymbery and many others, Lamb made a conscious decision about her clothing when she started working with Fairtrade.

Dilley et al's (2015) work on shoes is particularly relevant here. They draw on Merleau-Ponty's (1961) theories of embodiment, Budgeon's (2003) argument for treating the body as event, and Finch's (2007) concept of display, applying it to their own data, to highlight the temporality of emphasised femininity through the example of high-heeled shoes. People engage on occasion, episodically and purposefully with aspects of 'doing gender' through 'displays'. This can similarly be seen in Harriet's point about wearing high-heels. She chooses them for specific scenarios in order to *create the right impression* and *command attention*; they are selected when it feels appropriate and beneficial to her, in this case for the Fairtrade movement, assisting in embodying a temporary identity, and making her *feel more confident*.

This is evidenced further by Harriet conveying quite adamantly that she isn't *in to* clothes, and it was made clear that she would never wear those outfits in other circumstances or general day-to-day, even in the office, having been there. Yet, she crafted this *serious* version of herself on occasion in

order to help achieve the challenging goals of the movement. The priorities and objectives are clear in Harriet's head: *get straight in there and not waste any time on something as marginal as what I wear*, but *capture their attention* and *get on* with *fighting on the real issues* – it is the cause, Fairtrade, that comes above all else, and the existing stereotypes of activists must not get in the way.

The awareness that some of the interviewees had of their relatively small size and clout, and connotations with informal and disorganised social activists movements, heavily influenced the way they crafted and performed a particular image to counter that. This is consistent with Goffman's (1956) theory of impression management, whereby there is a fairly deliberate, almost manipulative process of quasi-theatrical presentation, be it through dress, accent or space. Through this, I suggest that they sought to heighten the efficacy of their movements to make them more effective. I think it is no coincidence that Lamb and Lymbery were two of the interviewees who were particularly aware of image and adjusted it accordingly, and they also markedly steered their organisations on a mainstream trajectory.

5.6 Presentation struggles

Like Harriet Lamb, Kath Dalmeny and Jeanette Longfield were also conscious of their appearance, and made efforts to appear more 'serious' when representing their movements. However, they have at times found it more challenging. The times that we met, both for interviews as well as at conferences they were working at as the public face of Sustain, I would describe them as fairly smart and professional in their attire, however there was always something that evoked someone who was radical and alternative.

As touched on before, Longfield is highly aware of the negative stereotypes that interviewees get, and one way she sees this can be escaped is through appearance:

> *"**Jeanette**: I've still got that kind of, I don't want to be conventional, streak in me, so I should, I think, probably dress more conventionally than I do, but then I think, oh bugger it, hahaha, I don't really want to. So I, I deliberately try and avoid looking too outlandish, but I don't go for a very conventional appearance.*

> ***Lauren****: Why is it that you think that that's, that you agree with [Philip's] statements, that the more radical you are the more smart and respectable you need to dress?*
> ***Jeanette****: Well because it's hard enough to try to persuade and engage people that this thing that you want them to do or change that you want to happen is a good idea, because, you know human beings don't like changing things… changing is difficult and risky and all of that kind of stuff, so that's hard enough without also looking funny, which allows them to think the whole thing is funny and to marginalise the issue along with you and all that stuff, and to put you in a pigeon hole that just says weird, freaky, nothing to do with me, and we're still doing it, as campaigning organisations in general, I still see people on the telly and I think, arghh who let you do that?! Who let you go on looking like that, oh my god!"*
> (Track 5)

Longfield's perception of how the general public view activists is quite strong: *weird*, *freaky*, *niche*, *outlandish*, *funny*, *marginalised*, again highlighting this negative image that some in the food movement feel it is trying, and needs, to get away from. Like Lamb, she remarks that it's *hard enough* engaging people on the issues alone and seeking to spread the shared group identity. Longfield is quite critical of others in the movement when they only reinforce these negative stereotypes, and is also a little hard on herself, feeling pressure to essentially be less individual, yet in reality finds it hard to change her appearance to the level she feels is necessary.

Kath Dalmeny, also from Sustain, had some specific challenges. If food activists really are typically non-conformists, then Dalmeny's lifestyle is an example of how and why there is this perception, and how it did indeed in reality make presenting herself in the most effective way tricky. She lived on a canal boat in London for about eight years, after which she decided to move to a house:

> *"**Kath**: We kinda felt like we ought to be being a bit more responsible, somehow, and now, actually after several years off the boat, I think why the hell did we need to be more responsible?! But it is actually quite hard to, for example, turn up to work in a clean shirt when you've come off a boat, you can't run an iron. I know that sounds ridiculous, but also, I think it's more to do with the mentality, if you're on a boat you slightly don't care about the routines and the world, and actually I've got to a point where I've got, I have to have, more responsibilities and be available, and run a laptop and be available for media calls, and all that sort of thing, and again, it seems like a daft reason to move off a boat, because the boat was wonderful, but it, it's not conducive to a sort of, a job with more responsibilities… I used*

> *to want to have a round of applause if I came in in a white shirt that had been ironed, you know it's like that was such a big deal to have sorted that out, and when you get to a stage to where you're interacting with lots of government ministers and things like that you can't quite have the unreliability in a way. Now I think I could probably handle it again 'cause I know what's needed, I'd probably just keep a suit at work you know.*
> ***Lauren**: Do you think it is necessary to a certain extent to be wearing the right kinds of clothes for the people that you're having to work with?*
> ***Kath**: Sadly yes, and it's tedious really, isn't it, but to, I can see that people make judgements about such things, and if you have, I feel like a definite sense of responsibility to present a charity and an NGO and a cause, in a way that people will accept, and I don't make a big deal of that, but I try to dress in a neutral and respectable way, which is complicated because most of my clothes come from Oxfam but, there you go, uh, but just to not convey too much about eccentricity or oil from your engine from a boat, you know. It's not fair in a way to uh, undermine your issue and the trust that people have put in you by not respecting the fact that people do make judgements on such things, so if you have to be on a say a television interview, which I have to do quite a lot, then one ought to convey what you need to without sort of, um, getting it wrong in clothing, but it's, I'm not interested in clothing, so, but I am aware that the world is, and it's the thing people always comment on, ooh I can't believe you wore that shirt on the telly, for goodness sake, somebody once said to me, I can't believe that you wore the same shirt you wore to that funeral, and I said, well it was the same day, it was about an hour later, and she went, oh, I hadn't thought about that. Like, how did you even notice and why does it even matter?! But it's funny, anyway."*
> (Track 3)

Like many others, she is prepared to make sacrifices to minimise people's *judgements* and present an appropriate image in order to be *neutral*, *respectable* and taken seriously. She hides her *eccentricity* and the fact that her clothes are from Oxfam, and, as part of her *responsibility* (dedication? duty?) to the movement, moved homes partly to help accommodate the necessary *respectable* image and not *undermine* the issues.

Both Lamb and Dalmeny claim that they are not *interested in clothes* and mentioned getting most of their clothing second hand from charity shops. In this way, they find a compromise between their values and their sense of duty, not fully participating in the world of fashion but dressing sufficiently smartly. It is interesting to reflect here on the work of McRobbie (2005) on the role of second hand

clothes as a statement on subculture identity, subverting their original meaning in the world of fashion. Not only do Dalmeny and Lamb participate in this through wearing second hand charity shop clothes as a means to demonstrate their lack of interest in fashion, but it could be argued that the act of appearing serious, business-like and mainstream, as many of the interviewees consciously did, in order to drive a radical agenda is itself also a way to subvert the meaning of smart image.

Simon Fairlie made a remark on image which perhaps further demonstrates the importance that others saw in defying the scruffy, outlandish stereotypes of food activists in order to succeed in their work. Whilst many of the others identified as activist-campaigners, Fairlie did less so. Here he explains why he doesn't identify particularly as a campaigner:

> *"**Simon**: I'm not a particularly good campaigner*
> ***Lauren**: Why do you feel you're not a very good campaigner?*
> ***Simon**: Oh because, uh, because you have to make compromises and be diplomatic and say the right things, and look good in the right places and wear the right sort of clothes at the right places and all that sort of thing, I'm not very good at that, um, but also I like, I like writing"* (Track 5)

Like many of the others, he acknowledges the felt need to dress appropriately – *diplomatic, wear the right sort of clothes* – but it is a step he is unwilling to take, preferring to focus on writing than more public work.

5.7 Youth – the exceptions?

With the younger and upcoming members of the food activist movements, there appeared to be a regression to informality. I don't have a large sample to come to these conclusions, as the majority of the interviewees were in their 40s or above, but it hints at a trend, and either way would be interesting to investigate further.

Kelvin Cheung, of FoodCycle, was the youngest person I interviewed, and the only one around the age of 20 or 30, and therefore considered in the early stages of his career in food activism. He came

across as quite conventional, although not smart or formal, indeed, not only his clothes but also his manner was very informal. We discussed appearance and presentation:

> *"**Lauren**: Can I ask what the general dress code, I mean, maybe you don't have a code at all if you know what I mean, but you know, what is the…?*
> ***Kelvin**: … so the dress code now is just, I mean, jeans, I sometimes even show up in a suit because I'm doing a pitch, but, I think the great thing about London is that, like, it's more acceptable now, I mean I'm probably the bummiest sometimes, or I'll just show up in cycling stuff, I'm known to basically always walk around in my cycling shoes… we just dress in whatever way we want, but of course for client meetings and things like that, you feel the need, it will be smart casual, so it's always reflective of the situation… I do like to play with people's perceptions and, I used to, I think I've gotten over my, kind of, 'I want to be the ironic boss' phase… most of the time, you dress the part, I think my emphasis is that, you know, like, I like wearing suits, I love wearing suits, I like wearing coloured shirts, I wear, like, I sometimes like to be well put together but I think also I like to bum around in board shorts or whatever like that and go to the local bar in my sweat pants and I think that's the kind of thing that, I understand the importance of fashion sense, but I haven't really given too much thought into it as well…*
> ***Lauren**: …for formal important meetings…*
> ***Kelvin**: Suit, or I do jeans, it's that social entrepreneur look which is jeans, your branded t-shirt and a nice jacket, and then I don't know, leather shoes, but I guess it's also that thing where I think, let's be, yeh, quite open, which is like, you know, I was about 28, 29, 30 from a different culture, from a different country, I speak in a different accent, and I'm young, and kind of, so we have always been kind of seen as the kind of outlier, fun and I think that's, you have to represent that brand, people feel, if you were dressed in a suit and tie it's almost, being different than anybody else and being younger than anyone else, signifies that you are a different thinker, you know those things do rub off, and I think, to always represent that you are wearing, you know, a suit, you know, but with a t-shirt, you know it's that like, Mark Zuckerburg kinda thing that all these young people, they're inventing their own style, not in disrespect to the other styles, but it makes, you know there's also another reason on why people do that, I think, I would be quite… there is also a reason to that, which is, Kelvin is the Chinese-Canadian-biker-foodie-food activist person that in a crowd of, you know, British white people, stick out and everybody knows who you are and, in a sea of food activists you need to be kind of recognised."* (Track 5)

Referencing things such as *bum around*, and *bummiest* as a way to describe his informal look, his language is quite informal, perhaps more so because he was speaking to someone similar to him in age, so he used terms he thought I would also use and understand. In this case he inverts what most of the rest have said, he owns *outlier* as a positive rather than a negative, he aspires to it. Perhaps they are outliers in a different sense, and therefore can get away with it. But he is also quite conscious of demanding attention and respect through a more individual, young, modern appearance, portraying the impression of a unique organisation, rather than joining the *establishment* by conforming, and in that way challenging the stereotypes of food activists.

This refusal to conform in order to be taken seriously was further highlighted in Francis Blake's comments about the young employees of the Soil Association:

> "**Francis**: I do try to, you know, I never wear jeans to the Soil Association, um, and I always used to, don't now actually, things have got much more informal in some ways, but I always used to make sure that I when I was attending a committee meeting I wore a tie, but yeh, things have got more relaxed now…
> **Lauren**: Were other people in the Soil Association going along those lines [dressing formally] as well?
> **Francis**: Some and some, I mean one of the great things about Soil Association is the, you know it's a very young organisation in a way, I'm probably the oldest now… it's very young and therefore, and it's very informal, so there's lots of people wearing jeans and being very informal, so, it's um, yeh, it's a, a very relaxed atmosphere there. But uh, yeh, somehow, I've always had, it's interesting, I've always, sort of, felt, if you like, the weight of authority." (Track 6)

Blake remarks on the informality of the staff today, how that's changed from the earlier years, and attributes it to the staff mostly being young. Having said that, from my personal experiences seeing and working alongside Soil Association staff, at conferences, but in particular in their offices, they were not informal in the way that Cheung described, in the *social entrepreneur* look, but rather in what I would describes as a liberal, alternative, slightly hippie-ish presentation. This would perhaps change if they were in much higher positions and public settings, representing the organisation, but it does maybe suggest that the felt need for formality is declining with the younger activists, indeed, they may be openly rejecting it.

5.8 Conclusions and Discussion

In this chapter, I have drawn on concepts of performance, presentation and impression management. I have examined some of the characteristics of activism evidenced from my data on food movements, looking in particular at the theme of image. Specifically, the ways the interviewees seek to shape and present themselves and their organisations to assist effecting the changes they seek. This contributes to theories of social movements, and performance and impression management, as well as literature within the geography of food on alternative and mainstream, adding a narrative approach to activist strategies (further addressed in chapter 7), and touching on identity (addressed in chapter 6).

Within human geography, the academic work on image and performativity has largely come from workplace geographies, notably Linda McDowell (1997) and Philip Crang (1994). Whilst they look at performativity, their context differs to this thesis. McDowell's *Capital Culture* work looks at performance and presentation of gender in the financial services sector, and Crang's '*It's Showtime*' work is based on restaurant waiting and sociospatial relations of consumption. Within wider academic theories, on the concepts of performance, looking the part, self-presentation and impression management, the seminal work of Erving Goffman (1956) developed the concept of impression management in the context of everyday interactions and using the analogy of theatrical performance. Within philosophy, Judith Butler (1990) developed the pivotal idea of gender being an improvised performance, allowing a fluid and multi-layered identity. Similarly, Bev Skeggs (1997), through her ethnography of white working-class women in North-West England, argues that identities are constructed, particularly relating to class and gender, arguing that they are fused, and she explores ways that respectability are gained. I extend these concepts to the field of food activism, where the interviewees demonstrated ways that they, too, manage and craft their professional image, adapting it in different contexts, such as through the ways they dress and speak, their physical and portrayed workspace, and the ways they struggle and succeed in being 'taken seriously'. I broaden Skeggs's (1997) and Butler's (1990) arguments to the realm of food activism, where the activists' identities are fluid, interlinked, fused and navigated with other identities, such as class, gender and age. In the next chapter, this extends further to identities relating to wider political movements, such as environmentalism and social justice.

This chapter has also addressed my research questions about the characteristics and developments within British food activist movements. The extensive, open interviewing of the oral history life story method has provided rich and detailed quotes and the ability to return to emerging themes. I have incorporated these longer quotes to capture this depth, as well as integrated some of my observations from the additional ethnographic methods I employed. This contributes to answering my research question on the oral history method as a way to explore food activism and identity, which I address further in chapter 8.

Chapter 6

Food and Identity: politics, practices and the self

6.1 Introduction

> "Food is more than a material component in the food chain: it is a key mechanism in the expression of a cumulative moral sentiment."
> (Little et al 2010: 1800)

> "Turner (1985) suggested that gastronomy – food, eating habits, and culinary culture – was at the center of an embodied reality of political subjecthood that remained under-utilized in social activism and under-examined in academic research."
> (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2008: 461)

Is there something special about food? Whilst food has been an ample topic of study addressed by most disciplines in some way or other, this chapter offers perhaps the most substantial contribution to the literature on a few specific areas. There has been plenty written about the relationship between food and identity (see for example Lupton 1996; Bell and Valentine 1997), likewise how people become politicised (such as on women's rights Jolly and Roseneil 2012, environmentalism Kenis 2015 and labour issues Wills 2008), and there has been research on the diets of those working in the food sector and the use of oral history to study food (Russell 2008; Thompson 1992). There is less research on the way food shapes food activists' identities and lives, their own consumption practices, the role of food in their politicisation, and the use of oral history to study food activism in particular.[16] It is these areas that I address here.

In this chapter, I look first at the pervasiveness and centrality of food in life, utilising the oral history method with the interviewees to see its role from their childhoods and transcending their personal and professional lives. In respect of the fundamental place of food in the interviewees' lives, I

[16] Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy argue that: "Scholars study what people know and believe about food, and point to food behaviors that seem to speak to certain beliefs (e.g., veganism), but most fail to say how these attitudes and actions actually intersect" (2008: 462)

consider how this relates to being a 'foodie'. Next, I look at the ways food contributed to their politicisation, or how their politicisation led them to food. This leads on to the way their work with food affects their personal food choices, practices and consumption, particularly as a way to 'live out morals'. On this issue, I go into more depth using the example of vegetarianism and the different and changing versions of this that they adopt/don't adopt. Finally, I conclude by considering the extent to which food and the interviewees' particular area of activism within it is perceived in the bigger picture, and to what extent the movement(s) may be united or disjointed.

I draw on the work of Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2008) on the visceral politics of food, Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1977, 1990), and the work on 'foodies' by Johnston and Baumann (2015).

Regarding the research questions, this chapter chiefly addresses question 2, on the relationship between food and identity within food activism. It also touches on question 1a, pertaining to the breadth and overlap of the activist topics. And, it considers question 3, on the capacity/strength of the method for researching food, identity and activism, and the realms of public, private, personal and professional.

6.2 The pervasive everyday nature of food

> "Food is immanent to everyday life, it offers a concrete way to trace the discursive through the body" Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2008: 469)

Before food and agriculture became a political topic and career focus for the interviewees, like everyone, because of its nature as something consumed daily, food already had a prominent place built on memories and practices. All the interviewees recalled particular diet, attitudes, habits and pleasure or displeasure towards food from their childhood. These ranged from personal likes and dislikes, family meals and cooking styles, to school meals, attitudes about waste and convenience food, and vestiges of the legacy of food rationing.

The qualities of the oral history life story method are ideally suited to capturing this information and following the thread of everyday habits (Thompson 2000), such as eating, through someone's life.

This is even more so if a particular topic is of focus and interest to the researcher/interviewer, who is then able to draw it out more purposefully.

A number of trends between the interviewees could be seen, as well as differences. Most grew up in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. They recall their fathers did very little, if any, of the cooking; their mothers did nearly, if not all of it, which was mostly, "typical British meat and two veg" (e.g. clearly mentioned in interviews of Marcus Thompson, Harriet Lamb, Jeanette Longfield, Jeanette Orrey, Kath Dalmeny, Geoff Tansey, Francis Blake, Pete Riley, amongst others). Eating out was a rarity, food was bought in local shops (butchers, grocers, bakeries, milk rounds) with supermarkets and convenience foods, such as Angel Delight and frozen vegetables, entering later on. Food shopping and meals were typically planned carefully for each week, and leftovers saved and reused, ensuring minimal waste. Aside from this, their experiences were not at all uniform. Some were "fussy" eaters, some liked cooking, others were not very interested in food besides "filling up", others tried vegetarianism before leaving home, some loved their mothers' home cooking, others did not. In many ways, they were not unlike any other child growing up in those eras.

However similar or dissimilar their experiences were, like everyone, the interviewees engage in food and eating every day. Whilst for most people this remains a fairly straightforward necessary daily act, at some point, for the interviewees it becomes more than that as it overlaps with their political self and their professional work. They are prompted to consider it in light of their public and professional work multiple times a day on a bodily, visceral level. Even when they 'switch off' and try not to think about it, it is almost inherently there every time they eat. This is markedly different from other types of activism, such as feminism, labour rights or environmentalism, whose focuses are rarely encountered and acted out through ingestion multiple times a day as part of basic survival. The combination of the professional work and politicisation around food with the daily interaction, as well as added social and cultural elements, makes it all the more powerful. They feed into each other – it can be difficult to entirely 'switch off' from the issues they work on when eating, and it can shape what and how they eat.

Here I provide some examples from the data of the ways that food became even more pervasive than its everyday nature because of also being their professional subject. Julie Brown discusses the growing importance that food came to occupy in her life through and beyond her work, and how it's difficult to escape:

> ***"Julie**: The food has become so much more significant as well, you know, that's what's, that's what I've learnt, or got… I was making a fresh tomato sauce the other day… I could name where every [ingredient] came from, I knew the people that had grown it… you suddenly get this sort of, oh my god, this bowl of food that I'm looking at is actually, it is actually this manifestation of all these, you know, all these connections, and actually here it is in this bowl of fresh tomato sauce, and spaghetti, I didn't make the spaghetti…*
> ***Lauren**: Do you ever not think about food when you're eating…?*
> ***Julie**: Yes, I guess I can, but I find, you know, it's like, food it is everywhere and the implications of it… no meal is without, you know, some sort of knowledge from somebody that there's, ah… we're aware that there are choices to be made around what you eat and what you don't eat."*
> (Track 9)

Whilst Brown may manage to *not think about* food at times, or tries to, it permeates even her preparation of a basic meal at home. In the anecdote she gave, the dish symbolised the *connections*, the *knowledge* gained from her work, and subsequently her *choices* as a consumer, highlighting where it was produced and who by. Her use of the word *manifestation* conveys the way that the food was a physical representation of her work. The knowledge she holds and the *implications* of the production, trade and consumption are there to varying degrees of consciousness, being *everywhere*, unavoidable in food's physical presence, procurement and ingestion.

Harriet Lamb, Jeanette Longfield and Philip Lymbery all remarked on the added power that food brought to campaigning, due to it being an issue with daily active presence in our lives. Lamb comments:

> *"I actually enjoy that fact, that it's about an everyday product, food, and about everyday practical things that everybody does every day in their life"*
> (Track 5)

And later in the interview:

> *"**Lauren**: Is there something particular about food? Can you imagine campaigning on something that wasn't related quite as heavily to the food system?*
> ***Harriet**: Um, I can imagine having campaigned on other issues, yes, and I can imagine that I would have thrown myself into it with equal energy and enthusiasm, however, what I do love*

> *about food is, it is so everyday, I just love that, I love the fact you're connecting with something that people do every single day, and have to do, I mean people have to eat! So, uh, and therefore you can drive such dramatic change, because everybody eats and everybody buys coffee and tea and bananas and oranges and rice and nuts and lemons and, and therefore, you can have, it's such a fantastic way to bring international injustice and tackling poverty into the everyday lives of people here, and it's a fantastic way to connect with the farmers, because it is something that's regularly traded and that they're growing all the time, and that connection to the land and everything, it's very, so I'm very glad… people love wine, it's very pleasurable, that's great… nice cup of tea, nice cup of coffee… so it's very nice to connect with something that's pleasurable as well."*
> (Track 6)

Lamb remarks on the *everyday* nature of food multiple times, and highlights the necessity of it because of *having to* eat, marking it out as unique as a campaign issue. Not only that, but she speaks also to the emotional, political, cultural and pleasurable side of food. Like Brown, Lamb describes how food can *connect*, for example to *injustice*, *poverty*, *farmers* and *land*. The positive physical and social associations are also mentioned, where Lamb describes the *pleasure* of *nice* drinks and how *people love wine*.

Jeanette Longfield describes how it wasn't food specifically that got her interested in campaigning, that she rather *fell into it*. However, reflecting back, she highlights its qualities as a campaigning issue:

> *"I think I've always thought that I could've ended up campaigning on anything, that food and farming is a vital and important part, but there's lots of other vital and important parts, it's not the only one, I don't think it is, I really, really enjoy it, but I could just have easily have ended up being a transport campaigner or a housing campaigner or a human rights campaigner, or anything, because I do think there's a big picture, and the big picture and how it all fits together… seems completely clear to me, and obvious, and I still scratch my head a bit that it's not obvious to everyone else… I suppose that [food] has got lots of advantages as a campaigning issue, but I didn't logically think, oh I'll do food because of all these reasons, it really was an accident, I fell into it… looking at it backwards, because people have to do it everyday, it's something that people feel they can do something about, it's very immediate and personal, you can engage with it very emotionally, it spreads its tentacles*

> *throughout the entire, you know, it touches on transport and energy and housing and technology and, so there's barely an issue that isn't touched by food, so even if it is a specialism it doesn't feel like one at all."*
> (Track 3)

Longfield remarks how food overlaps with so many other issues – *transport, energy, technology* – making it broad reaching. Furthermore, she highlights the *immediate, personal* and *emotional* side, which also makes it easier to engage in.

Philip Lymbery also considers the way food can be unique as a campaign issue:

> *"I think [the social and policy elements of food] are often dealt with separately, yeh, and the challenges facing food policy for the future really are so huge and so profound that dealing with them, there's always gonna be a natural separation from the day to day place in society, but the wonderful thing, is that the place in society is the way that you can introduce, you know, fairly heavy policy issues to an audience, a general public audience, an audience of people who, for them, feel that these issues are abstract, are for someone else, are for politicians or global leaders to sort out, when actually, if you bring it back down to their plate, people can immediately sense, connect with that interest, can sense the connectivity."*
> (Track 3)

Lymbery acknowledges, somewhat criticises, the way that food policy and the more cultural sides of consumption are often kept apart. However, he also remarks on the attributes and potential of food to overcome this. Again, he employs also the notion of connection and *connectivity*. The seemingly *abstract* issues can be *introduced* to a *general public audience* through *their plates*, where the *immediacy* can be *sensed*.

Through use of language like *everywhere*, *everyday*, *manifest* and *connect*, the interviewees evoke a sense of the omnipresence of food. Regardless of their personal (dis)attachment to it, they highlight this unique characteristic and asset for campaigning. This relates to the extensive literature on alternative food networks and the arguments about how to (re)connect people with their food through shorter supply chains and emphasis on knowing the producers and the production process, for example Watts et al (2005), Maye and Kirwan (2010), Kneafsey et al (2008) and Renting, Marsden

and Banks (2003). The interviewees are well aware of such dynamics, and hope to employ that connection in their campaigns to make the general public's everyday encounters with food more illuminating of the myriad problems they incur. Of course, the challenge remains in doing this beyond just the consumers who 'care' (Dowler et al 2009) as, despite the everyday encounter and ingestion of food, for the majority of people, their consumption is not embedded and is shielded from the means, and damages, which got their food there.

This was contrasted by Marcus Thompson, who got into food related activism through poverty alleviation, working with Oxfam and playing a key role during famines. He identified more as a poverty alleviation campaigner and international development practitioner rather than food activist. Interestingly, food had not become such a key focus of his work and, perhaps related, it had not permeated and come to define his life to quite the same extent as many of the other interviewees.

6.3 Are food activists 'foodies'?

Having discussed how the interviewees appreciate the uniqueness of food within activism and campaigning, this does not necessarily mean that they are 'foodies'; often an assumption for those working in the food movement and politicised about food. Broadly speaking, I refer to the term 'foodie' here as people with a passion for food; its sourcing and preparation, and learning, thinking and discussing food beyond just eating it. I discuss the concept and academic study on the topic below, but for now refer to two brief definitions of it. Cairns et al's brief definition of 'foodies' is: "people with a passion for eating and learning about food… a category commonly assigned to individuals who are passionate about the pursuit of "good food"" (2010: 591), whilst Guthman states of "foodie-ism": "the unprecedented mass interest (some would say obsession) in rarefied, specialized and/or health-oriented food preparation and eating" (2008b: 1175).[17] There are also class connotation of 'foodies', through associations with gourmet food and fine dining.

Looking at the oral histories, this relationship with food as an interest and passion in itself can be examined. For some, working on food issues and taking great interest in them was part of their

[17] See also Levy and Barr (1984), one of the originals to write about 'foodies', and who define it as "a person who is very very very interested in food… who consider[s] food to be an art, on a level with painting or drama" (1984: 6), in Johnston and Baumann (2015: 48).

general passion for food (for example, Deirdre Hutton, Hugh Fearnely-Wittingstall, Simon Fairlie and Patrick Holden), whilst for others it did not translate into a passion for food alone (for example Philip Lymbery, Harriet Lamb, Kath Dalmeny and Jeanette Longfield). I provide a few quotes here to demonstrate this range of feelings towards food itself.

Hugh Fearnley-Wittingstall describes how food is all-encompassing for him, bringing together the wide range of issues as well as pleasure in the production and consumption process itself:

> *"**Hugh**: I find an interest in food at all levels… a huge amount of my waking and working life is directly or indirectly connected with food, but I feel fine about that, because I think it's important, and I don't think that there are many things around that are more important, I really don't.*
> ***Lauren**: Do you think it's possible to be someone who's working in food, as a chef, and really passionately as a chef working with food who can't, you know, do you think it's possible to be doing that and not be aware of and tackling these political issues behind the food?*
> ***Hugh**: Yeh I think it is possible and I mean, I think it has been possible for a long time and I think it's still possible, but it's not possible for me, because, because I've, through a series of accidents and no doubt because of many of the things that we've talked about that seemed accidental or by chance, but have steered me in one direction or another, that's just where I've ended up, and I think that there's no turning back from that. I mean, it certainly doesn't feel like any kind of possibility for me to say, well that's enough food politics, why don't you just, why don't you just get back into the kitchen and start creating some really amazing dishes to blow the world away, doesn't really interest me to do that."*
> (Track 5)

For Fearnley-Wittingstall, the creative side in the kitchen cannot be separated from the politics, but a significant part of that interest in the political side came from the pleasure in cooking, and increasingly, growing/rearing the food, shaped by his career as a chef.

This contrasts with Harriet Lamb, Jeanette Longfield and Marcus Thompson, for example, who do not particularly enjoy cooking, nor do they cook if they can avoid it. Lamb describes her feelings towards cooking:

> *"**Harriet**: I would've been a very bad pupil [learning to cook from my mother], I would've said oh, this is taking too long, this is too boring, I can't be bothered, and I wouldn't have bothered to listen, even now I can't be bothered, I hate cooking actually…"*
> (Track 2)

> *"**Lauren**: You said you never learnt to cook and you still hate it now, on the other side of that, do you enjoy the eating?*
> ***Harriet**: Oh yes I like food, I like food and I like eating, I just find cooking boring and annoying, takes too long, can't be bothered, yeh I'm, it's really not something I'm interested in, but yeh I love eating, love food!... I'm vegetarian now… My partner's the cook in the family… but I probably do as much, more cooking than he does, probably, because the family still need to eat… there are times it can be ok, I'm just too impatient."*
> (Track 6)

Whilst Lamb enjoys food immensely, she takes no pleasure in the preparation and sees it as a chore, perceiving negatively the amount of time and effort it requires.[18] She also talks in a different section about the pleasure she takes in sourcing her food, although not in the sense of being artisanal or fancy, but of the ethics and sustainability of the produce.

Similarly, Jeanette Longfield, whilst enjoying food, has little interest in cooking:

> *"**Lauren**: Do you remember enjoying food [growing up]?*
> ***Jeanette**: Oh man, yeh! I ate whatever was put in front of me, I was not even slightly fussy… I always ate loads, even though I was skinny.*
> ***Lauren**: Did you enjoy helping your mum out?*
> ***Jeanette**: I did it 'cause I knew I was supposed to help, and it seemed fair enough to help, but I don't remember thinking, grin, this is fantastic, and actually, even now, I don't cook. My other half, Phil, one of the many attractions when I met him was, he enjoys cooking, I mean, excellent! I mean I can cook and I did cook for myself at university and stuff, but I'm not, ooh let me get in the kitchen, I mean, I'll wash up."*

[18] There is also an interesting gender dimension in this last quote in the division of household labour, where Lamb comments that she ends up doing more of the cooking at home for the family. This relates to debates on the gendered and political nature of domesticity and cooking, and to what extent it is oppressive or emancipating. See for example Meah (2014); Charles and Kerr (1988); and DeVault (1991).

(Track 1)

Longfield later affirms that her partner does the food shopping and cooking in their house (discussed in more depth shortly). Like Lamb, she sees cooking more as a sense of duty and necessity rather than something exciting that interests her or brings pleasure, even though she takes great pleasure in eating and the political issues surrounding it.

This is also consistent with Polly Russell's findings from oral histories with individuals involved in the UK food industry (2008). She argues that despite a professional interest in food and its issues, this does not necessarily translate into a personal passion for preparation and/or consumption. This is particularly exampled in an oral history of Tim Lang, held in the British Library.

The ambiguity, variations and contradictions within the concept of 'foodie' is explored by Johnston and Baumann, who remark that "the meaning of the term "foodie" is hotly debated" (2015: 48). They trace its routes to the 1980s, where it emerged in part as a reaction to the abysmal quality of mainstream food and the importance of thinking and talking about food, not just eating it (ibid). They highlight how foodie discourse today often employs universal accessibility, yet is associated with snobbery and distinction. Foodies tend to "take the form of individualized ethical stances… rather than encouraging a collective approach to solving the serious social problems stemming from the food system" (2015: 28). In this way, through their activism, and considering my definition of activism to include seeking wider social change beyond the individual level, my interviewees were not mere foodies. Their work seeks a more inclusive and wider transformation of the food system.

What is applicable from Johnston and Baumann's research to my own is the role that food serves in their narrative of self-identity. Food is not "just as biological sustenance", but also "a key part of their identity, and a kind of lifestyle… the transcendence of food beyond mere stuff for survival… the details and intensity of the foodie lifestyle will differ, but what unites foodies is the fact that food serves a key role in their "narrative of self identity"" (2015: 1-2). In this way, there are parts of Johnston and Baumann's understandings of 'foodies' that do relate my interviewees.[19] I would argue that it is that definition including narrative of self-identity, in addition to a desire for wider change beyond the individual.

[19] That particular definition also reflects the approach of the Slow Food movement, which seeks to engage the ethical and sustainable through pleasure (Parkins and Craig 2006), but which has often been perceived as bringing out the socially exclusive nature of 'foodie' movements.

6.4 Politicisation: routes into the politics of food

What was particularly interesting to note with the interviewees, and what was particularly afforded by the oral history method, was the process of engagement and politicisation about food that each interviewee went through. Sometimes the politicisation (whether specifically around food or not) led them to food activism, sometimes the work in food led them to politicise, sometimes politicisation on rather different issues played more prominent roles. They all had quite unique experiences and relationships with food, and almost as equally diverse was their various focuses with which they addressed food activism. Ultimately, through consumption and work, this led to food defining each of their lives and political selves to some extent. The next few examples demonstrate this.

Philip Lymbery recalls being interested in conservation, which prompted him to become vegetarian, and describes the impact of that and how it began a thread into other issues:

> *"I [became vegetarian based on] a vague notion that being vegetarian was environmentally a sounder way to, a sounder diet, which as it turned out, was right… once I'd moved dietarily to a different place, it then connected with my natural affinity with other living beings, with animals. So, what then became the main, the central driver, was that, that empathy with other living creatures, and then as I began to learn more about how animals in society lived and died, that became my overarching concern, my driving concern. So what had been born out of my interest in wildlife, my trajectory to be involved in the conservation movement, the environmental and conservation movement, in fact then unlocked, a real connection, a real empathy with other living creatures… the wonderful thing is, here at Compassion, it brings it all together, the care for the animal also delivers great benefits for people, for the environment that was the start of my interest, and thereby has a big part to play in preserving the future for us as a species and our neighbours in other species… [as a meat-eating teenager, food] was just something that came on the table that mum put in front of us, it was just fuel for the day… when I became a vegetarian I entered the food movement, and I realised food's central place in society but also in the future viability of society, and its ability to connect with, or to break the connection, with other species."*
> (Track 3)

This quote shows Lymbery reflecting on the path(s) that brought him to food and its politics, despite not being particularly interested in food either materially or as an issue as a child (*just something that came on the table… just fuel*). His decision, based on a *vague notion*, as a 17 year old to become vegetarian, was the moment he identified that he *entered the food movement*. He traces how over the years his initial interest in wildlife, conservation and the environment as a child led him to becoming vegetarian as a teenager, which in turn led him to animal welfare in farming as an adult and his professional trajectory and focus. Not only that but he links the work of Compassion to wider social issues – *great benefits for people, for the environment*. This can be seen in Compassion's work, which has developed over the years from being a more solely animal welfare charity to addressing multiple related issues, such as the social and environmental.[20] On the specifics of vegetarianism, I discuss this below in section 6.6.

In her interview Jeanette Longfield recalls becoming politicised at university, but that she did not connect this to food and agriculture until later when she ended up working increasingly for food focused organisations, through chance more than conscious decisions. She reflects here on the influence of her job on the politics of her diet and eating practices:

> *"It must have happened incredibly slowly, I don't remember thinking, oh my god, I need to change what I eat! Partly I suppose because what I ate wasn't that dreadful in the first place, because I hadn't been brought up on junk food, I hadn't got into junk when I was a student, I could cook. My wonderful partner Phil is a fantastic cook, so, I just never got into eating trash, so radical changes weren't necessary, so there wasn't a 'blimey' moment, but over the years, you just get fussier and fussier and fussier, the more you find out the more you think, I'm not eating that, I'm not eating that either, and ooh, you wouldn't eat it if you knew where that came from, and so, yeh, gradually, gradually, gradually over the years, it's more and more… I suppose, maybe [Phil and I] kind of did the food thing a bit together… I guess, bit by bit, I'd bring a bit home, and he'd go yeh yeh, ok, let's do that, and he'd incorporate it into his cooking, so none of it was particularly dramatic, I didn't kind of come home and say, we've got to stop eating this! Or anything, I don't think he would've gone with that. Yeh, I think we did it together in a way."*

[20] For example, their recent conference in 2017, "Extinction and Livestock: moving to a flourishing food system for wildlife, farm animals and us", was in collaboration with WWF and addressed issues of the environment, society and health as well as animal welfare.

(Track 2)

The change was slow and *gradual*, there wasn't a single *moment*, yet Longfield remarks on increasing knowledge of the food system – *the more you find out* – affecting the cooking and eating at home with her partner. She'd *bring a bit* [of information] *home*, and they'd decide to adjust their consumption accordingly. Harriet Lamb similarly identified her time at university as one of the key periods of her politicisation, which led onto working within social justice issues, such as international development and labour rights. Whilst these were not directly related to food, they eventually took her to Fairtrade, where the focus turned to food.

Helen Crawley described her huge appetite as a child, but besides the quantity, didn't think that much about what she was eating. Her route was initially through her bachelor's degree and subsequent work in dietetics, followed by encountering some of the socio-economic difficulties experienced by patients, doctoral research, and increasing work looking at the relationship between diet, nutrition and child development, which gradually took her to international as well as national sectors, broadening her understanding of the wider system. By comparison, Jeanette Orrey didn't consider food much as a child or beyond cooking for her husband until she began working as a dinner lady after having children. There, she soon found herself running the kitchen and encountered the challenges of budgets, quality, procurement and children willing to eat the food. As she successfully overcame these through innovative approaches, she was increasingly aware of the wider inherent problems and addressing these at a larger scale became her next career focus.

For Francis Blake, the politicisation around food that developed into his profession came when he started farming, and led him to the organic movement and beyond:

> *"It was absolutely a way of life, I mean farming is a way of life, and organic farming is also a philosophy of life I think, so it was full on and you absolutely lived your work… The feeling of balance in what you produce and therefore what you consume, and being as close as possible to the source of what you eat, is very, I mean, it's a wonderful thing, and I think in some ways that's what's so special about organic, is the quality of what you're producing and your contact with it, and your connection with it, and then eating that and therefore feeling that connection as well, is just, it's wonderful. I've been lucky enough to travel all over the world with organic farming and sharing good food and company and, and wine and so on, with like-minded people, all who share that respect and that love of farming and that*

> *respect for good food and for where it's come from and for how important it is for us and for the planet, is really something very special… Food didn't particularly come into my consciousness, even when I was starting to contemplate organic farming, but certainly organic farming helped to bring it together, and bring an appreciation of food, so I'm not quite sure when that happened, but I guess it was all part of, particularly of moving here and then having our own goats, producing the milk, making cheese and yogurt, our own eggs, that sort of thing… it was part of that sort of self-sufficient ethos, which probably gave me that connection with food much more."*
> (Track 5)

Like earlier themes, Blake remarks on the *connection* and *contact*, here between the land, animals and food he ate. He describes how the farming of the produce combined with the daily ingestion of it became not just a way but *a philosophy of life*, how it materialised in *living the work*. This relates to the earlier points about viscerality and the pervasiveness of working on an issue that is also daily sustenance. This all guided him from a position where food wasn't really a *conscious* issue, to where organic farming helped *bring it together*. He particularly highlights the impact of working physically with food from the farming side, *close* to *the source of what you eat*, how it *balances what you produce and therefore consume*, the connections being inescapable. This concept of food as 'way of life' and 'living ones work' I address next in section 6.5.

It is also interesting to note the reference to *like-minded people*. This relates to two points. The first is the friendships and community element of the food movements – many of the interviewees knew/knew of each other through professional and/or personal relationships, which was often commented on in a positive way, and relates to the 'shared identity' of social movements referred to in chapter 4. The second point is how this hints to some kind of exclusivity and elitism. The food movements have been criticised by many for promoting better, more ethical food, but which is inaccessible to many, whether due to financial resources, geographical location, education, etc. (Guthman 2003, 2008a, 2014; Smith 2006; Zimmerman 2015).

Whilst for Lamb and Longfield, their route was through social justice, for Crawley it was public health nutrition, for Lymbery it was through wildlife and conservation, and Blake through farming. They all ended up working on aspects of the food system, and it increasingly altered their own consumption.

Before moving onto the next section, which explores some of the more material ways that the interviewees' politics affect their consumption, I find it valuable to consider the theory of the visceral politics of food that Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2008) propose, to understand the everyday of socio-political life. With the example of Slow Food, they argue for a "visceral understanding of (everyday) socio-political life" through food, looking at the minded-body as singular to better understand the "political (eating) subject" and the "play of power in food systems" (2008: 461). They argue that food beliefs and representations exist materially in the body and that food movements can use this to inspire action for their progressive goals (ibid).

It is also worth noting the Slow Food movement itself, which Parkins and Craig (2007) discuss in their book *Slow Living*. Slow Food aims to connect ethics and pleasure, and places great value on the shared gatherings through local groups called 'convivia'. However, the movement struggles to distance itself from being perceived as elitist and posh. It is this fine line that food movements are often walking, between engaging people through the unique and tangible consumption of food whilst invoking the political ramifications, and not alienating them. Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy argue for the exploitation of this: "appreciating how food beliefs and representations exist materially in the body is crucial to the ability of food-based movements to inspire action across difference and achieve their progressive goals" (2008: 461). It begins with themselves first…

6.5 Eating your politics

Guthman states that food and consumption have become a major site of politics, especially around political and ethical responsibility, and that eating decisions themselves are seen as politics (2008b: 1175). Whilst this trend appears to be moving increasingly away from collective forms of resistance and towards individual choices, in line with neoliberal values (Guthman 2008b), the personal responsibility felt by the interviewees, as professionals on the issues, was particularly great.

As demonstrated above, the interviewees' work in food and its political components seep into their life. Furthermore, it has become what in part defines them and for some, has become a way of life in itself. Because of working on an issue that also requires daily bodily consumption, the overlaps between their professional and personal lives deepen. When discussing through the oral histories each of their food consumption patterns throughout their life, it became apparent that they lived

out their morals through their food. They all made very conscious and carefully considered decisions about the types of food they produced/bought, prepared and consumed, and this consciousness and practices had increased in conjunction with their work. What was interesting was that, whilst there were many overlaps, shared values and practices, they were not always the same. Indeed, between them there was a variety of, sometimes conflicting, food politics and practices. However, what was consistent was that each of their food practices were highly dictated by their work and politicisation of food.

Harriet Lamb here describes not only the additional ways, beyond Fairtrade, that food enters her life and how she acts out her morals, but how it represents the wider complex food system and interweaves with the global political-economic system:

> *"I've always gone to the local wholefood shops and bought from organic stores or independent stores, I've always shopped from markets and more recently in Britain the rise of farmer markets, I would always go to them, or, I would only ever buy free range eggs, I mean, I wouldn't, I just could not buy a not-free range egg, and I could not buy a not Fairtrade banana, or not Fairtrade tea and coffee, I mean there are some lines I just can't cross now, I would go without, and I would travel miles to find those things, while I appreciate that not everyone else does, but that's, I'm not a moral high horse about it, that's my personal position. I'm vegetarian, I would always buy wholemeal bread over white bread, I only buy brown rice or red rice, or black rice… I wouldn't buy white Uncle Ben's, unless and until it's Fairtrade, I, so, well I've been vegetarian for years and years now, I don't eat meat, or fish, and I will not, ever again, and I bought my two children up like that, although it's completely their free choice but both of them have chosen to stick with being vegetarian so far… also I ride a bike everywhere and I have done my whole life and I can't even drive, I buy as much as I possibly can in Oxfam shops in terms of things like candles, or second hand clothes, I try to buy all my clothes second hand… so I try to run those principle through my life, I clearly fail totally in having a green lifestyle because I spend so much time on planes, that's obviously a problem, and I actually hate flying… but it's part of my job and of course I love it when I get to wherever I'm going and visiting the farmers and visiting different parts of the world, but that is definitely the major downfall in my lifestyle in terms of is it in any way sustainable or something."*
> (Track 6)

For Lamb, her consumption and lifestyle is about more than simply supporting Fairtrade and being a conscious consumer. She buys into the alternative food values of *local*, *wholefood*, *organic*, *independent*, *markets* and *free-range*. Her phrasing of *wouldn't*, *I just could not buy* and *some lines I just can't cross now* indicates not only the firm moral boundaries that dictate her consumption, but also how this wasn't necessarily always the case; that her increased knowledge has cemented such morals and consumptions. What's more, the morals she lives out go beyond simply food. Referencing her transport, clothing and recycling habits, *running those principles through her life*, she reveals how the food issues relate to wider social, economic, political and environmental global concerns, and how these integrate into other identities such as environmentalist. This was a similar story to Helen Crawley.

The way that Jeanette Longfield carefully considers her food consumption differs, although is still informed by her knowledge working in food politics:

> *"**Jeanette**: Phil [does the food buying], um, I think, I'd prefer a bit less meat and a bit more vegetarian than I get, um… but to be honest, he does the work, and I'm not in a terribly strong position to say, why don't you shop in this way and why don't you cook in that way… we eat loads of pasta, and rice and spuds, I keep nudging him into quinoa, I don't think he's all that keen on it, I quite like it, but anyway, um, plenty of veg, even if there's meat with it, but very often there isn't… we don't have a microwave, we won't have one in the house, cooks from scratch, lots of tomato-y sauces and things… sardines… he's taken to doing Sunday roasts of late, then using the left overs of whatever it is later on in the week for other dishes, oh and he makes fantastic soups…*
> ***Lauren**: And do you, you know, vilify the supermarkets, how do you negotiate..?*
> ***Jeanette**: Waitrose, Waitrose is the compromise because they're a co-op, and he does the shopping, he goes to the farmers market in Ealing sometimes, he shops at some of the little local fruit and veg stalls… the origin is probably a bit suspect and they're certainly not organic, but, so he mixes organic stuff from Waitrose with street stall stuff with farmers market stuff, so it's a mish mash, and no we don't have an organic box scheme… so yes, it's not ten points out of ten, no."*
> (Track 3)

Longfield considers the wider issues that food connects with, such as business practice – noting that Waitrose is ok because it's cooperatively run – and how she and her partner negotiate the multitude

of food choices and their ethics. This expands on what she discussed in the quote earlier, about how she and her partner have together gradually learnt and adjusted their food according to various food issues. The comments on organic box schemes and *not ten out of ten* indicate that she's aware of even further steps they could take, and says it almost guiltily as if she should wield more morals in her consumption.[21] It also conveys some of the dilemmas and difficulties inherent in ethical consumption, from the practical of what's easily available to the social, such as domestic harmony. The cost implications of shopping in Waitrose, one of the most expensive supermarkets in the UK, are not insignificant and illuminate the price tag of Longfield's ethical consumption choices. Though she doesn't mention it here, she talks in other parts of her oral history about appealing to the masses (see chapter 5) and her awareness of how exclusionary food activist movements can appear. This is in part attributed to her own conflicted class identification and experience of having come from a working class background and feeling that identification change as she became more educated and liberal (for literature on the class and race dimensions of food and food movements, see for example Slocum 2007; Guthman 2003, 2008a; Mellor, Blake and Crane 2010).

Julie Brown's carefully considered food choices differed yet again:

> ***Lauren****: So in terms of your own kitchen, beyond what you can and do get from Growing Communities, what kinds of things would, are in your cupboards?*
> ***Julie****: Well that's what I, if I was, you know, please don't go through my cupboards, you know, I went and hid a few things this morning just in case, just in case you did!... Box scheme, farmers market, local Turkish shops, bulk buy thing like pasta, rice, coffee, which is Fairtrade and organic, so on a personal level I do try to apply the principles that are in the [Growing Communities] food zones and, with the odd, you know, discretion, indiscretion, and concession to the children, and you know, you go out to eat and you can't control all of that, and also you just need to get on with your life as well, you just need to be able to be normal, or fit in, with how the rest of the world is going, but here, yes, no, we pretty much try to not source anything from further away, and from organic and FT.*
> (Track 9)

[21] This also reflects her perception of me, the interviewer, assuming I would expect her to have an organic box scheme.

Brown largely lives up to the guidelines of Growing Communities for food procurement, *applying the principles*, thereby living out her food ethics in her own personal consumption. Like Longfield, she also acknowledges the challenges, such as being able to *control all* food, and the socio-cultural dynamics of being *normal* and *fitting in*. Brown inferred a sense of what she 'should' be doing, as if there were a moral spectrum that she, as a food activist, should be at the top end of, perfectly practicing what she preaches. Both amusing and interesting, this related to what she thought I as the interviewer expected (*please don't go through my cupboards… I hid a few things!*), and reflects the pressure she feels and her concerns about being morally judged, and how she perceived me – a fellow political food consumer? Expecting her to be the ideal ethical consumer?[22]

In these three examples alone, there are differences in practices and priorities between the interviewees. This was amplified in the data when considering all the oral histories, with even more variances and modifications between their priorities and practices, some of which were quite conflicting to each other. For example, it may be of no surprise that Francis Blake was an avid (though not exclusive) grower and consumer of organic food.[23] This contrasted sharply with Deirdre Hutton and Marcus Thompson, who both declared that they didn't "bother" with organic and didn't see it as an important element of food production and consumption. Similar tensions between local and/or seasonal also emerged. For Jeanette Orrey, locally produced food, and ideally organic, was particularly important, especially in connecting students to their food chain. What was consistent was the awareness, thought and concerted decision that went into the interviewees' consumption choices, and they each would talk me through their rationales.

Before going onto a specific example (vegetarianism), I would like to consider some of the theoretical underpinnings to these personal consumption transformations experienced by the interviewees resulting from their professional lives. Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy argue that the visceral politics of food can challenge "power dynamics at play not only in dominant discourses on food but also in one's own internal bodily processing – how bodies with minds ambiguously relate to food regimes" (2008: 469). Bourdieu (1977, 1990) argues that habitus is constructed from and

[22] This reveals some of the dynamics between the interviewer and interviewee, notably how I was perceived as a fellow ethical eater. In a further/different study, ethnography could perhaps capture more of the actual eating practices, associated feelings and embodied politics of food activists. For an example of ethnography, including going through participants' cupboard, as a method to study everyday eating, see Evans (2014) work on food waste.

[23] As his daughter, I had the access and insight of knowing intimately the food consumption of Francis Blake.

embodied within the social and environmental world in which we exist, and it is therefore difficult to disrupt. To transcended the structures and formations that normally reproduce it, the self is fundamentally rejected. Throughout the lives of the interviewees, from childhood to professional work, the role of food penetrates both the personal and the professional. The daily confrontation with, indeed, bodily ingestion of, the very substance they work on, and constantly increasing knowledge of the related problems, is sufficiently substantial to gradually alter their habitus.

6.6 The vegetarian case

To delve deeper into the differences, contradictions, diversity and place of the food-identity-politics triangle, it is valuable to look into an example of a dietary choice and the issues that surround it. One very good case is vegetarianism. Whilst many of the interviewees either were or had been vegetarian at some point in their lives, they all had very clear opinions and had considered their decision carefully.

Here I present extracts from six different oral histories discussing vegetarianism, to demonstrate the breadth of factors considered, the rationales and the variations of vegetarianism. Of relevance here, Beardsworth and Keil (1997) explore the diversity of practices and experiences within vegetarianism, for example how there are multiple versions of it rather than a single category (e.g. vegan, pescatarian, flexitarian), the widely varying reasons and justifications, and social responses. For studies on vegetarianism as a socio-political movement in itself see Maurer (2002) and Morris and Kirwan (2007) – perhaps increasingly relevant as vegetarianism as a practice is experiencing exponential growth in popular culture.

Harriet Lamb describes her gradual route into vegetarianism and how her diet has changed over the years:

> *"I grew up eating a lot of meat [meat and two veg]… I went to India when I was 18, and of course in India… a huge percentage of the population are vegetarian… and it's completely normal… it was very unusual to be vegetarian [at that time in the UK] so it really helped me going to India, and over time I realised I was only eating meat when I went home to please my mother and father, it seemed… so then I completely stopped and started to say I was*

> *actually vegetarian… so for me it was very clear initially, it was from a position that if, you consume so much more of the world's resources to produce a meat rather than vegetarian diet… so it was initially from a political perspective that I stopped eating meat, reinforced by seeing how it was so much part of the Hindu philosophy and way of life in India and that desire not to harm animals… but above all else I could not bear factory farming… for a long time I still ate fish, and one day I suddenly thought, this is completely mad, because if there's a problem with growing meat, actually the fishing industry's even more unsustainable and even more terrible… this is even worse… I thought this doesn't make sense… so for about 25 years I haven't eaten any fish either, and completely happy."*
> (Track 6)

Jeannette Longfield recalls her first period of independent eating at university:

> *"I don't ever remember [vegetarianism] coming up, and I suspect that might have been the boy thing, sharing with three boys, and none of them were vegetarian, so that's probably why it didn't come up, but it didn't twig with me at all at that stage, I mean it's completely obvious now, but at the time."*
> (Track 2)

She then compares this to today:

> *"I don't think I've ever consciously been through a phase or a period where I've not eaten any meat at all, I've been through loads of periods, including now, where I don't eat all that much, and I think it was very very gradual. Lots of people who I meet for work think I am vegetarian because when I eat out I always choose the vegetarian option for political reasons really, to demonstrate there is a demand for vegetarian food, to show solidarity with genuine vegetarians who are very often present and in a minority and feeling a bit kind of put upon, to show market demand. Very often the food is a lot nicer as well, so that's good, and also because when you're eating out you don't know where it's been, whereas if Phil's buying it, you know, we don't buy cheap low-welfare meat, and that's another way of rationing it of course, because if you buy high welfare meat it's quite expensive so you don't eat a lot, which is how it should be, so I suppose if I'd thought about those things when I was 18 or 19, in the first rush of, whoa politics, all interesting exciting, I'm fairly sure if anybody had tried to persuade me of the moral and logical benefits of being vegetarian, I probably would've*

> *said yes… [Phil and I], well we've gotten closer and closer together as the years have gone on… [Phil did degree in demography] and I was getting more and more into the food side [with work] and we were just learning more and more about it together, I guess, and I think, the only time when he bridles against it a bit, because pretty much we're both signed up to the food thing, is when we go out for a curry, which we do from time to time, and even now, even now he still says, I can't have chicken can I, and he knows, he knows that the chicken in a curry house, is the cheapest, crappiest lowest welfare, pumped up with polyphosphates crap you could ever imagine, but he still gets a bit wistful, he doesn't have it, but, so yeh, mainly it's fine."*
> (Track 3)

Hugh Fearnley-Wittingstall, known in the media as "Eatitall", especially regarding meat and fish, describes his relationship with vegetarianism:

> *"Yes, I have [been vegetarian], and I've made a series about it and written a book about it… Without a doubt, as a species, we're eating far too much meat, no question about that, we don't have to eat any meat to survive. Going back a while, meat has been a precious and fairly scarce food, a high reward food… at one time in our evolution we'd have had to go out and fight hard or work hard for those foods... meat… we have fried chicken and burger outlets on every corner of every major street every city in the world… it's not doing us any good, and of course it's not doing the animals any good… the bottom line underpinning it all, has to be, eat less meat, eat much less meat."*
> (Track 4)

Julie Brown discusses how her relationship with food has changed over the years, including on the issues of animal products. She became vegetarian in her early twenties, initially because of environmental reasons, and remained so for many years. A few years ago she started eating meat again:

> *"Well I eat much better now than I used to. I remember, I was thinking about when I was at Friends of the Earth, we, I ate very poorly, 'cause we just spent all the time working, and then in the pub smoking and drinking, so, and also, it's interesting about the whole thing, because, I didn't, wouldn't buy organic food in those days, and it wasn't, I wasn't particularly concerned about my own health… so the organic thing, it was about the environment, rather*

> *than the food, but the food has become so much more significant as well, you know, that's what's, that's what I've learnt, or got… We started sourcing small amounts of [meat] for the farmers market about three or four years ago… it was a tricky… I didn't want to be eating meat that'd been produced in an ecologically wasteful way, and I didn't want animals to be raised in an industrial farming system, so here we'd set up a market where the farmers, you know, where the farmers at the market who were trading meat were not doing, none of those things, and I wanted to support them with that, so, and we do want to support that, and we thought long and hard about how to incorporate, you know, meat into our principles, my personal principles but also the principles of Growing Communities, and as I say we think that we need to eat a huge amount less meat, but that meat does have, animals do have a place within an ecological system, you know, an ecological farming system."*
> (Track 9)

By comparison, Francis Blake has never been vegetarian, although still holds strong and considered opinions on the place of animals and meat in the food system:

> *"It was lovely, animals, were, yes, they're great to have around, all of them, whatever, they are all characters of one sort or another, and I, it's a privilege and it's a great responsibility to have animals and to manage them and to treat them and look after them and care for them, very, very important, and to respect them, therefore, and, uh, in that context, they wouldn't be there if we weren't farming them for meat or milk or eggs, or whatever it might be, there but for the grace of god, they wouldn't be there, and so, I don't have a problem then, with saying, ok we've, I've given you my love and care and attention and protection and given you a good life for as long as is appropriate, and now it's time, it's pay back time, if you like, and so provided that they're treated with respect and they're killed with respect, and eaten with respect, then I'm fine about that. I've never been a vegetarian, and as far as farming is concerned, obviously, it's a lot easier with livestock being able to recycle nutrients and reuse the things, the vegetation that we can't eat, so I'm completely comfortable with that, provided there's love and respect there, that's the key."*
> (Track 5)

Deirdre Hutton is also a meat-eater, although she describes here her approach to meat and what guides her consumption:

> *"Yes, I do [enjoy cooking], at the weekend, you know, when you've got time, yes I enjoy cooking, and I like feeding people, but it's not just food, it's the whole hospitality thing that goes with food, and sitting round and putting the world to rights as you eat, reasonably, at least reasonably good food, you know… I'm fussy about where I buy things, you know, so, I will go to the farmer's market to buy fresh vegetables, if I buy meat, frankly, I only buy really high quality well hung meat, I'd rather not eat meat than not eat the best meat, and I'm fortunate that I have the resources to do that, not everybody does, um, but I'm very fussy about what I eat. I have now a house in Herefordshire and there's a terrible dilemma about whether I make a vegetable garden or whether I think, don't be so damned stupid why give yourself so much work?! So I'm wrestling with that at the moment… [story of friends' pigs and the pork from them] it was absolutely delicious, and that's the sort of meat I want to eat, and that's really what I like finding. I, I'm not really terribly interested in organic, I don't really, I think it's a very good, I think it's a marketing niche, I think if people want to buy organic then that is absolutely fine, but actually I like the attitude of the people with the piglets which is about, let's make this the very best eating experience we possibly can, and that's actually nothing to do with organic, but they treat their pigs very, very nicely because that produces better meat… I don't want to buy pork or bacon from a place where the sows have been in a crate unable to move, you know, so it's a combination of, of very good welfare, good rearing, good feeding, good slaughtering, good hanging, all of those things, that all collectively go to make something that's really quite good, and do you know, I'm happy to pay for it, but again, you know, I kind of emphasise, I have always recognised that many people can't and think one of the really important issues in the UK is how we get food of sufficient quality to all the areas in the UK where people are not finding it easy to get fresh fruit and vegetables and they're not eating the diet they should."*[24]
> (Track 2)

Through these extracts on the case of vegetarianism, it is clear that the range of dietary choices made by the interviewees – those all working within food activism – vary enormously, from both the actual consumption to the rationales behind them. Despite all being highly informed about food systems, and all having their consumption deeply shaped as a result of their work, there was no

[24] The issue of accessibility and affordability of typically more expensive ethical and sustainable food was acknowledged by many of the interviewees, and reflected the growing food justice and food equity movements. This is also touched on in chapter 7, particularly 7.5

consensus on the 'best' way to eat. Indeed, within both academic research and the messages of organisations, guidelines can be contradictory and conflicting – eat high-welfare meat, eat no meat, prioritise organic, prioritise local, prioritise seasonal, buy at independent shops, buy ethically at supermarkets, choose low fat milk, choose minimally processed full fat milk, etc. It begs the question, are the food activist movements united?

6.7 Discussion: holistic and united or disjointed?

This leads me to an important point relating to one of my research questions (1a): To what extent are the issues to be focused on broad and overlapping or narrow and self-contained? This chapter has explored the way that food, politics and identity has shaped the interviewees. More subtly, it has looked at the different lenses through which they have come to food and the lenses through which they continue to see food (e.g. social justice, conservation, animal welfare, environmentalism). What I was getting at with that first research question was the extent to which the interviewees and their particular areas of specialism are siloed or collaborative, do they understand food systems issues holistically and their particular role within the big picture, or are they more disjointed? Is there one food movement or multiple food movements? Was there a shared group identity?

What was apparent was that there was a substantial degree of friendships across the interviewees, their colleagues and associates. They often mentioned each other, and certainly mentioned some of the wider issues worked on. There were some overlaps and collaborations too, that have grown over time – particularly from Sustain because they are an alliance. But also between the Soil Association and Compassion in World Farming, and GM Freeze as a member organisation. Philip Lymbery commented on the shift from distancing themselves from the Soil Association to later collaborating (see chapter 5). There were also overlaps such as being a certification body as well as campaigning organisation (Fairtrade and Soil Association).

Whilst there is not perhaps total consensus and collaboration, many of the interviewees did talk about the wider issues of food than their own topics, and contextualised their place in the food system and broader food activist movement. I briefly use two examples here: Julie Brown from Growing Communities, a small local initiative, and Harriet Lamb from Fairtrade, a large international organisation.

Brown describes how she sees their place:

> *"We're looking at all food… we do look at the whole food system, um, but yes, we're focusing on the bits that we can kind of influence."*
> (Track 9)

And:

> *"I think that creating alternatives is really critical at the moment because we haven't got, we haven't got the ability to bring about legislative change and we don't have governments controlling industry, or creating level playing fields, or creating standards, so we need people to be carrying on campaigning for those things… some people are really great on… the direct action… other people stick with the personal action, and other people get involved in politics, and other people will create, I think, alternative structures, which is the businesses, the social enterprises, all of those other things that are gonna, hopefully, make all of those awful dominant things redundant, but in the short time are gonna be able to provide people with real alternatives, and actually, if we do get into a crisis situation, there will be examples there that can hopefully be ratcheted up and spread"*
> (Track 7)

She reflects on the variety of activisms that, together, work towards the same end goal, and situates Growing Communities within that. In contrast, Harriet Lamb describes the role of Fairtrade in the wider food movement:

> *"I see intellectually Fairtrade as part of these wider food movements, it's all about trying to put value back in our food, trying to take them out of being commodities… so we're absolutely part of a bigger movement in everything, through the trade union movement… through the environmental movement… you must and always have to be part of bigger movements, while I think always being able to strengthen your part within those broader changes that you need, and I think that's absolutely critical."*
> (Track 6)

The descriptors of *wider movements*, *bigger* and *broader* reflect her holistic understanding, along with examples of the other less direct areas they connect to – *trade union movements*, *environmental movement*. These quotes highlight the plurality of activisms challenging the current food system and how they fit together.[25]

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have looked at the relationship between food, identity and politics amongst the interviewees. The oral history method afforded a unique window onto the lives of those involved in food activism, enabling a narrative approach to see how, albeit in different ways, food and politics was increasingly woven into their lives, shaped their practices and formed part of their identities. The everyday nature of food from childhood through to their professional work was traced, which allowed me to explore the unique characteristics of food and how that translated into activism. Furthermore, their more intimate relationships with food were charted, and how they changed through processes of politicisation, food informing their politics as well as their politics leading them to food, including wider related issues. This in turn deeply affected their personal consumption habits, where they each thought carefully about what they ate and made highly informed choices. Interestingly, though, there was not necessarily consensus between them and, indeed, their own choices often contained conflicts – shown with the example of engaging/not engaging with forms of vegetarianism. This led me to consider the extent to which the movements are overlapping, collaborative and united, representing a more holistic singular movement, or a multitude of siloed and disjointed movements. Each interviewee, having travelled their own path to their respective areas of specialty in the food movement, were deeply shaped by food, albeit in different ways, in both a political and material sense.

I drew on Bourdieu (1977, 1990), taking his theory of habitus from work on class-based distinctions in 1950s France and French colonial Algeria, and applying it to a very different context, that of recent and present British food activism. Food is an apt topic for considering the concept of habitus, given its daily physical ingestion and the inherent social, cultural and political meanings it carries, which I explored using Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy's 'visceral politics of food' (2008). When combined

[25] Whilst it paints a rosy picture, not everyone demonstrated such depth of understanding in the overlaps. These quotes show that there is a variety of movements and suggests an increasingly united outlook.

with activism, which is often bound up with both personal and collective identity, Bourdieu's habitus opens up new conversations about altering one's core identities, politics and practices.

In addition, this chapter adds to and complicates the debates around 'foodies', which is a term that already has multiple definitions and of which there are, sometimes, conflicting perceptions (Johnston and Baumann 2010). There is some debate as to whether being a 'foodie' means that a person should, does, or is more likely to engage with food on a political level, with some arguing that it is a potential route into food activism (see for example Guthman 2008b, Alkon and Guthman 2017). The interviewees may all be, or have become, obsessed with food in various ways through their work, and for them it is highly political, but that does not necessarily mean that their interest falls into typical ideas of what constitutes a 'foodie'.

Chapter 7

Food Movement(s): alternative or mainstream?

> *"If your ideas are out on the margin then the mainstream doesn't pay much attention to the norm… You are an extremist, extremism is almost used as a term of disapproval or abuse on the radio and so forth. I mean my experience is that ideas that are a bit ahead of their time kind of, um, get absorbed by society through a sort of kind of Chinese whispers. So, they'll first be voiced by a few mavericks and then gradually they'll be taken up by progressively more conventional people or forms of media and so forth… I've seen things that I've written or the Ecologist has written 10, 15, 20 years ago suddenly re-appear a lot later in the mainstream…"*
> (Simon Fairlie, Track 6)

One of the reasons for taking a (albeit recent) historical view of the food movements was to look at how they've changed over time and become more influential, established, and professional. Often to the extent that they become the leading authority on a topic and area of legislation, or take on a role that in many other European countries is performed by the government, for example organic farming standards and certification. With serious, growing, global concerns over how food is produced and its effect on the environment and health, the arguments of the interviewees and fellow activists are also being increasingly listened to. This has meant that some of the organisations and their work have changed quite dramatically from a minority voice to a much more dominant one, and in their desire for creating larger scale societal change, they have aimed for a wider reach, penetrating the mainstream food, political and economic systems.

So, how has this affected them? It is increasingly acknowledged and argued that the multitude of challenges ranging from environmental to social require an integrated, systems approach (see for example McMichael 1994; Lang et al. 2009; Ericksen et al. 2010). Have the food movements and activists united across their various issues and now work as a united food movement for wider, systemic change, or are they a series of disjointed, smaller movements? And as they have up-scaled, how have they navigated changing the mainstream system and pushing the alternative they propose? Do they change the agri-food system from within or from an external position? In their

plight for success, are they in danger of assimilating and reinforcing the very system they seek to change?

The relationship between, or complex spectrum of, alternative and mainstream also raises questions about whether activists are involved in a single, unified 'food movement' or are members of diverse movements, each with their own, sometimes competing, agendas. While some organizations are focused on a single issue, such as animal welfare, others frame their activism in terms of broader notions of equity or sustainability. Several interviewees acknowledged the drawbacks of thinking in silos and sought to set their work in terms of a 'bigger picture' (see section 6.7 of chapter 6). There were also numerous examples of personal friendships between members of different organizations and working together to meet shared goals. For example, the Soil Association and Compassion in World Farming were once quite distant but have now begun to collaborate. The organizations also acknowledged the potential compromises they faced, such as Sustain's involvement with the Big Dig (inspired by David Cameron's vision for a Big Society, based on unpaid volunteer labour). Similarly, organizations faced trade-offs between competing ethical goals, such as the promotion of (imported) organic and (local) conventional foods, a dilemma explored from a consumer perspective by Meah and Watson (2013).

This section in particular addresses my first research question on how British food activism be defined, with particular focus on the following sub-questions:

a. To what extent are the issues focused on broad and overlapping or narrow and self-contained?
b. Has the work of food activism produced wider social change, leading to some movements shifting from being perceived as alternative to mainstream?
c. What has been the impact of food activism and in what ways?

In this chapter, I look at the challenges, contradictions and tensions between concepts of 'alternative' and 'mainstream' food systems. Looking at the empirical data, I provide examples of different ways that organisations and movements have taken to changing the mainstream, before addressing some of the theoretical applications and critiques in the wider literature. First, I look at what I loosely term the corporate approach taken by Fairtrade and Compassion in World Farming, who have sought to engage with food businesses such as Nestle and big retailers. Then I look at the

organic sector and its struggles with moving away from 'niche' and 'luxury', and finally at Growing Communities as a 'living alternative' to intensive, corporate industrial agriculture, before reflecting on them all and addressing some of the critiques.

7.1 Alternative Mainstream?

> "*The more radical you want to be, the more mainstream and conventional you need to come across"*
> (Philip Lymbery)

> "The greatest challenge for alternative agricultural trade movements is ensuring that they go beyond creating a parallel (perhaps necessarily ancillary) market for alternative agro-food products in the North, to integrate more sustainable environmental and social practices into conventional world trade"
> (Raynolds 2000: 306)

As is addressed in works by Goodman (2000, 2004), Belasco (2006), Guthman (2014) and Whatmore et al (2003), amongst others, the terms 'alternative' and 'mainstream' are tricky and not always clear cut, and the space between them can be especially contested. In particular, Guthman (2014) addresses the tensions of the conventionalization of organic agriculture, and Whatmore et al (2003) challenge the contrast between mainstream and alternative in alternative food networks (AFNs). I therefore begin by acknowledging that there is not a simple dichotomy between alternative and mainstream, and that often the distinctions are grey and muddy. I use the terms here primarily in the ways in which they were used by the interviewees themselves, and consider some of the ways they have been used in the wider literature.

Many of the food movements I researched are perceived as alternative and critical of multiple aspects of the mainstream food system, seeking in some way to change it, sometimes to the extent of becoming themselves a new, improved mainstream. However, 'mainstreaming' can be a double-

edged sword. Gibson-Graham (2005, 2008) developed the concept of diverse economies, moving beyond mainstream economic analysis focused on formal market transactions, paid labour and capitalist enterprise. Instead, they include an array of other transactions, forms of labour and enterprises, operating with alternative rules that make up the diverse economy (not simply a formal and informal dualism). This concept can be applied to activism, especially on the muddy notions of alternative and mainstream. Rather than an either/or, and even a spectrum from alternative to mainstream, we might think in terms of diverse activisms.

The different food activism approaches taken often combine elements of radical and conventional practices alike, challenging and subverting the status quo in evolving ways. This calls into question a dichotomy between alternative and mainstream, and broadens the focus from simply Alternative Food Networks, to the multitude of strategies and enterprises. The edited book by Fuller, Jonas and Lee (2010) (including several chapters specifically on food) argue that many alternative economic and political spaces exist. It celebrates and advocates for these alternative spaces through a series of case studies, whilst also providing a nuanced and critical analysis of them. They build on the diverse economies work, as well as alternatives spaces, within geography. It is acknowledged that the diverse approaches presented in the case studies each have their pros and cons, and that remaining critical, including of what is 'alternative', is important in continuing to improve, grow and develop. Similarly, I aim to do this in this chapter, looking at some of the approaches taken by the interviewees and their organisations within food activism, and some of the challenges, positives and negatives that have ensued.

Whilst the themes discussed in this chapter were prominent throughout the interviews, I am using a selection of carefully chosen excerpts as some of the most apt examples to explore the nuances in greater depth, and I discuss briefly below the language employed by the interviewees. In particular, I focus in this section on the interviews relating to Fairtrade (Harriet Lamb), Compassion in World Farming (Philip Lymbery) and Growing Communities (Julie Brown), as well as referencing some of the others, particularly the Soil Association (Patrick Holden and Francis Blake). In their strategies, these organisations have each considered the tensions of mainstream and alternative and their roles within it, and the interviewees had interesting things to say on the topic, which provide good material for analysis. It is worth pointing out that whilst much of the relevant wider literature pertains to related movements in the rest of Europe and North America, my interviews were based on people and movements in the UK.

As an alternative idea or practice becomes popular and more widespread, when does it become considered mainstream? Does becoming mainstream necessarily signify a loss or dilution of the originally alternative values? Does it have positive, or any, effects on the mainstream food system overall? Many new ways of doing and being start off as seemingly radical, and gradually become more accommodated and eventually a social norm. Take, for example, the case of the smoking ban in the UK. It was the culmination of decades of evidence, campaigning and cultural shifts that demonstrates how something – smoking – once more-or-less ubiquitous and socially endorsed change to the extent of legal bans and is socially shunned (Hoffman 2010, Murphy and Clancy 2010).

What is meant by the often used terms 'alternative' and 'mainstream'? For clarification, in this thesis, when using the term 'mainstream', I am referring to the current, dominant and conventional food system, entailing all elements such as production, processing, trade, retail and consumption. When using the term 'alternative', I am referring to a proposed or existing alternative to any whole or part of that system. This is consistent with various uses in the wider literature.

For example, Jackson et al comment that: "alternative food systems are generally taken to imply some notion of oppositionality to the conventional" (2007: 309). Much of the extensive literature on ethical and alternative food refers to the notion of Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), which Whatmore and Clark define as the following:

> "AFNs constitute organized flows of food products that connect people who are concerned with the morals of their consumption practices in some way with those who want a better price for their food, or who want to produce food in ways counter to the dominant (or conventional) market logic" (Whatmore and Clark 2006 in Maye and Kirwan 2010: 1)

This is consistent with my use in this thesis, as well as highlighting some of the main ethical issues at the forefront of many of the movements studied. However, it is also important not to be too restrictive in the definitions. Renting et al argue that it is "important not to overly 'prejudge' or theoretically restrict definitions of AFNs", but rather grasp the variability and "explore the heterogeneity" of them (2003: 394).

Regarding organic food specifically, Michelsen et al remark:

> "As long as organic food is primarily traded in specialised organic food shops or in very small quantities in general stores, one may speak of a niche market. When general stores and supermarkets appear as the major distribution channel and the quantities sold grow beyond negligible shares of their turnover, it becomes however more problematic to speak of niche marketing" (1999: 4)

This definition is primarily looking at quantities, proportions and channels of sales, as well as marketing strategies, therefore focusing on size. However, it addresses the contradictions of calling something niche once it enters major retail markets. Through language, Jackson et al (2007) explore some of these complications and developments, with the case of 'mainstream' food retailers such as Marks and Spencer appropriating 'alternative' discourses.

The words 'mainstream' and 'alternative' are frequently used but also synonyms for them, and broader meanings and associations. For example, amongst other terms, mainstream was also equated with *establishment*, *agri-industrial*, *conventional* and *professional*, whilst alternative with *outlier*, *fringe*, *radical*, *extremism* and *marginal*. These were often part of discussions about the place they occupied, such as *niche*, *luxury* and size (*big*/*small*), as well as *acceptability*, being *listened to* and *taken seriously*. The language and words used highlight the tensions and problems of the dichotomy between mainstream and alternative, both from the interviewees as well as terms used in the wider literature. For example, some of the terms and topics are addressed in Whatmore et at (2003) on 'alternative', 'quality' and 'local' food networks; Kirwan (2004) on farmers' markets; Watts et al (2005) on food relocalization and the 'quality' turn; Sonnino and Marsden (2006) on the relationships between alternative and conventional food networks in Europe; Maye et al (2007) on representations and practices of AFNs; Kneafsey et al (2007); Holloway et al (2008); Marsden (2008); Maye and Kirwan (2010) on sociological studies of AFNs; Blake et al (2010) on buying 'local' food; Horlings and Marsden (2011); Lee and Marsden (2011); Marsden and Franklin (2013); and Wibbelmann et al (2013).

The interviewees were all, in one way or another, trying to bring about change in the current food system. In their ideal of creating the new mainstream they envisioned, they often trod a thin line between demonstrating an alternative way of being/doing and integrating into and operating within the mainstream system they opposed, at the risk of being no more than a niche with little wider effect on the overall system, sometimes even reinforcing that very system they opposed.

7.2 Going Mainstream – the 'corporate' approach

Whilst the concept of mainstream is not a tidy definition (nor with clear measurement), in this section I focus on organisations who saw, what they referred to as, the mainstream as an opportunity rather than a threat, and examine how they managed and experienced the process of engaging with mainstream food businesses. In particular, I draw on Harriet Lamb (Fairtrade), Philip Lymbery (Compassion in World Farming) and Patrick Holden and Francis Blake (Soil Association).

As documented in more detail in chapter 5, Philip Lymbery and Jeanette Longfield, amongst others, discussed the topic of image and the importance of coming across the right way in order to be taken seriously by what they alluded to as more mainstream society. This was a recurrent theme in different ways, and here I look at it in terms of strategies for criticising and changing the mainstream food system. The various interviewees and the organisations they work(ed) for took a variety of approaches in creating change, from campaigning to example, and at different scales.

Whilst not all interviewees took this approach by any means, in the case of Harriett Lamb, Philip Lymbery and Patrick Holden, they each had a vision for how to bring about larger scale change that was key to the directions in which they led the organisations they worked for. They all held a conviction that entering the mainstream in one way or another was the way forward. As Lymbery succinctly puts it: "if you wanna be part of the mainstream establishment, you want your views to be adopted mainstream, well, start taking a mainstream approach to get it there" (Track 3). It was generally felt that they had to integrate into the very mainstream system they criticised and wanted to change, in order to influence and transform it.

Looking at an example of a discussion on this topic, this is a quote from Harriet Lamb:

> *"I was always very clear, I've always been clear, I'm only interested in Fairtrade if we're gonna make it mainstream, it's not interesting to be a tiny niche, because you also then can't have a wider ripple effect either, and not only do you affect less farmers and workers directly, but also, you're not taken seriously, you can't have any wider impact on trade, trade structures, trade policy, people's thinking, company thinking, so I was always interested that we were going to the mainstream… [I remember the New Internationalist] saying [in an interview about bananas],*

> *'well many people think that Fairtrade is just for being niche' and me saying, 'no, no no no no, we're interested in being the norm, we're absolutely interested in being the norm, because otherwise we're not having a big enough impact'"* (Track 3)

Her approach was to aim for mainstream and explicitly away from being a minority sector as part of Fairtrade's strategy to create wider change in global trade. The use of the word 'niche' is presented quite negatively and combined with notions of small size ("tiny niche"). This is in contrast to how the opposite is presented, where mainstream shares a more positive category with 'norm', 'big' and 'impact'.

Like Lymbery and Longfield, there is also a clear desire and focus on being 'taken seriously', which is felt cannot happen without being perceived as participating and belonging in the mainstream. As Lamb remarks later on, she doesn't want to be treated "as a sweet little NGO, and a niche" because people then "patronise you and look down on you" rather than take you as a "really serious business" (Track 4). Being taken seriously is therefore seen as a necessary part of their broader strategy to affect mainstream food systems.

What is also interesting to note is how food movements like Fairtrade are, or certainly were, perceived as being alternative and niche by the wider public. As Lamb indicates in the interview with the New Internationalist that she refers to, this was one of the perceptions she saw necessary to move away from.

The ultimate rationale for this mainstreaming is claimed to be able to have an impact on wider global trade, as she reasoned above. One such example Lamb uses of this in action is the case of bananas:

> *"After a bit, of persuading companies to dip their toe in the water… we then realised, actually what was gonna take us to the next level was persuading companies to shift, to switch, what we called switch, to switch to Fairtrade… persuading them to make that total shift, because once you've done that, then, once Sainsbury's has switched all their bananas to Fairtrade, well the public are buying Fairtrade just because they're buying bananas in Sainsbury's, so they don't even have to know about Fairtrade or be actually actively looking for it, to be buying Fairtrade"* (Track 4)

There are multiple points to unpack here. First, "next level" connotes again size and growth and is used in a positive way. This upscaling, here into a dominant supermarket, is counter to what often comes to mind when people imagine alternative and more ethical food provision. I am not suggesting big or small is either inherently good or bad; there are strengths and weaknesses in both. However, there are often associations with small being innately good in the alternative agri-food sector, as Guthman (2014) examines with the – often unrealistic and not without fault – ideal of the small family farm in California. This association is to some extent simply in contrast to dominant large scale industrial agriculture, but was also influenced by books such as Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful,* first published in 1973. Indeed, the romantic notions of small scale family farms is commonly used as a marketing ploy by many food manufacturers and retailers. For example, packaging is used to personalise food by including photos, names and quotes of individual farmers, and blissful bucolic images of free-range animals far from the reality of the origins of the meat inside, or, as Jackson et al (2007) analyse, the words used to convey a romanticised 'alternative' of a relatively intensive and mainstream product (broiler chicken). Belasco (2006) argues that the food industry to some extent hijacked this new market, an issues which I address next. It is interesting, therefore, that Lamb in this case took the opposite approach with Fairtrade and not only views big agri-industry positively but courts it, and sees the collaborations as a marker of success.

Second, counter to the typically idealised 'small' in alternative agri-food, the approach that Fairtrade took under Lamb was to gain the reach of the large mainstream food sector, and to some extent remove the onus from the individual consumer. This approach is also described in Lamb's book (2008) aptly titled, *Fighting the Banana Wars and other Fairtrade Battles: how we took on the corporate giants to change the world*. The vocabulary of the title alone evokes struggle, battle and a conquering of the dominant global agri-industry. Whilst working simultaneously on consumer support for Fairtrade, there was significant focus on winning over and gaining access to the large food corporations, as explained in the extract above. Aside from Sainsbury's bananas, this tactic is also evident in Fairtrade's work with big global brands, amongst others, in confectionary, such as Cadbury's Dairy Milk, Nestle's KitKat and Mars's Maltsters, and with corporate chains, such as Starbucks coffee (see Lamb interview). As Lamb explains above, the "total shift" means removing the need for the consumer to 'choose' fairtrade and instead automatically be buying it regardless of their ethical or financial situation, by virtue of buying the household products they already buy habitually.

Lamb argues that Fairtrade's collaborations with global corporations, such as Starbucks and Nestle, are worth it because they have such dominant reach, and therefore the impacts can be on a much larger scale. This is in terms of actual fairtrade production, sourcing and consumption, which dramatically increase in quantity, but also the potential knock-on effects on both consumer awareness and support, and company policy and culture, whereby it can positively influence the way they operate more generally. These next two excerpts highlight Lamb's conviction. She explains one of their approaches:

> "*We developed a very ambitious plan called Tipping the Balance, which was about how we can tip the balance in favour of farmers and workers in developing countries… [when we said clearly], our objective is to tip the balance, and actually, we want to take three products to fifty percent of the UK market and we want to take five products to ten percent… that was the clearest articulation of the scale of our ambition and vision, and undoubtedly being able to do that helped people take us seriously, engage with us, and took us to the next level, it meant that companies like Sainsburys came in and did their big conversions and then we got Cadbury's and then DfID came in to give us significant funding, and I think it's often the case that if you share with people the scale of your ambition they actually wanna come in behind you… success breeds success, people want to be with something that's motoring, and they don't want to be with someone who's down in the dumps and small and tiny and got no ambition, so I think that did really help"* (Track 3)

Again, the large scale is emphasised. Lamb also reflects on how the level of ambition is important to the image – of the organisation but to some extent how she personally is perceived. This in turn drives greater buy-in to the concept and the movement.

Here, she reflects on an anecdote, which touches on reaching the wider public:

> *"My brother's much more, um, mainstream if you like, so that's also very interesting, I mean I'm always interested to see different people's reactions, and so when, for example, we first started working with Starbucks, and lots of the pioneering people were saying, eeeeeh you can't possibly work with Starbucks, and I remember that was the first time my brother said to me, 'wow, congratulations, how fabulous you're working with Starbucks', and so I think, ahh, haha, that's very interesting, that's where people who aren't thinking about these issues all day every day, will think, 'oh that's good, I can now get Fairtrade in Starbucks!'"* (Track 6)

Lamb acknowledges here the tension and criticism in working with a corporation with questionable ethical practices, like Starbucks. However, she also justifies it through addressing one of the very real challenges within alternative foods; that seeks to reach consumers who don't, for various reasons, prioritise such produce, seek them out and engage in the issues, or simply, due to financial resource constraints, are unable to purchase them due to actual or perceived higher prices. This helps to remove the limits of putting the responsibility to change the global agri-food system predominantly on the consumer's purchasing, and instead turn some of the accountability on the corporations. In turn this helps to move it away from a niche market and into the mainstream.

Similarly, in Compassion in World Farming (CiWF), Philip Lymbery aimed to break into the mainstream in order to change it. Where CiWF differs is that it does not have a certification label and therefore have products actively in the food economy. Instead, it works on campaigns and partnerships, ranging from legislation, policy, consumer awareness, industry awards and working with industry to improve their food production and sourcing.[26] Along similar lines to Fairtrade's total shift concept, this takes the responsibility off the consumer to be informed, committed and have the resources to make a (political?) purchase, and instead puts it on the food industry to address their practices.

Here he describes the development of that approach and some examples:

> *By the time I came back here as the CEO in 2005, I could really see that there was a huge rich vein of opportunity in engaging positively with food companies, with corporations, be they retailers or food manufacturers or the food service sector, the likes of McDonalds and Burger King… what I wanted to do was to spend a million pounds a year for the next five years on corporate engagement alone, so I needed to go out and sell this programme and its likely impact for animal welfare and crucially for food quality… I needed to be able to sell it to major donors… [describes deciding against a Fairtrade style certification model competing with non-Fairtrade products]… I wanted a programme which essentially said to corporations that, if you agree with us that cage eggs or battery chicken or mega dairy milk is bad, take it off the shelf entirely, and that's the model we adopted and it's one that's been hugely*

[26] See the CiWF website for further information, including in particular this page: https://www.ciwf.org.uk/contact-us/faqs-compassions-work/ (accessed on 16/1/2018)

> *successful for us. Sainsbury's now don't sell any battery eggs in Britain, they're moving all of their chicken lines to high-welfare chicken… it's a massive amount, you know, it's tens of millions of lives are gonna be better off through that one policy change… by taking this approach that if you agree with us that it shouldn't be, then take it all off, you're able to make strong headway… the great thing about the McDonalds model is that they've moved from being a relative pariah in the 1980s, they were being vilified really for some of their standards… in the 21st century they are pioneers in many respects, the great thing about McDonalds making these wonderful animal welfare stands on their pound saver menu is, if they can do it, anyone can. Indeed, we go to the government now and we're pressing them on their public procurement standards and saying, hey do you realise your standards are worse than McDonalds?!... the government respond to that."* (Track 5)

Lymbery justifies working with the corporates by quantifying the numbers of animals' lives who are improved, and how getting one surprising chain to shift, it has given them more clout in other areas of negotiation. Of course, some would balk at allowing McDonalds to claim they are pioneers of food quality and ethics, and would argue that they're using this to improve their corporate image. This sort of criticism is taken up at the end of this section.

7.3 Organic certification and mainstreaming

In comparison, the organic movement, being one of the oldest and most established within alternative food, led the way in certification. This has predominantly taken the form of organically certified produce offered separately and often in direct competition with conventionally produced counterparts. It has been under this system that it has integrated into mainstream markets, with considerable success. Data from Michelsen et al (1999) showed that over 70% of organic foods were traded through corporate retailers in the UK – higher than most other European countries. This continued to grow throughout the early 2000s, with substantial, sustained increases in general market shares until it slowed following the financial crash of 2008 – which in itself indicates how dependent it is on the prosperity of consumers.

The Soil Association has been the main driver of organic food and farming in the UK, engaging substantially in campaigning and supporting various initiatives. The Certification body of the Soil

Association, being the oldest in the UK, licenses over 70% of organic food on sale here.[27] It was also a significant leader in the strategy towards mainstreaming organic food, particularly through getting it into supermarkets. Freidberg (2004) looks at this process in her study, and provides insight into the relationship between the Soil Association and Sainsburys, as well as forays into overarching fair trade labels with the Fairtrade Foundation.

Here, Holden reflects on the process of mainstreaming:

> *"There are plenty of people out there who would say that the worst thing that ever happened in the UK was the Soil Association getting in bed with the supermarkets, and uh, the jury's out as to whether that will indeed prove to be the case. The argument, the sort of pragmatic argument that people like me used at the time was that, if we want organic production to grow, whilst, for as long as 90% of the population are buying all their food in supermarkets, unless we get organic food in supermarkets, we're going to be held back. And that led to active cultivation of the supermarkets, which I do, and did, think carries attendant risks. Because if you're not prepared to speak your truth for the sake of cultivating the relationship and getting cosy, or if you take money from them or all that sort of thing, it's becomes, you can be very, very easily compromised and conflicted, and I would like to think that that never occurred, happened to me, but there were lots of people that thought we were selling out, taking the money, neglecting the radical people, they could see that increasingly, even the organic food market was becoming sort of semi-intensified, only the large companies could supply, and those companies were not very principled, and all that kind of stuff, so I think that it was a rocky road at times… [story about Holden publicly denouncing Sainsburys over his own carrot contract with them]… I think there were people within the Soil Association who thought I'd gone too far… that it was too dangerous, because at this time there was a huge woo-ing, there was a lot of people within the Soil Association who thought that our relationship with the supermarkets was crucial, and we should cultivate this further, and not do anything to risk it… one of the main supporters of organic foods in the UK, namely Sainsburys, and Justin King, still the Chief Executive of Sainsburys, who I knew, and knew quite well, and got on perfectly well with, he was mightily displeased about this. And so people in the Soil Aassociation thought, well, you're risking your relationship here which could have consequences. And I think that is the perfect example of the dilemma that you*

[27] Taken from the Soil Association website: https://www.soilassociation.org/what-we-do/organic-standards/ (accessed on 16/1/18)

> *face if you want to practice constructive engagement with, you know, people that you don't see eye to eye with on everything. And I believe you should always practice constructive engagement with the enemy, you know, but you shouldn't sell out… the problem is… you will tend to get, you will meet, inevitably, dilutionary forces... The supermarkets never really, they knew so little about the whole system, they were never really interested, they just thought, we'll sell it because people want it"*
> (Track 10)

Holden highlights the *risks*, *compromises*, *conflicts*, *tensions* and *dilemmas* of working with the mainstream food establishment, acknowledging that it was not an easy process. He also refers to the base that they were seen to stand for originally as *radicals*, yet the corporates who they collaborated with as the *enemy*. There are also ethical dilemmas about *getting in bed with* and *selling out*, *truth*, *principles* and *dilution*. There were criticisms from both sides, from some within the organisation who wanted to push the supermarket approach, and some (the public?) who were against. In the end, he hadn't found a clear solution or concluded that there was a clear right or wrong.

With regards to the political side, and combining certification, campaigns and political lobbying, Holden discusses the role of policy and politics in mainstreaming:

> *"I did an enormous amount of lobbying of governments, to try and persuade policy, and the fact that we had a market sector which was significant, vastly increased our lobbying power, so I regarded the two as sort of joined at the hip. [Certification and campaigns] needn't be seen as separate, but as I've already discussed, I think the unintended consequence of promoting a market and trying to link policy change to the promotion of the system, which was, would enable the market to grow more, ghetto-ised the system of production that we'd always intended to become mainstream, rather than extended its reach into the mainstream, which would have been the ideal mechanism, and this was because conventional farmers, in their minds, and many policy makers and retailers, they decided that they would, in their minds, separate the organic sector, the organic market, the organic farmers, and put them in a kind of ring-fenced area, psychologically and in terms of policy, separate from mainstream agriculture. That was, and I think remains, a disaster on many levels, because really the original idea was to try to create a system supported by policy instruments which could be adopted by mainstream farmers, and that somehow stalled, very much so in the last few years… there's a systemic problem here of a lack of integration of thinking, let's say in policy*

> *terms, about the organic, the potential for promoting the organic market and for influencing the rest of the Common Agriculture Policy… it's held back, in a funny sort of way, the influence of thinking about truly sustainable agriculture on mainstream farmers, because it ought to be a spectrum, an integrated spectrum, but instead in the Commission's mind and in the organic movement's mind, it's become the opposite… in the early days, I don't think we could have done anything else, I'm talking about the 80s and the beginning of the 90s, we had to sort of carve out an area that was sort of demonstrably different and separate… in terms of really enabling a systemic change to happen, we failed, and I'm not sure that it was so much a failure of the, our powers of persuasion with ministers… I've become, not cynical, that would be too strong, but very aware… if you really want to change a system, you're never going to do that without getting the public behind you"*
> (Track 10)

Here, Holden is more regretful of the way things have turned out. He talks of *disaster* and *failure*, especially with regards to *systemic change* (yet, notably, is *not cynical*). Yet he also contends that there were few other options. The tensions are highlighted between promoting the organic market through certification and building the necessary public and consumer support, which gave them *power* and *influence*, and working on the political side through lobbying and policy. Holden describes the consequences where, instead of being *integrated* into the mainstream food and farming system, they were *separated*, they both succeeded in entering the mainstream and yet were excluded from it and the level where it really counted.

Whilst there has been substantial success in both real sales as well as growing consumer awareness and support of organic food and farming, it has encountered problems by mainly remaining as an alternative option, and therefore competitor, to conventionally produced food. Furthermore, the additional (and frequently unsubsidised) costs of production have largely been passed on to the consumer, creating what many have observed as the development of organic food being perceived and marketed as a luxury and niche sector, that subsequently fails to address food equity (Guthman 2014; Raynolds 2000; Kneafsey et al 2013). What's more, as Goodman concludes: "In the absence of consumer price subsidies and related institutional changes, alternative quality food production seems destined to retain its status as a narrow 'class diet' of privileged income groups" (2004: 13). This throws into question the potential to change the mainstream from 'within'.

The Soil Association have been increasingly taking a much wider approach through a number of strategies, such as Food For Life and various Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiatives, to redress this imbalance, the dependence on consumer commitment and resources, and the perception of organic food being a luxury and middle-upper class diet. Nevertheless, it is interesting to chart its journey of mainstreaming, which highlights some of the challenges and tensions of alternative food movements aiming for wider change in the neoliberal food system. Johnston et al (2009) analyse some of these complexities of the 'corporatization of organics', looking at how they have interacted and evolved alongside competing counter movements of food democracy.

Mara Miele, in her book published in 2001, provides a substantive study of the growth of the organic sector. It is the multiple supermarket retailers that are identified as the "main actors playing an increasingly active role in moving this consumption segment from niche to mainstream market." (Miele 2001: 38). What is interesting, however, is the change in strategy and values:

> "Associations approaching the supermarkets represent a crucial change compared to 10 or 15 years ago. At that time all actors (the producers, the associations and the people in the organic shops) were very clear that co-operation with the conventional supermarkets would be unacceptable, because those were the same retailers that had ruined numerous farms and small shops in the 1960s and 1970s through their rigid expansion and price policy. In the late 1980s more and more actors in the organic movement realised that if they really wanted to extend the percentage of organic production and bring it out of its niche, they would need the conventional supermarkets." (ibid: 76)

However, this of course came with a trade-off: "For some companies, especially food processing and catering companies, organic lines are starting to represent an important means of adding value to an otherwise stagnant industry" (ibid: 38). The realities of working with the profit-driven food industry mean that more ethically (socially and environmentally) produced food is only perceived as valuable and worth including if it brings more profit. Similarly, Raynolds joins others in her concern that the mainstreaming of movements like Fairtrade and Organic serve in part to boost market shares whilst undermining the movements' principles (Raynolds 2009: 1090, see also Low & Davenport 2005; Moore, Gibbon & Slack 2006; Raynolds, Murray & Wilkinson 2007; Guthman 2014; Goodman 2000).

Furthermore, in her conclusion, Guthman remarks:

> "Consumers are in effect asked to pay more to incentivize better production practices. This poses some thorny issues regarding equitable access to safer and healthier food. Those who can't afford to pay more are stuck with the dregs. Also, since many consumers are simply not able to pay more – least of all farm and food laborers, who are also consumers(!) – there is an inherent limit to what this market segment of enlightened consumers can do" (2014: 214).

The organic certification approach grew predominantly by placing the additional costs of better production at the point of purchase, therefore depending largely on consumer support and resources. This not only removed the onus from the wider food system to address and pay for its growing failures, but it allowed the manufacturing and retailing sectors to distinguish the produce and market it as an aspirational, superior and luxury option for those that could afford it, in order to turn a profit. As a result, as Guthman argues, this has meant the organic movement has been in danger of neglecting other ethical issues like social equity (as well as actually ignoring issues of social responsibility with regards to labour wages). This surely undermines the holistic endeavours of wider food systems change.

The story of organic mainstreaming is perhaps one of the best examples for highlighting the challenges and paradoxes inherent in an alternative niche aiming to alter the mainstream system. As Smith succinctly puts it: "niches are more likely to influence mainstream change when they show a degree of compatibility with the incumbent regime, yet this compatibility criterion blunts the scope for niches to be radically innovative, thereby undermining the degree of regime transformation being sought" (2006: 439).

Without being too harsh, this approach grew in part due to the Soil Association and other similar certification bodies beginning less as campaigning organisations. They served more to provide a support to organic farmers (see for example Francis Blake and Patrick Holden interviews on their early experiences of farming and involvement with the Soil Association), taking on the responsibility of certification due to a lack of interest from the government, and promoting the concept of organic. It was only later that the Soil Association became more heavily involved in campaigning and wider policy. These transformations and reflections on the shortcomings can be seen in the rather different focus today. As director of the Sustainable Food Trust, which Patrick Holden went on to found after leaving the Soil Association, his new raison d'être is incorporating the external costs and consequences of food production and consumption (e.g. pollution, degradation, health impacts, etc.). In recent years the Soil Association has also engaged in much wider-reaching campaigns and

programmes and away from such a focus on the market share in mainstream manufacturers and retailers.

7.4 The Living Alternative

> *"The key, the thing that links it all together are those trading systems, which are an alternative to the current ways of trading"*
> Julie Brown, Track 8

The concept of 'living alternative' came up multiple times. Most notably by Harriet Lamb and Julie Brown, although by no means exclusively. It took a number of linguistic forms beyond just 'living alternative', such as: *real alternatives, creating alternatives* and *alternative to*…. The essence of them all is that they are existing as tangible production and consumption systems in the global food economy.

In this section, I look at the concept of the 'living alternative', and in particular at the case of Growing Communities and its director, Julie Brown. This is an example of a food movement whose approach, in contrast to the 'mainstreaming' above, is not focused on breaking into the mainstream, but remains separate and small in scale.[28] Some of the other interviewees were working much more on campaigning issues, focusing, for example, on coordinating and supporting an array of issues (Sustain), or maintaining pressure against GM technology through the public and legislation (GM Freeze), or challenging through independent research and writing on a multitude of issues (Geoff Tansey). This means that they were not in the business of actually producing and selling food, and therefore aren't as suitable for analysis in this section on providing a 'living alternative' through example and existing in the real economy. I find focusing on one particular example (rather than multiple), similar to Fairtrade and Organic above, is a good way to explore an issue with more detail and utilise the rich data gained from an oral history approach.

[28] There are of course overlaps, because one of the fundamental principles of Growing Communities is being organic, therefore this is one of many examples of organic operating in a non-mainstream way. There are indeed many activities that organisations such as the Soil Association lead on similar notes, such as Community Supported Agriculture.

I draw on the work of Little et al (2010), and in particular, their use of Seyfang and Smith's (2007) 'grassroots innovation' – comprising "novel, bottom-up solutions" which culminate in the creation of "new 'systems of provision'" (Seyfang and Smith in Little et al 2010: 1799). They also employ Gibson-Graham's (2005) 'diverse economies' in order to explore the wider range of emerging ideas on food and citizenship, rather than the dominant neoliberal and market-led focus (Little et al 2010: 1799).

I argue that Growing Communities fits into this concept of a 'grassroots innovation', and considering it amongst wider food movements addresses some of the 'diverse economies'. In contrast, to some extent, the 'mainstream' approaches of Fairtrade and Soil Association aim to challenge and transform the existing, predominantly neoliberal, market-led food systems by entering into them.[29]

It is interesting that the concept of the 'living alternative' appears in two quite different approaches. As explored above, one of Fairtrade's key strategies has been to penetrate existing mainstream food systems. Of Fairtrade, Lamb states: "[in FT] you are creating the living alternative" (Track 3) and "we have always believed that in FT, it is our role to create the living alternative, to create change here and now" (Track 4). It is one of the parts of the movement that Lamb finds most exciting and rewarding, proving that parts of the global food system can operate in a different way, and showing that through example.

Growing Communities has a number of programmes locally in Hackney, London, which all interlink. These range from urban farming plots, community supported agriculture, apprenticeship schemes, farmers markets and vegetable box schemes. Although it had some start-up funding, the aim was to become a financially viable business, which it has been for a number of years. Brown describes here the rationale for what they do, an opposition to the mainstream:

> *"It's interesting about this sort of, the big business versus the scale, I was thinking that, the issue that I have is that, that big business, globalisation, corporate, I haven't got a problem with little bits of it, what I've got a problem with is it dominates and forces out everything else, and all of the other things it's forcing out are the things that I think are the ecological solutions, not just the ecological solutions but the community solutions, the humane solutions, the solutions that are gonna give us decent lives… [humanity] couldn't survive in*

[29] I do not mean that 'mainstream' is their only approach, they also do a great deal of work focusing on more diverse and small-scale ways to challenge the current food system status quo, but I refer to their strategies particularly focused on penetrating existing mainstream food systems.

> *the worst case scenario, so there's no point even thinking about it, what I'm working towards is the best case scenario, which is something where we do rise to this, we do manage to sort out alternatives, we end up having decent lives and decent communities… it's not to do with how much food we can grow, it's to do with how we run our societies and what we aim for and what we aspire to"* (Track 7)

Brown sees that what they do is a multi-faceted alternative, not just to the dominant means of food production, but to the ways it relates to the wider environment and societies. This is in spite of, or regardless of, it being of a small scale. There is also an undertone of what Little at al call the collective belief that 'we can do it better', which "appears to be a guiding factor in these attempts to provide proactive and creative responses to a perceived need to for alternative provisioning" (2010: 1811). It is part of the 'living alternative', developing a tangible, different and better way of being and doing.

What is also interesting in this quote from Brown is how she talks about multiple solutions – ecological, community, humane. She speaks to a holistic ethical agenda, a moral economy (Thompson 1971; Scott 1977). Whilst there are parts of the work of Fairtrade and the Soil Association that address and promote overall health in people, society and planet, their strategies focusing on the mainstream systems are more limited. Where this differs from the Growing Communities approach is this more explicit focus on 'decent lives', demonstrated in the microcosm of a living alternative.[30]

There are also comments about Brown's motivation and optimism (including struggles with remaining optimistic), as discussed in chapter 4, when she mentions 'best case scenario', as well as other comments throughout. Here, Brown describes how she sees the value of Growing Communities:

> *"In terms of the actions that I do, we, Growing Communities do real actual real practical stuff, you can see it, and I just think, ok, that's the hope… there's creating alternatives, which I think Growing Communities is doing… I think that creating alternatives is really critical at the moment… I like creating something real and practical, and I like something that's*

[30] Growing Communities is endorsed and certified by the Soil Association and is an example of the many wider initiatives that aim to address both social and environmental aspects of food systems. However, I look here at Growing Communities as an entity and food activist movement in itself, independent of the Soil Association and broader organic movement.

> *working with actual money that exists in the actual economy… and [the economy] needs massively challenging… big picture small picture sort of practical thing, fitting into a bigger theoretical framework"* (Track 7)

And later on in the oral history:

> *"It's about doing business in a different way, it's about redefining what business is and what it means, and also it's about that whole idea of what profit is and what profit isn't, and not being motivated by personal profit and personal gain, but absolutely getting that you need to make money… the economy, it's the thing that we really really really need to challenge"* (Track 9)

The emphasis surrounding alternative is on *real*, *action*, *actual*, *practical* and *creating*. This is in the context of a relatively small operation, but that aims to demonstrate a totally different system co-existing in the real world. Whereas some of the approaches of Fairtrade and Organic have been to enter the mainstream without fundamentally changing its core, in hope of what I would describe as hijacking it. Growing Communities aims to prove that a totally different way of doing things, throughout the whole food chain and on environmental, economic and social fronts, is possible. The comment on *doing* business in a different way, *redefining* it, again highlights the action and the example, and fundamentally questioning and challenging the status quo. As Little et al argue, the "motivation to make provision for purchase and distribution outside of conventional food networks both indicates a will to enact creative interventions and underlines the role of collective purchasing as a mechanism for proactively professing a level of dissatisfaction with the existing system." (2010: 1803). It is both a protest and an action, and on a scale larger than the individual, which is much of the essence of what activism is, as discussed in chapter 1.

Some would consider the more grassroots initiative of Growing Communities and similar organisations a more truly alternative 'alternative', and speaks to the criticisms of those such as Belasco (2006) regarding the corporate assimilation of the counterculture. Of course, these movements are not without their challenges and drawbacks, especially with regards to the scale of influence. Here, Brown reflects on the potential wider effects and the scale of their operation (I return to a larger excerpt of a quote used earlier in discussing motivation and optimism):

> *"In my biggest sort of fantasies, mad kind of ruling the world scenarios… the foundation for social entrepreneurs, who helped us set up the first stage of the start-up programme, and I had to, I worked out how many groups we had to have within how much time to get 10% of the food market, and it was like, I dunno, 4,000 or something, and then I tried to work out how many Body Shops Anita Roddick had managed to set up before she died and how, ya know, it's almost quite funny, interesting to do those kind of exercises, and now at the moment we have 9 potential, we have 5 trading groups and 4 more setting up, so it's 9 so it's slow. And part of me, what I need to work out for myself is, well what does that mean for me? What does that mean for me in terms of what I want to do – is it significant enough? And what the hell else would I do that's gonna be more significant? Ya know, if I still want to be trying to be in this game of changing things, and I suspect that even no matter how low or how tired I might get that I just can't not be in it… there's a dollop of significance in there, it's not gonna be the whole answer"* (Track 7)

Here Brown reflects on the limits of what they do, and how she justifies that. Whereas the likes of Lamb, in Fairtrade, face criticism for working with food corporations and not being radical enough in challenging their entire system, smaller community initiatives like Growing Communities face criticism and self-doubt for, whilst providing a comprehensive alternative, not being on a big enough scale to have wider influence and change the likes of the corporates. These criticisms are also addressed in the next sub-section of this chapter. In discussing the Body Shop and calculating scaling up, Brown is contemplating her aspirations and whether she would want to be like Anita Roddick. Operating on a much larger scale would align more with the mainstream approaches to effecting change, and Brown questions whether the scale Growing Communities is currently at is *enough*. This reflects the complexity and tension of size and impact inherent in the mainstream/alternative debate and the compromises that each entail.

Little et al (2010) argue that including these sorts of inclusive, grassroots innovations, which Seyfang and Smith (2007) suggest create new systems of provision, is important when analysing the broader world of AFNs and ethical consumption. Along with the more well-known movements like Fairtrade, incorporating smaller, community led/focused initiatives, addresses Gibson-Graham's (2007) 'diverse economies', where the issues are not only framed through the already dominant neoliberal market, but allow the lens on global food systems and their ills to take a different form.

Indeed, Brown emphasises the importance of the social role it plays:

> *"Community-led trade, that's the term that we've tried to coin for what it is we're doing, it's about putting the responsibility back into the trade, and stepping up and stating, actually, we're going to decide what, who we trade with and how, and that we're only going to do certain things that meet certain principles and certain standards, and then we're gonna pass on that food at a fair price, and we need as many of you in our community to support us with that… so it's sort of the trade and the food that run through it all but there's so many different elements to it too, so many spin-offs, other things happening in terms of that kind of intangible community side of it, which, and that's also really important, is to build community, to foster community, to foster a sense of being involved in something that makes a difference actually, something that matters, if only in a tiny tiny way"* (Track 8)

There are several points to address here. One is the importance of 'meaning'. Brown refers numerous times throughout her oral history to 'significance' and doing something that 'matters', as also referred to in chapter 4. This stretches beyond the food itself and into the social world it exists in, the community.[31] The wider positive social benefits to the community is an important part, indeed a core focus, of Growing Communities, whose name obviously acknowledges this. The remark on *putting the responsibility* on the trade itself and about a *fair price* speaks again to a moral economy. The monetary cost cannot be seen in isolation, but value how it is produced and traded, and must take into consideration the wider ethical implications to ensure it operates in a just system.

This quote also reflects the way that food is a unique vehicle through which to explore many issues in the world. Its distinctive position of essential life substance, socio-cultural anchor, ecological player and bodily ingested matter, means that it can cross many boundaries. Particularly through organisations such as Growing Communities, food, as Little et al state, is "recast as an active agent in the cohesion of wider society" (2010: 1808).

[31] The themes of significance and meaning were common to all the interviewees to varying degrees and played an important role in their motivation and identity, which I have explored to some extent in chapter 4. I have not addressed this issue fully in this thesis with regards to activism, although it is an important one. It perhaps warrants further analysis given the scope.

7.5 Critiques

Whilst I have touched on some of the critiques encountered by the various approaches taken by the food movements examined in this chapter, it is useful to bring them all together here. The ultimate question faced is whether any of the various approaches and alternatives actually change the wider food system, and more than that, the political economic system that it is entrenched in. Whilst there has been exponential growth in some areas in the past decades, the proportion of the market occupied remains relatively small. For the mainstream approaches, do they genuinely challenge the dominant modes of agricultural production and global trade? For the smaller approaches that remain a niche alternative, do they have significant influence for a wider knock-on effect? Whilst the existence of, and demand for, alternative modes of food production and consumption represent a critique of conventional practices, they often also embody "the inequalities of the global food system" (Johnston and Baumann 2015: 4).

Looking at the example of Growing Communities, which can implement its ethics throughout its operations, I question whether the smaller, more independent systems are limited in their locality. Are they able to scale up, especially with regards to the social, political and economic environments they exist in? Equally, on the other end of the spectrum, with certain products under Fairtrade and organic becoming more dominant as part of mainstreaming approaches, do they fundamentally challenge the dominant system? Has there been significant tangible change in broader international trade as well as production? Or, do they remain trapped as a niche within it? Or, are some of the principles compromised at the expense of expansion?

Sonnino and Marsden (2006) and Maye and Kirwan (2010) call for a more nuanced analysis than the dualism of the alternative and conventional divide within food studies. I hope that I have already represented some of the tensions the interviewees themselves are caught between with their work in the murky waters between alternative and mainstream. Here I aim to bring some of the wider critiques from the literature into consideration regarding these tensions.

Guthman's (2014) seminal work examines how organic farming in California has fallen short of its transformative ideals, which is not a lone voice in criticisms of organic generally. Amongst various points, she criticises the certification system of organic, which although it takes different forms in different parts of the world, is common to all organic production. Whilst not attacking producers

directly, Guthman highlights the issue that growers voluntarily abide by the set standards and are certified against them by an outside party, which is returned through a price premium. However, this of course means that the consumers have to pay more, and if they won't or can't, there won't be the wider conversion to the organic farming method that the movement aims to create. It is ultimately vulnerable to the market, which is a product of the dominant economic system.

On the issue of price, Guthman argues that organic has not been inclusive by depending on passing the cost onto the consumer. This relates to arguments from Raynolds, who comments that, to transform our exploitative global agro-food system, alternative production and trade initiatives, "must go beyond the realm of consumer politics, where individuals with discretionary income make positive purchasing decisions, to the realm of citizen politics, where people make positive collective decisions about the nature of acceptable production and trade practices" (2000: 306). Indeed, this was problem was touched on by quite a few of the interviewees. Philip Lymery, for example, stated:

> *"The inbuilt assumption is that poor people can't afford decent food because they're income poor, and that assumption is made in developed countries, in relatively rich countries… UK for example… it's actually a shame, it's a shame on the nation to have people in developed countries who are food poor, it is doubly shameful, then, for us to assume that just because people are poor, they also have no morals, they also have no ethics, that seems to me to be patronising in the extreme"*
> (Track 5)

The problems of inequality and poverty, and the economic dependence of participating in 'ethical' food consumption, is the focus of growing food justice and food equity movements (see for example Windfuhr and Jonsén, 2005). Recent studies in the UK look at food security (for example see Kneafsey et al, 2013), and the growth of food poverty and food banks, such as Caraher and Cavacchi (2014), Dowler and Lambie-Mumford (2015), Lambie-Mumford and Dowler (2014). It is also reflected in the work of the Food Ethics Council, which published a report on food justice, combining the expertise of a wide range of sectors, including some of the interviewees and their colleagues (FEC 2010). Issues around access, equity and food poverty are also addressed to some extent by some of the other organisations represented, notably FoodCycle and Food For Life. This is an area of focus which has grown considerably in the last few years within food activism, partly due to the economic crash of 2008, austerity regimes and widening inequality, all accompanied by a proliferation in food banks, food poverty and sales of 'ethical' produce taking a hit.

Beyond the organic movement, there are many criticisms of AFNs falling victim to appropriation by the corporate food industry for their own gains. This is seen increasingly with ethics and sustainability being used as tokenism in branding and corporate social responsibility. Belasco (2006) laments the aims of the counterculture related to food, where he argues that the corporate food industry saw an opportunity for a diluted version and, avoiding substantial reform, employ their marketing resources to capitalise on new markets. Renting et al (2003: 408) also acknowledge that, whilst there are significant degrees of success, there are examples of AFNs "which can fall victim to appropriation by retailers and other agribusiness concerns". Within the European context, they particularly highlight the UK, with the fact that around 70-80% of organic food is traded through corporate retailers. Goodman (2000) argues that this increased corporate control potentially pressurises producer prices and dilutes the quality of standards, in turn undermining and compromising the very principles of movements such as organic.

This concern is particularly relevant in light of recent trends where smaller, independent and ethically focussed companies are bought out by large, multinational corporations. During this process it is often cited that one of the main motives is to have a positive impact from within on the ways the corporate food giants operate. See for example the case of Green and Blacks, first bought by Cadburys, which was subsequently bought by Kraft Foods (now rebranded as Modelez), and recently Pukka Tea bought by Unilever[32]. Yet, it remains to be seen whether their place in these large global companies has had any real effect, which begs the question of whether, despite intentions otherwise, they are therefore simply supporting the current status quo. Whilst there are some exploring this area, for example Doherty and Tranchell's (2007) case study of the mainstreaming of The Day Chocolate Co (Divine Chocolate), there is a lack of research on the effects of smaller ethical companies being bought out by large corporates.

This leads to the criticism of what Trauger and Murphy (2013, drawing on Campbell and Le Heron) refer to as the 'audit culture'. Through the case of banana exports from the Dominican Republic to the UK, they argue that the certification process used in organic, and similarly in Fairtrade, can result in political, economic and environmental outcomes that are inconsistent with original standards and principles. When trade is on an international scale, which is inevitable for many staple food products

[32] See for example the article on the Pukka Tea acquisition: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/pukka-unliver-tea-brand-buy-takeover-pg-tips-a7933921.html

such as bananas, the certification allows for the extension of the supply chain. The "standards often reduce organic production from complicated and place-specific processes to a series of must-haves and not allowed", but this can result in facilitating "the neo-liberalization of the food system", as corporations manoeuvre to meet the minimum standards required for certification (2013: 208).

This ties in with arguments about embeddedness, whereby part of the need to challenge the industrial global food system is to reconnect producers and consumers and embed the environmental and social implications (Raynolds 2000; Kneafsey et al 2008; Watts et al 2005). The mainstreaming of products and systems like Fairtrade, or marginally improved welfare standards of animal source foods in corporate food chains (e.g. eggs from layer hens in McDonalds, lobbied by Compassion in World Farming), is prone to losing what Raynolds (2000) terms 'embeddedness', which she argues is necessary to challenge the dominant agrifood system. She explains thus:

> "Theoretically it is in the process of capitalist exchange that commodities become abstracted from their human and natural roots, so that price becomes their dominant characteristic. To socially and environmentally re-embed agricultural production would thus appear to require not just alternative products, but alternative marketing links." (Raynolds 2000: 306)

She compares Fairtrade and Organic, and whilst in other works remains critical of Fairtrade, concludes that:

> "By building alternative networks of solidarity between agro-food producers and consumers, fair trade initiatives encourage the participation of disadvantaged farmers and thwart the entry of transnational corporations seeking only to profit from lucrative new niche markets. In contrast in the organic sector, where trade is left to conventional market forces, marginal producers are typically excluded, while transnational corporations are permitted to appropriate the value added by organic labels without adhering to the movement's underlying social and environmental values." (Raynolds 2000: 306)

However, it is worth noting that there is an array of mediums which Fairtrade operates under, which muddies this water somewhat and relates to the point about audit culture. As Raynolds herself examines in later work (2009), using a commodity network approach in the case of coffee, she identifies a variety of motives and priorities, from accessing additional markets to enhancing traceability and improving overall social and environmental outcomes. The sharpest challenges come

from “market-driven buyers who vigorously pursue mainstream business norms and practices”, such as dominant coffee brand corporations, who she concludes “limit their Fair Trade engagement to public relations” that, whilst complying to the label standards, still promote price competition and supplier manipulation, and ultimately still seek “buyer domination” (Raynolds 2009: 1091). As is also argued by Jaffee and Howard (2010), the existence of a replicable certification scheme allows dilution of the principles and practices and enables corporate control and appropriation, maintaining ‘business as usual’.

On the mainstreaming process of Fairtrade, Raynolds eloquently sums up some of the wider challenges, concluding:

> “Fair Trade has come to represent an important counterpoint to the ecologically and socially destructive relations characteristic of the conventional global food system. Yet this popularity has simultaneously put pressure on what was once an alternative commodity network to become part of the mainstream market, incorporating conventional business norms, practices, and institutions.” (2009: 1083)

Concern prevails that the mainstreaming of AFNs and more ethical and sustainable production serve in part to boost market shares whilst undermining their movements’ principles (see also Low & Davenport 2005; Moore, Gibbon & Slack 2006; Raynolds, Murray & Wilkinson 2007; Guthman 2014; Goodman 2000). Freidberg (2004) adds to the debate on the other side, with her study of the pressures supermarkets were put under by the NGOs and popular media, acknowledging a significant shift in their supply and trade of more ethical produce as a result, but which present an ethical complex. She draws out some of the geographical limits that are navigated when trying to address and reconcile both local and global issues, referring to Evans’s (2000) concept of the ‘polanyi problem’ of globalised capital, which identify the failure of ‘protective movements' to “regulate capital very effectively beyond the national level” (Freidberg 2004: 528).

The studies and evidence on AFNs presents one of its inherent problems relating to scale. By nature, their form and focus are based on being small entities and short chains, thereby an alternative to the long, complex chains of the dominant, industrial food corporations. Like Raynolds (2000) argues with ‘re-embedding’, Renting, Marsden and Banks (2003), amongst others, argue that this is what can make them challenge the agri-food status quo, by re-socializing and re-spacializing food, and connecting consumers with the locations, methods and people of its production. This therefore

makes scaling up – replicating and/or expanding in size – problematic, and the opposite of what it represents. This challenge is examined further in studies by Beckie et al (2012), Friedmann (2007), Nost (2014), Johnston and Baker (2005), and Johnson et al (2016).

Considering a more positive note, Renting et al argue that these movements are not entirely marginal and have developed substantially throughout Europe, where Short Food Supply Chain trajectories "have become key elements of rural development." (2003: 408). Relevant to enterprises such as Growing Communities, they maintain, "the very process of shortening food supply chains, at least partly, engenders new market relationships which are built around new forms of association and institutional support" (ibid). Little et al also contend that these sorts of groups, "represent an important form of agrifood network and, crucially, may also offer greater room for consumer voice and action, capable of animating ethical consumption practice" (2010: 1798). And whilst the mainstreaming approaches have their many faults, they have broadened the debate and put pressure on the current status quo, "creating a stronger alternative to our conventional corporate dominated world agro-food system" (Raynolds 2000: 306).

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined some of the different approaches that activist food movements have taken to push their agenda for change in the global agri-food system. With examples from the oral history data from fair trade, organic, animal welfare and community social enterprise, I have explored the tensions, nuances and challenges faced in aiming to change the mainstream food system, and to make alternative food systems mainstream. The evidence from my own data, as well as the wider literature, demonstrates the significant challenges, complications and compromises inherent in this endeavour. Whilst the interviewees largely remain positive, and certainly committed, they are faced with moral dilemmas and unintended consequences, and they are up against enormous, powerful, deeply engrained existing systems.

This chapter adds to the debates around alterity within food systems and geography studies more widely, including exploring the tensions between concepts of alterative and mainstream. Similar to the alternative economic and political spaces explored in the edited book by Fuller, Jonas and Lee (2010), alternative food movements are alive and kicking, some of which are explored above.

However, they are imperfect, evolving and growing, and it is important to remain critical to aid this progress. The multiplicity of approaches and enterprises demonstrates diverse activisms, taken from Gibson-Graham's (2005, 2008) diverse economies concept and applied here to food activism. They do not fall simply into either alternative or mainstream, but create a wealth of ways in which to address food systems.

Chapter 8

Discussion and Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I begin by returning to my research questions and consider to what extent they have been addressed and how. I then include a discussion about the value and limitations of the oral history method in researching food activism. Following this I summarise each chapter of the thesis, the main issues explored and conclusions drawn. Taking account of all of this, I present my overarching conclusions from the thesis and what it has contributed to the wider literature, disciplines and debates. Finally, I consider future research directions.

8.1 Return to the Research Questions

Looking back at the research questions I developed in the first year during the planning phase, on the whole they were suitable, guiding and have largely been addressed. They helped me to frame the main debates, bring a degree of focus and consistency to the interviews, and structure parts of my analysis.

The first research question pertains to how British food activism can be defined, specifically the degree of overlap and collaboration (or disjointedness), the changes and shifts from alternative to mainstream, and the impacts of food activism. This was addressed to an extent in all the main empirical chapters. Whilst it was not a chief and systematic focus, many collaborations, overlaps and friendships were referenced throughout the interviews, although I did not expand on them in detail in the thesis. However, there are essences scattered throughout, such as the changing relationship between the Soil Association and Compassion in World Farming, noted by Philip Lymbery in chapter 5. I believe it is also evident in the testimonies that many of the interviewees increasingly understood and connected the wider and integrated nature of food systems issues as they progressed through their careers (see especially chapter 6). Having said that, there were also many places where there was little consensus amongst them. Chapter 7 directly addressed the tensions between alternative and mainstream, capturing some of the challenges, approaches and changes that have taken place. It was also a theme in chapter 5. The ‘impacts’ of British food activism are

hard to define and to measure, and I was not clear in the question what I meant by 'impact'. The concept of impact touches on the issues of alternative and mainstream, and perhaps is reflected in the 'professionalisation' that arose at various points. This question should have been phrased differently/clearer, or perhaps removed altogether.

The second question deals with food, identity and activism, asking if there is something particular about food engaging the physical, emotional, social and political realms, how activists (interviewees) define themselves in relation to food and how it features in their lives, and how their other identities may interplay. The central chapter that answers this is chapter 6, looking at the interviewees' changing relationships with food throughout their lives and how this interacts with their politics, as well as the other influences that brought them to food, such as social justice, environmentalism, etc. Chapter 6 also looks at their (reported) consumption practices. Identities are also addressed to a lesser extent in chapters 4 and 5, looking at outlook and image in relation to food activism. I had originally developed further sections related to specific identities such as class and gender, but felt in the end that the data was not substantive enough in comparison to the rest. However, many of the topics, such as religion, gender, health, social class, etc. are discussed to greater and lesser extents in each of the interviews.

The third research question interrogates the method in its contribution to understanding the first two questions, particularly the extent to which it is a useful method in researching food, activism and identity, the advantages and limits of the method, and its ability to explore the relationship between private, public, personal and professional. I refer to some of these points in the methodology chapter (3), and to an extent in chapter 6 on food and identity. However, they are more directly expanded on in the above discussion section (8.1).

8.2 Discussion: oral history and narrative as method for researching food

Given that the research method itself was such a crucial and influential part of the project, my third research question addressed it directly. Here I consider what oral history can contribute to understanding British food activism, its interplay with identity, the advantages and limits of the method, and especially its ability to explore the relationship between the private and public, personal and professional.

The everyday nature of food means that it is generally a given in terms of topics covered in oral history life story interviews (see for example 'Life-Story Interview Guide' in Thompson 2000). This makes food a highly suitable subject for exploration, including as secondary data (see for example Jackson, Olive and Smith 2009). Having said that, I made a concerted effort to ask about this topic throughout the interviews, and it featured more than it would in standard life story interviews. An overt focus is normally seen as negative in oral history, because it is seen to be at the expense of exploring the person's life in the round. However, in the case of this project, given that food is such a key part of life, as well as their profession, it was bound to dominate more than normal.

The insight afforded by the individual, narrative approach of life stories in relation to identities is particularly unique. I believe this enabled me to explore the triangle of food, politics and identity that is of interest to food activism. The relationship between identity and food is well established (Caplan 1997; Pilcher 1998; Cherry et al 2011). As is the relationship between identity and activism, both of individual identity and of group identity (Klandermans 2015, 1997; Zomeren et al 2008; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2007; Sturmer et al 2003). I was particularly interested in how the everyday nature of food, including its bodily ingestion, shapes and is shaped by the political engagement in food issues, and how this informed and was informed by multiple identities. This was chiefly what I explored in chapter 6. The rich, personal insight of the life stories was especially valuable in this respect. It was possible to explore each interviewee's relationship with food, which was by no means uniform (as illustrated in sections 6.5 and 6.6). Furthermore, the method enabled me to trace the gradual but significant changing relationship with food throughout their lives and, particularly, with regards to their changing politics and involvement in food movements. This illuminated the role of time-place in shaping those changes.

Food, politics and identity in the case of food activism calls into question the dubious boundaries between private, public, personal and professional. If the personal is political, then that is especially so for those working in social movements. Oral history has been used to explore and demonstrate how engagement in socio-political movements has deep impacts on many aspects of individuals' lives. For example, as seen by work on the women's liberation movement (Jolly 2012), bakers in France (Bertaux 1983) and labour and political activism (James 2000). This was reflected in my own research, where people 'ate their politics', attempting to practice in their private, personal lives, what they preached in their public, professional roles (again, see chapter 6). Largely due to the

method, I believe this thesis provides insight into these dynamics in the lives of the interviewees from British food activism.

The oral history life story method provided individual accounts of experiences of food activist movements in the UK. In addition to the above, this also included insight into their motivations, emotions and group identities, which is valuable when considering understandings of social movements from a social psychology viewpoint. What was also provided were personal descriptions of specific events, projects and changes over time from the standpoint of particular organisations and/or food movements. For example, understanding the rationales behind certain approaches and campaigns, and the network of other people (especially friendships) in influencing activist projects and programmes. Of course, as is always the case in oral history, and any individual, subjective account, the value is not so much in the historical accuracy, because there are always multiple truths, but in the narratives told (Samuel and Thompson 1982). Because this project focused on collecting voices from a range of food activist movements, rather than one particular organisation/movement – for example through multiple interviews providing different perspectives within the same organisation – it is even less able to provide historical accuracy. However, it does offer a broad insight into multiple organisations and movements in Britain.

Oral history both facilitates and limits the role of contextualisation. Each interviewee provides rich context to their own life, through a combination of their personal accounts of experiences and references to the wider socio-political world. However, being their personal perspective, it is not always more broadly applicable unless cross-referenced with other sources. Furthermore, oral histories are not reliable as the sole resource to comprehensively understand particular historical and societal changes, due to their subjective nature and the 'multiple truths' that exist (Thomson 2006). Their value is, instead, as an expression and representation of culture (Passerini 1979; Frisch 1990).

The topics of food and work are inherent in oral history due to their fundamental roles in daily life. Therefore, they inevitably feature in the life stories of those working in food activism. Having said that, to be captured well and expansively, I did feel that it required concerted focus during interviewing, given that the purpose of the oral histories was to create a collection on British food activism, and to provide the rich data for a PhD thesis. This has implications for secondary use of the data, where it would be important for researchers to understand the motives behind the oral histories (Moore 2007; Mauthner et al 1998, amongst others).

Depending entirely on what people say in an interview setting also means that you can only accept what they share in that particular moment. This is one of the greatest shortcomings of the method. For example, there were various instances in which people shared additional information or opinions with me 'off record' but which, of course, couldn't be incorporated into the data for ethical reasons, and won't be represented on the public record. It is also well known that what people say and what they do is often very different, which happens largely on a subconscious level. Relying solely on oral histories means that only conscious, verbal and public versions are captured and included in data and analysis.

8.3 Summary of the Thesis

The first chapter sets the scene for the thesis, starting with a brief overview of why food systems are of interest and importance, the place of food activism and what the research and thesis set out to do. I begin with some background to the project, highlighting the collaboration between the British Library and Sheffield University. Notably, the British Library's oral history collections in the sound archives, of which some are focused explicitly or implicitly on food, but the lack of representation from the political, alternative and activist side. This was one of the chief motives in funding the PhD project, an outcome of which was a new public archive in oral history on food activism. I then outline some of the background to food movements in the UK, from colonial era, through to recent food scares and reactions to productivist industrial agriculture and neoliberal global trade, spurring a range of activist movements such as fairtrade, organic and animal welfare, and some of which I study through the interview data. I also provide some background to the oral history life story method, noting its ability to explore narrative identity and the blurred lines between private, public, personal and professional. This is relevant to Margaret Somers' (1994) argument about how identities are narrated for a specific audience, with elements of plotting and other narrative devices. The value it offers in understanding patterns of social change from individual perspectives, and its roots in 'giving voice' to marginalised groups is also highlighted. A second section of the introduction examines the concepts and definitions of food activism/food activists, looking at the work of Counihan and Siniscalchi (2014) and Alkon and Guthman (2017). For the purposes of the thesis, I defined it thus: food activism and activists include all those who have sought to mobilise society in

opposition to the dominant industrialised system of food production and allied processes of mass consumption. Chapter 1 concludes with an overview of the thesis.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the main literature and debates that are most relevant to the thesis – disciplines, topics and methods – to help identify the gaps and frame the debates that it contributes to. The main areas include: geographies of food, food activism, social movements, and oral history. The geographies of food literature has grown enormously over recent decades, as the hybridity of the discipline lends itself to the diversity and complexity of food systems. In particular, there have been extensive studies of alternative food networks, geopolitics, short and long food chains, and notions of alternative and mainstream, with particular attention to theories of embedding connections in food between producers and consumers, and more recently on visceral politics and experiences of food. Whilst there has been use of oral history within food geographies, there is little looking at food activism specifically. On food activism literature, I cover the principal studies on specific food movements and issues, such as organic, fairtrade and food sovereignty, as well as the main publications on food activism in general, which take studies of predominantly grassroots initiatives from around the world. There is a substantial lack of work on British food activist movements and few using oral history to research food activism. On social movements, the scholarship has been dominated by political science, social theory, political philosophy and sociology, with recent New Social Movements work arguing for the importance of understanding multiple identities and wider contexts. I also mention the literature from social psychology, which has studied the role of motivation and emotions to understand why people participate in social movements.

The oral history life story literature is really a discipline of its own, and I outline its progressions since the 1970s when it was a less respected form of historical research. In particular, I outline the key works and debates relating to agency, collaboration, memory, narrative, power, subjectivity, reflexivity and context. I touch on the issues of oral history as secondary data and briefly reference some of the uses of oral history to study activism, before outlining the studies focusing on food, including those collections held in the British Library. Again, there is little oral history that focuses specifically on recent British food activism. Having considered the relevant bodies of literature, I conclude the gaps noted and the contributions my research will make, which lead me onto the research questions.

In chapter 3, I describe in detail the methodology. This begins with some background on the oral history and life story method, before providing context to the research project. This is largely on the role of the British Library, the intended use of the recorded interviews as a public archive, and the gaps the Library seeks to address – namely to explore Britain's food movements of the recent past to the present day. I outline some of the additional methods and data that supplement the main oral histories – existing relevant oral histories in the British Library (which are provided in Table 1), and elements of ethnography. The next section describes the sampling and participation process, from how and why proposed participants were identified, to contacting and interviewing them, and Tables laying out who was interviewed, when, where, their roles/organisations and what area of food activism they'd worked on. There are two diagrams (figures 1 and 2) providing a visual representation of British food activist issues, and how the interviews fit in with them. Table 4 also provides information about each organisation, taken from each organisation's website to provide context to how they present themselves. Next I describe some of the practicalities of the interviews, such as the total lengths, how sessions were navigated depending on location and time available, and the broad structure of each life story interview. Following this I explain how I went about collating, analysing and interpreting the data, through the function of 'summaries' (rather than transcriptions), performing thematic analysis through coding, and developing chapters for the thesis. Penultimately, I include a section on nuances, reflections and reflexivity, including information about my own past and interests in the topic, any existing relationships with interviewees, building rapport and reflecting on dynamics, how the setup may have affected interviews, how the understanding about the project may have affected it, and some reflections on interviewing an immediate family member. Finally, I describe the ethical approval, implications and procedures adhered to.

The first empirical chapter, 4, looks at activism and outlook, exploring the interviewees' motivations, momentum and positivity. In particular, it explores how they navigate optimism whilst working on challenges of such a large scale. I draw on theories within social psychology to understand how factors like efficacy, injustice, personal and group identities, and emotions, including anger and hope, can attract people to participate and stay in movements. I explore some of the narratives around challenges, change, significance, journeys, fixing, belief, (dis)satisfaction, action and visions. The use of historical successes is often employed to maintain hope, inspiration and justification, from significant global events like abolishing slavery to more recent past successes within their own movement. Looking at their dreams and faith in change, each one navigates the realities and their optimism differently, inevitably having to confront it. The narratives of positivity are also taken beyond the personal and into their organisations, where some interviewees have played a particular

role in organisational cultures. This is recounted in the language of their campaigns, to highlight the importance of having positive colleagues, and creating and instilling that positivity.

Chapter 5 continues to look at activism but this time with a focus on image – both the personal and organisational images that were crafted. The concepts of performance, looking the part, self-presentation and impression management by Goffman (1956), Butler (1990), McDowell (1997) and Skeggs (1997) are of particular relevance to this, as well as noting the trends of social movements formalising and professionalising. There are overlaps throughout the chapter with the concepts of alternative and mainstream too. The data evidences how some organisations carefully present a larger and more powerful sounding version of themselves in their quest to be more influential, and the ways the interviewees can shape the physical spaces in which they work to instil organisational values and strategies through 'performing' them. Some of the interviewees reflect on the importance of the impressions they give through their appearance, particularly clothing, with regards to being listened to and taken seriously, for example by appealing to the perceived mainstream. Some were highly conscious of, and made concerted efforts to, look smart and 'professional', especially in trying to distance themselves from 'hippie' associations, in order to be taken seriously and further their causes. Others described their struggles with this. I end by contemplating whether this is changing with younger generations, who are perhaps moving to more casual appearances, as reflected by a couple of the interviewees, although I didn't have substantial data on it due to the limited nature of the sample.

The sixth chapter examines the relationship between food, politics and identity. Considering whether there is something different or special about food, especially as an activist issue, I begin by looking at the pervasiveness of food in everyday life, and how this permeates the interviewees' lives, as well as how it affects their activist work, engaging people on something that is experienced everyday, personally, and bodily. I then consider whether activists are 'foodies' and the relationship between foodie-ism and activism. Next I explore the politicisation processes that interviewees experienced, and how their interest in food issues shaped, or was shaped by, wider political issues and identities, such as interest in conservation, environment or social justice. This then leads into discussions about their actual, personal food consumption practices, and how these are influenced by their political work, where they figuratively live out and eat their morals and politics. I consider this with relation to Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy's (2008) concept on visceral food politics, and Bourdieu's (1977) habitus. I include an example on vegetarianism, demonstrating the range of issues, attitudes, beliefs and practices that the interviewees exhibit, with careful, considered, and

informed decision-making being the only consistency. This leads me onto a final discussion about the extent to which British food activism is a united and holistic sector, or rather more disjointed, with conclusions that, whilst there is increasing shared understanding of the wider food system's web and collaboration, it remains a challenge.

The final empirical chapter, 7, focuses on the tensions between alternative and mainstream. It explores the different strategies and challenges, starting with considering the thin line between aiming to change the mainstream whilst not compromising the alternative values and systems represented in the process of becoming the new mainstream. I then look at several different approaches, beginning with some of the corporate focuses of Fairtrade and Compassion in World Farming, before analysing the certification approach within organic, and then the living alternatives of more community scale initiatives of Growing Communities. I conclude with looking at the extensive critiques of the various approaches and the inherent challenges they each face, breaking down the alternative/mainstream dualism that in reality is much more nuanced and complex.

8.4 Conclusions and Contributions

This oral history study of British food activism has explored themes of food, politics and identity, the place of optimism and image within activism, and tensions between alternative and mainstream. I have argued that understandings from social psychology are useful in analysing the motivations, efficacy, personal and group identities that exist amongst those working in food activism, and help to understand their relationships with hope, anger, optimism and pessimism, including narratives of positivity within their work and organisations. Theories about performance, looking the part, self-presentation and impression management also contribute to framing the ways that the interviewees craft and are aware of their image. This feeds into their own personal image, managing external relationships and impressions of their organisation and sector, and their workplace space, in order to be 'taken seriously' and further their cause for change. There are significant overlaps with perceptions about alternative and mainstream that are navigated through image.

I have argued that, whilst not all the interviewees were particularly passionate about food itself in their own personal consumption, it was still a unique medium for political action, engaging through its everyday, material, bodily encounters, feeding into/from their activist work, and representing

their political identities. It was a key part in processes of politicisation, and was interconnected with wider identities such as environmentalism, social justice and animal rights. Their work within food activism also constantly and gradually altered their own consumption practices to reflect their work and their food politics, where they all considered their choices very carefully. However, there was not consistency in what and how they ate, calling into question the extent to which the food activist movements are holistic, integrated and united or more disjointed. Finally, in exploring the tensions between alternative and mainstream, I have analysed the different strategies that activist movements have taken, and the challenges inherent in each, as they seek to change the mainstream food system through various alternative solutions. In these endeavours, they are often at risk of replicating or falling victim to the very system they oppose, or remaining an outlying niche, and rarely can they tick all the boxes whilst working within the current neoliberal global system.

I conclude that the method of oral history life story interviewing is valuable in exploring the nuances between food, politics and identity, and the supposed barriers between private, public, personal and professional, which are particularly dubious within activism. The narrative approach of individual, subjective testimonies from the inside of parts of food activism affords deeper insight into both wider social issues and cultural trends, and shines a light on areas less explored within food activism, such as image and food and identity. It does not necessarily provide accurate data on particular events and changes, or ways to measure 'success' of food movements, but that is not the method's chief value. Indeed, "the testimony that results is of interest not so much in terms of its historical accuracy… but in terms of what it reveals about the subjectivity of the person whose history is being recorded. Notions of myth and memory are therefore central to the method (Samuel & Thompson 1982)" (Jackson et al 2011: 4). This study, employing oral history, is therefore not so good at measuring and analysing the *outcomes* of British food activism, but capturing the *experience* of it from the inside. It provides insight into the connections between individual and collective politics. As Schrager (1998) remarks, the contents of oral histories are often narrative in style, with stories that have been repeated and modified over time. He argues that this means that the role of oral history is in individual biographies that speak to bigger social issues and trends.

This study is different from many existing activism studies, for example on social movements from political science, and studies that compare cases of grassroots activism across the world, or case studies of particular movements/organisations. Rather, using the oral history method to look at food activism through narratives and biographies from individuals within movements, including topics like personal motivation, or image, which may appear futile versus the global issues addressed by their

politics, these actually situate individuals in the wider social contexts. This is relevant and important, providing a different window through which to look at wider food movement issues such as alternative and mainstream, food and identity, notions of and different types of activism.

Through the particular combination of British food activism and oral history, this thesis offers a different lens and new contributions within several different existing literatures. It provides the oral history literature with richer data and insights into activism and food, and especially in British food activism within the British Library public archives. This combination of method and topic is also unique within geographies of food, where it contributes to debates about food, politics and identity, and tensions between alternative and mainstream, but through the lens of oral history and individual biographies of some of the people instrumental in shaping challenges to global food systems. It is unusual in offering a narrative, life story approach to social movements, and particularly on food activism, provides a focus on a wide range of movements in British food activism through oral history, with predominantly 'professionalised' movements. This is a region and method that has not been well represented within the literature on food activism.

Finally, with regards to the discipline of geography, this thesis has looked at a number of concepts and debates that extend beyond the topics of food, activism and Britain. The method of oral history allowed for a distinctive consideration of time-space horizons. The life story, being a historical perspective with a longer time frame, draws from experiences of childhood to the present day, situated in a wider socio-political context, including stretching before the individual's existence. When combined with the focus on their activist work, it also uniquely looks to the future and the longer term changes they hope to be part of, often beyond their own lifetime. Talking to individuals caught up in wider social movements brings together a combination of individuals in society, changing trends over time, and future orientations, capturing a substantial time frame through the oral histories that is rarely afforded in other branches of geography.

The focus of the food activist movements also speaks to concepts of space and place, particularly relational scale (see Massey 2005 on space). The issues within food activism address both local and global scales, and the connections between them. Indeed, doing away with a simple local or global scale, the interviewees and their work cut across boundaries, where the issues relating to food had far reaching effects on people and the planet, whilst also depending on local participation and impact. Whilst they were all based in the UK, their work was as much international as it was local.

This has been explored more widely in geography in the fields of commodities, value chain approaches and 'follow the thing' (Cook et al, most recently 2017).

Theories of identity were particularly popular in geography and the social sciences more widely in the 1980s and 1990s. I mobilised these at various points in the thesis on the topic of food activism, but they speak to wider debates around identity. Notably, chapter 4 in relation to ones' political identity in the context of collective action, and in chapter 5 on the presentation of the self and impression management, and the fluidity and interconnectedness of multiple identities. In chapter 6, the topic of food and politics explicitly was examined in relation to identity, with the unique visceral experience of food, and the way it combines with and shapes politicisation and living out ones politics. Of course, there are many more geographical concepts that this thesis speaks to, but these are a handful of the ones I have identified and addressed within its scope.

8.5 Future Directions

There were many other themes and topics that could have been explored and developed from the data, to a greater or lesser extent. These include for example, food and social class, the dynamics and experiences of gender relating to food activism, and race – or rather, lack of racial diversity. Food activism in Europe and North America is observed and criticised as being predominantly white (see for example Guthman 2003, 2008a; Slocum 2007). This was also evident in my sampling, and struggles to find non-white interviewees (Kelvin Cheung, a Chinese-Canadian, was the only non-white interviewee). The general dearth of discussions about diversity in the interviews was striking, even when I raised it. There were various interesting discussions about social class, assumptions and changing identities, which could have been expanded upon with more scope in the thesis. All these topics warrant attention and could be developed further, but would benefit from additional data, both from within and outside oral history.

Though I have largely highlighted the merits and value in the oral history method, there are, of course, limits to it also. Whilst it affords substantial contextualisation at the individual level, it is more challenging to access the wider socio-political context of food activism. For example, I listened out for references to wider contexts, but they were still only heard from the perspective of single interviewees. More was revealed about how wider socio-political dynamics affected the individuals

than the other way around. For example, some interviewees described the impact of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament on their political awareness, or their involvement in punk or hippie cultures. But the oral histories only provide the subjective experiences of individual interviewees, making it difficult to map this wider picture from a purely personal perspective. This was particularly the case in my sample, where there was mostly just one person interviewed that represented a particular movement/organisation.[33] There were also many other organisations and movements that were not represented in the oral history interviews at all. Depending on the research aims, this could be remedied with supplementary data from grey literature, newspaper accounts, meeting minutes, etc. to thicken the narrative. This would probably work best in the form of an in-depth study of just one organisation/movement/issue.

As I mentioned, the use of field-notes from elements of ethnography was very valuable. Further participant observation could add deeper insight and help to move beyond relying only on what people say, to incorporate also what they do. For example, this could work particularly well in the analysis of food practices, as explored in chapter 6. It could also thicken narratives, including organisational cultures, on the other main themes explored – outlook and image, and alternative/mainstream tensions.

Given that this study was quite novel in looking broadly at British food activism through oral history, there could be similar studies on wider European movements, and/or global food movements. Studies could also be combined with additional methods and existing data, such as in measuring some of the impacts of movements, or looking at the behavioural side in more depth, or ethnography, as mentioned above. It would also be interesting to use the method for a more in-depth study of just one movement, interviewing multiple members from different roles and eras, for example.

As the oral history life stories now sit as a public archive in the British Library, I hope that they may also be used as secondary data in future studies, and it would be interesting to see what topics and themes are explored. I also hope that they are added to with more interviews with people working in food activism, enrichening the archive further.

[33] I addressed this somewhat with the double-interviews of Sustain (Kath Dalmeny and Jeanette Longfield) and the Soil Association (Patrick Holden and Francis Blake).

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Appendix 1: Oral History interview invitation letter

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

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THE WORLD'S KNOWLEDGE

The University Of Sheffield.

Receiver address
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Date

INVITATION LETTER

Dear XXX

I am writing to invite you to be interviewed for a new oral history project on British food activism, a collaboration between the British Library and the University of Sheffield. The project involves recording the life stories of a range of people involved in food activism focusing on their work over recent decades until the present. As well as forming the basis of my doctoral research, these recorded life story interviews will be archived at the British Library's Oral History department in the National Sound Archive. These will be made accessible, in accordance with the interviewee's wishes, to the public. The interviews, therefore, will form part of an invaluable resource for future generations.

Given your knowledge and experience of XXX amongst much else, we believe that your life story would be an invaluable contribution to the historical record. I would be delighted if you were willing and able to be interviewed as part of this project.

Background to the Project

The British Library Sound Archive has a significant oral history collection. In 1997, in recognition of how dramatically food production and consumption have altered within living memory, the library instigated an oral history project called 'Food: From Source to Salespoint' to collect the life story recordings of food producers from across Britain. This project has resulted in over 200 oral history recordings. These histories record the experiences of people who have witnessed and contributed to the many changes in the food landscape. The library is looking to expand this collection to include representatives from alternative food sectors and food systems and my research aims to use these recordings to explore developments in British food activism within living memory. I am conducting approximately 20 oral history interviews for this project, and it has been ethically approved by both the University of Sheffield and the British Library.

The Life Story Method

Life story recordings are usually made over two or three sessions each lasting 2-3 hours, at the interviewee's convenience. They can be conducted at the interviewee's home or office, the British library or in any other quiet space. The interviews will be conducted by me. I appreciate you are very busy and would, of course, accommodate to fit in to your schedule. No preparation is needed as the interviews take the form of informal

conversations, covering biographical material as well as looking in detail at your career and involvement in food activism. The aim is to produce a recording with which the person interviewed feels entirely happy.

During the recorded interview sensitive topics and personal experiences may arise, but you are not obliged to discuss them if you feel uncomfortable. Many people find the life history process reflective and enjoyable. However, if you feel that there is anything that you are not happy about that occurred during the discussion (i.e. you would like me to withdraw personal information or responses made), or with the research programme as a whole, please do not hesitate to speak to me directly after the session, or subsequently. If you have a serious complaint that you would like to address to a higher authority, I will give you the contact details of my supervisory panel at the British Library and The University of Sheffield.

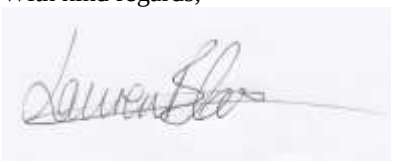
Participation and Copyright

In order for the recordings to be accessible in the British Library you will need to sign a Recording Agreement copyright form once the interview is complete. This Agreement sets out the terms on which you will make the recording available publicly. If necessary, the recording, or sections of it, can be closed for any time period up to 25 years to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. You may willingly withdraw from participation in this research at any time during the recording process and you do not have to give a reason for such withdrawal. During the recording process you can refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from any discussion. You may withdraw consent for me to use information from your recording in future work at any time through contacting me personally. A summary of the interview will also be written for the British Library sound archive catalogue, which will be available to the public electronically. You may request a copy of the recording, although I anticipate that this will not be available until 2014 at the earliest.

For your information I attach the British Library's leaflet about Copyright and Deposit of Oral Histories, as well as a copy of the Recording Agreement. If you would like to look at the British Library's webpage for the National Sound Archive the address is http://www.bl.uk/soundarchive, the British Library oral history page is http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/sound/ohist/oralhistory.html and previous interview projects can be viewed at http://www.bl.uk/nls.

I very much hope you will be able to be part of this exciting new archive of food movement voices which will be preserved in the British Library's National Sound Archive for many years to come. I will contact you shortly but if you would like to contact me sooner and/or if you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch by email or phone. I look very much forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,



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Appendix 2: British Library leaflet on depositing Oral Histories

The deposit of your oral history recording at the British Library

This leaflet explains:

- How your recording or interview will become part of the British Library's collections
- The forms we will ask you to complete to ensure we can provide public access to them in accordance with your wishes
- How people use recordings at the British Library

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world's greatest research libraries. It provides world class information services to the academic, business, research and scientific communities and offers unparalleled access to the world's largest and most comprehensive research collection. The Library's collection has developed over 250 years and exceeds 150 million separate items representing every age of written civilisation, among which the oral history recordings are considered vital to the Library's intention to preserve the nation's memory.

As a statutory charity, the British Library is most grateful for contributions, such as yours, to help to build, improve and enhance its collections. These collections are cared for by a team of professionals: their priorities are to select, preserve, research and provide access to them.

Your oral history recording will become part of the national collection cared for by the British Library. The audio recording itself and its associated documentation will be kept in secure environmentally-controlled conditions, and research access will be provided to generations of students, academics, family historians, journalists, writers and many others for years to come.

The British Library's Sound Archive

The Sound Archive holds over 3 million sound recordings. They come from all over the world and cover the entire range of recorded sound from music, drama and literature, to oral history and wildlife sounds. The Sound Archive catalogue, http://www.cadensa.bl.uk, is updated daily. It is one of the largest catalogues of its kind anywhere in the world, covering both published and unpublished recordings. Visit the Sound Archive section on the British Library website for more information: http://www.bl.uk/soundarchive.

The Oral History collections

Oral History is a powerful means of collecting and preserving the unique memories and life experiences of people whose stories might otherwise have been lost. Few historians, researchers, teachers and students can now afford to neglect the insights that oral sources provide. Our mission is to capture as many voices as possible from across Britain. The oral history collections cover a huge range of topics encompassing diverse voices, from artists to steelworkers, doctors to postmen, Holocaust survivors to authors. Visit the oral history section on the British Library website for more information: http://www.bl.uk/oralhistory.

Many oral history interview projects are led by National Life Stories, an independent charitable trust based in the oral history section. Visit http://www.bl.uk/nls for more details.

The Oral History Recording Agreement

At the conclusion of an interview, each interviewee is asked to fill in an Oral History Recording Agreement.

What is this form?

The form is a legal agreement whereby each interviewee confirms their consent for the recording to be made and archived, designates ownership of their copyright in the recording and stipulates any desired restrictions to public access. Recording this information in a short formal document is in the best interests of both the interviewee and the Library.

The Oral History Recording Agreement:

- formalises our agreement
- establishes any special provisions for the use of and access to the recording;
- specifies ownership of copyright and underlying rights

Before you are asked to sign this Agreement, the oral history interviewer or member of oral history staff will talk through the document with you, explain each part and will be happy to answer any questions you may have. The completed Agreement will then be signed by you, or your legally appointed representative. You will be given one copy, countersigned by the interviewer or by another authorised representative of the British Library Board, as your record of our agreement. The Library will retain the other signed copy of the Agreement.

The Oral History Recording Agreement establishes and confirms a legal relationship between you and the British Library Board. This relationship is also based on trust and a shared understanding of the terms of the agreement: it is therefore very important that you raise any concerns you may have about anything included or omitted from the Oral History Recording Agreement before it is signed.

Key elements of the Oral History Recording Agreement:

1. Permission to record
The Agreement confirms your willingness to take part in the recording made and archived by us.

2. Public access to the interview
The Agreement allows you to specify how researchers can use your recording – both now and in the future. If you wish to restrict access to all or part of your recording there is space on the Agreement to specify these restrictions.

At present, summaries of recordings without access restrictions are usually made available on the Sound Archive Catalogue via the internet. Until recently all users needed to come to the British Library to listen to your interview, which limited access to those who had the means to travel to the British Library. In line with most public archives and libraries, many of our open recordings are now becoming available online through the British Library website, subject to interviewee consent.

The Sound Archive is also approached by broadcasters (particularly radio journalists) who wish to use excerpts from the collections.

If you have particular concerns please discuss this with the interviewer or BL oral history staff member.

Your options are:

- If you do **not** wish to impose any access restrictions, then simply leave this section of the Agreement blank.
- If you **do** wish to restrict access to the recording – in its entirety or particular parts – please specify this in the space provided.

You are required to give an end date to each restriction you specify. In most cases a maximum closure period of 30 years is appropriate.

3. Copyright

The Oral History Recording Agreement contains a statement whereby the interviewee assigns their copyright in the recording to the British Library Board. Clarity around ownership of copyright is central to the Library's ability to provide services that meet the demands of 21st century researchers, such as digital storage and web-based access. Copyright in the words spoken on the recording lasts for 70 years after the year of a speaker's death, so documenting copyright information at the completion of the interview is vitally important.

Almost all interviewees assign their copyright to the British Library Board, as they trust that the British Library will make use of their recording in an ethical and responsible manner and comply with any access restrictions specified. The Library is a strong supporter of author and creators' rights. Assignment of copyright does not affect your moral rights, that is your right to be identified as a contributor and for your contribution to be protected from derogatory treatment which might damage your reputation or the integrity of your contribution.

A small number of interviewees decide to retain their copyright in the recording. This means that no public, published or broadcast use can be made of the recordings without the interviewee's written consent, although such recordings will be accessible at the British Library for private research and non-commercial use only (assuming there are no access restrictions imposed).

We ask interviewees to bear in mind that when interviewees retain copyright this can create considerable difficulties for the British Library. The British Library may lose contact with an interviewee (or, after their death, their relatives or estate), which would prevent the interview being used for published research in the future.

Your options are:

- If you are happy to assign your copyright to the British Library Board leave the Agreement as it is and sign it at the bottom.
- If you wish to retain your copyright in the recording, please strike through the relevant sentence on the Agreement. Then choose one of the following options regarding the duration of the retention of copyright and write it in the space provided:

a) I retain my copyright in the recording until 20XX after which I assign copyright to the British Library Board. I undertake to keep the British Library informed of any changes in my address.
b) I retain my copyright in the recording for the duration of my lifetime after which I assign copyright to the British Library Board. I undertake to keep the British Library informed of any change of address.
c) I retain my copyright in the recording. I undertake to keep the British Library informed of any changes of address and to keep the Library updated with the address and contact details of my next of kin and solicitor.

4. How will the information on the Oral History Recording Agreement be used?

The conditions that you have agreed or asked to be met with regard to your recording will be included in the entry made for your interview in the Sound Archive Catalogue. Such information will be of value to people wishing to include your interview in their research while ensuring that any restrictions you have requested are made visible and upheld.

All personal information about you or any other living individuals recorded in the agreement will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that it will be held securely and used **only** for the following purposes:

- Legal purposes, for example as evidence of ownership;
- Internal administrative purposes, for example to contact you or your appointed representative for matters relating directly to your recording;

- Research, for example as a record of the provenance and history of the recording;
- Collection management purposes, for example to compile a catalogue record.

As a public body, the British Library is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This gives members of the public a statutory right of access to information held by a public body. While your personal details will not be released without your consent, other information recorded on the form may be released, for example the date the form was signed and the catalogue number.

IMPORTANT NOTE:
If you have requested an embargo or closure for all or part of your recording, it is **not** possible for anyone to request access to the closed material under the Freedom of Information or Data Protection Acts.

Frequently asked questions

1. How can I find a recording on the Sound Archive catalogue?

Once your recording is catalogued you will be able to find the relevant catalogue entry by searching the Sound Archive catalogue http://www.cadensa.bl.uk. This catalogue is available on the internet, but at present internet search engines such as Google cannot search within the catalogue itself. This may change in the future.

2. How can I listen to British Library material?

Onsite access to oral history recordings
We serve a wide range of users including researchers, historians, social scientists, journalists, academics, general users including family members and friends of interviewees. At present, for anyone to access material in the Sound Archive on-site at the British Library they need to register for a British Library reader's pass. Upon registering a reader must give a reason for using the British Library and a current home address. This means that, if necessary, we can trace who has used the collections.

To apply for a reader pass you will need to visit the Reader Admissions Office at the British Library in St Pancras. You will need to bring two pieces of identification, one to show your address and the other to prove your identity. For opening hours and further information visit: http://www.bl.uk

Once a reader pass is acquired listeners need to make an appointment with the Listening and Viewing Service http://www.bl.uk/listening. Please contact the Service in advance and quote the catalogue references for the recordings you require.

Many digital recordings are also available via the *SoundServer* a computerised listening facility located in the Humanities Reading Rooms. *SoundServer* is also available at the British Library's site in Boston Spa in Yorkshire. For further information about visiting the Boston Spa site, please contact the Listening and Viewing Service.

Internet access to selected oral history recordings

The British Library 'Sounds' website http://sounds.bl.uk gives remote access to hundreds of oral history recordings. Some of these are currently only licensed to Higher and Further Education users in the UK, others are available for full public access.

Further contact details:

The British Library
96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB
Website: http://www.bl.uk Telephone: 020 7412 7000

Listening and Viewing Service
Email: listening@bl.uk Telephone: 020 7412 7418

Oral History section
Telephone: 020 7412 7404 / 7405 / 7406 Email: oralhistory@bl.uk

Appendix 3: British Library Recording Agreement form

Oral History
British Library Sound Archive
96 Euston Road
London
NW1 2DB
020 7412 7404
oralhistory@bl.uk

ORAL HISTORY RECORDING AGREEMENT

You have been asked to give a recorded interview for the purposes of a Project entitled "Food Activism: An Oral History of Recent British Food Activism" (the "Project"). This is a Project being run in close collaboration by the British Library and the University of Sheffield, and is funded and ethically approved by these institutions. Recordings of oral histories are integral to the British Library's intention to preserve the nation's memory. Your recorded interview will become part of the national collection cared for by the British Library, where it will be preserved as a permanent public reference resource for use in research, publication, education, lectures, broadcasting and the internet.

Your recorded interview will be used by the Library for the purposes outlined in the Invitation Letter which accompanies this Agreement. Please read this Letter before signing this Agreement.

The purpose of this Agreement is to ensure that your contribution is used for the purposes of the Project and added to the collections of the British Library in strict accordance with your wishes (as outlined in more detail in the Invitation Letter), and to provide the British Library with the necessary permission and assignments in order to use your recorded interview.

This Agreement is made between **The British Library Board**, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB (the "Library") and **You** (the "Interviewee"):

Your name:……
Your address:……..

in regard to the recorded interview/s which took place on:

Date(s):……..

Declaration: I, the Interviewee, confirm that I consented to take part in the recording and, in consideration of being asked to contribute in such a manner to the Project, I hereby assign to the Library all copyright in my contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my moral right to be identified as the "performer" in accordance with the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988.

I, the Interviewee, also consent to the processing of my personal information (including any sensitive personal data, which I may disclose during the Interview) by the Library for the

purposes explained to me. I understand that all such information will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you wish to limit public access to your recorded interview for a period of years, or if you wish to impose any special requirements on the use of your contribution by the Library, please state these conditions here:

.....
.....
.....

If you do not wish to assign your copyright to the Library, or if you wish to retain your copyright for a period of time before assigning it to the Library, please state these conditions here (as explained further in the explanatory Invitation Letter):

.....
.....
.....

This Agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with English law and the jurisdiction of the English courts.

All parties shall, by signing below, indicate acceptance of the Agreement.

By or on behalf of the Interviewee:

Signed:.....

Name in block capitals:..... Date:.....

On behalf of The British Library Board:

Signed:.....

Name in block capitals:..... Date:.....

Appendix 4: Interview Guide

Interview Outline
To be used to guide and prompt the interview. To be adjusted for each interviewee.

Section 1 [1 hour 50 minutes] APPROX birth to age 20 (1970 to 1990)
This is LB, interviewing XX, on DATE, at LOCATION.

Opening question: As you know, we are using a life history method. So I want to begin by asking you: Using key words, if you were listening to an interview of your own life what would you want to be included?

Second question: I've introduced you as XXX. Is this the name you were born with? Did your name change? Tell me the story of your name? *(full/middle names)*

- When and where born
- Family (parents, siblings, extended family)
- Where grew up
- Childhood

School; home; early relationships; pocket money; friends; family meals; school meals; role of food in childhood; social class; family political stance; family morals; leisure/hols.

Wider socio-political refs: e.g. Thatcherism, counter culture/60s, fast food and ready meals emerge, Delia Smith's first TV show, microwaves/broiler chicken/caged egg-layers boom, BSE/drought/GM begins...

Section 2 [1 hour 50 minutes] APPROX ages 20-30 (1990s)
6th Form; University; early employment; politics
Relationships; homes; travels; clothes; pets; pleasures
Getting involved in food/politics?
Were there any turning points for you or things you consider influential?

Contextual details, e.g.: Boom of BSE and GMOs
Laws about animal welfare improve
1990 – Food Commission established
1992 - Fairtrade founded
1996 – Dolly the sheep is cloned
1997 – Tony Blair
1999 – Sustain launched

Section 3 [1 hour 50 minutes] APPROX ages 30s and 40s (1980s/1990s)
Work; events; political changes; social issues; demands; publications
Key friends and influences; home life; love life; family; social context
Thatcherism/Blairism, race uprising, miners strikes, peace protests, etc.
"Did the movement affect your attitude to your lifestyle, and food in particular?"
"What can you tell us about the movement across the UK?"
Individualise your interview guide by inserting here two or three lines of key biographical information to investigate.

Section 4 [1 hour 50 minutes] APPROX ages 40s and 50s (1990s and 2000s)
Work; love; family/children; life; travel
"What has been the impact of food politics on your life?"

Individualise your interview guide by inserting here two or three lines of key biographical information to investigate

Section 5 [1 hour 50 minutes] APPROX ages 60s, 70s, 80s (2000-present)
Legacy and overview. Work-life balance; activism and professional and personal life.
Ageing, health, partnerships, love and death
"Looking back, what do you consider was your contribution to food politics/the movement?"
"How useful do you think the life story method we have used has been in capturing the essence of activist food movement? Or your life?"
"How have you felt about the process of making this recording?"
"Do you have anything else you would like to add?"
"Do you have any messages for future listeners?"
Individualise your interview guide by inserting here two or three lines of key biographical information to investigate

1. Basics/background
    - Name
    - Born (date and where)
    - Parents (who, dob, job)
    - Siblings (who, dob, job)
    - Grandparents (who, dob, job)
    - Other significant relations

2. Migration (if relevant)

3. Daily life in childhood

4. Local community(ies) and class, identity (rural/urban)

5. School/education
    - Where, when, what was it like
    - Further/higher education

6. Lifestyle
    - Leisure, interests, relationships

7. Marriage and children

8. Employment (or after marriage/children?)
    - First job, subsequent jobs
    - Significant career moments, best/worst/most difficult
    - Specific work in XXX
    - Greatest achievement

9. Significant life changes / historical moments

10. Later life

11. Conclusions
    - Anything you want to add?
    - Lasting message/overview of your life

Source: http://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/index.php