Addressing whiteness and racism in the Alternative Food movement – lessons from participatory action research with two Dutch Food initiatives

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MSc Thesis Environmental Policy & Rural Sociology

Wageningen University & Research | 2022-2023

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Abstract

Alternative Food (AF) initiatives have sprouted in cities in the global north to address various social and ecological issues of the industrial food system. The AF movement aims to address local food insecurity by advocating for sustainable, local production and distribution. Despite striving after ecological and social imperatives, the movement is criticised to reproduce oppressions based on gender, ability, class, religion and race. Food justice scholars have called for specific attention on the way racism and whiteness pervades the AF movement. Common critiques are that the AF movement is dominated by white, privileged people who are ignorant of their privilege, replicates neoliberal narratives of consumer-responsibility and imaginaries that reify colonial, patriarchal settler-agriculture. To address the whiteness of their perspective and practices, AF initiatives should explicitly commit to anti-oppression ideology, recognise and learn from the legacy of food justice initiatives led by communities of colour and do the internal work of deconstructing of white ideologies and practices.

This study elucidates how two Dutch AF initiatives replicate and address whiteness and racism in their ideologies, food cultures, and practices. It draws lessons from the different approaches between an urban farm whose community is considered as rather white and privileged, and urban gardens organisation that was founded by a black woman, whose community consists of predominantly women of colour of whom many are underprivileged. In doing so, it draws from critical whiteness theory and black feminism and geography.

Through Participatory Action Approach, interviews and participatory observation, it was found that difference in intentionality about who to reach and how to build community, as well as the social patterns of migration, colonialism, class-privilege reinforces the whiteness of the ways of working, food cultures and community composition of the initiatives. It was found that knowledge and commitment to anti-oppression varied in the initiatives. Whiteness was observed in the form of resistance to embedding anti-oppression in their vision and practices, because it was associated with a trade-off between productivity and economic viability. Moreover, people at the first farm tended to view the other as a homogeneous group about which there were assumptions of black death. In addressing whiteness and racism, the need for building a shared commitment to racial justice and inclusion, and collective deconstruction of the way oppressions are internalised in the practices of the farm, was emphasised. Furthermore, being embedded in the social fabric of the local neighbourhood is essential, by building the relationships with organisations and local community members is essential for being inclusive to the communities living there. In this process, a humble, authentic attitude and willingness to share power are vital. After, this study discusses race, interacts with oppression revolving around class, gender and ability, and puts in the perspective of the wider, agricultural political landscape of the Netherlands. Lastly, it reflects on the limitations and provides recommendations for future research needed to advance insight into the way AF initiatives can transform their practices towards more liberatory ones.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and problem statement

A growing awareness of the interlinkages between the climate crisis, industrial agriculture and urban resilience has been growing in recent years. Alternative Food (AF) initiatives have emerged in the global north, attempting to address these intertwined issues. Through localising production, dependency on large-scale, industrially produced products that are distributed through transnational supply chains decreases. This way, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation associated with industrial growing methods, and carbon emissions produced by fossil-fuel heavy production and distribution is reduced (Ilieva, 2016). AF initiatives have the potential to contribute to a more just food system. Instead of relying on food produced under poor working conditions far away, it is done closer to home with more transparency on the working conditions (Agyeman & McEntee, 2014). Moreover, AF initiatives may enable communities that do not have access to fresh food to grow and distribute it themselves, and address local food inequalities (Glennie & Alkon, 2018).

However, food justice scholars criticise the AF movement for sustaining hegemonic values, practices and epistemologies, and replicating various oppressions based on gender, age, class, ability and race pervasive in society (e.g. Tornaghi, 2007 (European context); Darly & Clintock, 2017; Agyeman & McEntee, 2014; Chennault, 2021). Specifically, in the US[1], food justice scholars unpack how the AF movement is a movement of white, privileged people ignorant of their privileges, and how white views and ways of working are normalised, which marginalises the views and practices of Black and Indigenous people and People Of Colour (hereinafter referred to as BIPOC). Often, AF initiatives lack a vision and ideology that views racial justice as integral to food justice issues, increasing the chances this initiative perpetuates whiteness Chennault, 2012; Ramirez, 2017). Moreover, AF initiatives are critiqued to impose paternalistic, white saviour charity programmes onto BIPOC communities (e.g. Chennault, 2021; Slocum, 2007; Akon & McCullen, 2011). Moreover, the AF in the US, is based on imaginaries that reify colonial and white supremacist lines of thinking. As long as the AF movement reproduces these oppressions, food injustices and white hegemony are sustained (Sbicca, 2012). Based on these critiques, food justice scholars call for AF activists to deconstruct the way they replicate whiteness and racism, and explicitly commit to anti-racist ideologies and learning. AF initiatives should also build alliances with BIPOC-led food initiatives that have worked on food security and food justice issues for their communities since the civil rights movement (Sbicca, 2012; Chennault, 2012; McKittrick, 2011). These alliances can inspire new visions and practices that support struggles for BIPOC self-determination and collective liberation of all forms of oppression (Chennault, 2021).

Most of the literature on alternative food and racism and whiteness is based in the US [2]. However, racism and food injustices are different around the world, and there is a knowledge gap in the way it manifests in the European context. Consequently, scholars call for the provincialization of food justice research in the European context (Darly & McClintock, 2017).

All in all, while the AF movement aspires to transform the food system, it is perpetuating dominant ways of thinking and replicating various forms of oppressions (Slocum, 2007; Chennault, 2021).

[1] Most literature is from the US, in this paper, it is a US author unless specified]

[2] Literature searches using the keywords anti-oppression, racism, whiteness, colonialism, food, urban agriculture seem to only yield studies in the US. Black women in the US have built a body of knowledge on racism already for centuries, while Dutch anti-racist scholarship is a rather recent phenomenon (Essed, 1991a).

However, to be a vehicle for racial change, the AF movement needs to deconstruct the way it reproduces oppression, and transform its ideologies practices to more liberatory ones.

1.2 Objectives and research questions

This thesis aims to respond to the call of food justice scholars to highlight and deconstruct whiteness and racism in the AF movement, by trying to understand how whiteness and racism are present in urban AF initiatives. Simultaneously, this study aims to understand how white perspectives and practices can be shifted towards more liberatory ones. It does so by studying two urban agriculture initiatives, of which one was started by white food activists and the other one by a black woman.

Secondly, recognising that racism and whiteness manifest differently around the world, my thesis responds to the call to provincialization of food justice research to the European context (Darly & McClintock, 2017). It does so by studying two food initiatives based in Amsterdam.

How do urban food initiatives approach anti-oppression, racial inclusion and justice?

The following sub research questions will help me answer the main research question:

1. How are the selected food initiatives situated in classist and racist society?
2. How do the initiatives replicate or challenge whiteness in their ways of working, food culture, ideologies and views on BIPOC communities?
3. How could initiatives integrate racial justice and anti-oppression into their practices more?
4. What changes can be observed in the ways initiatives view racial justice and inclusion during the timespan of this thesis?

2. Background

This thesis focuses on race, but not restricted to race-based oppression. Various forms of oppression and privilege interlock and reinforce each other, which is called intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). Race cannot be studied in isolation from other forms of oppression (Billings, 2021; Neville & Hamer, 2001), but needs to be understood in the way it intersects with class, gender, ability, age and religion. Hence, this thesis aims to provide a more intersectional understanding of the way whiteness and racism are present in the Dutch AF movement.

In the following sections, I will delve into the background of the AF movement and its critiques, as well as a brief introduction to the racial dimensions of food, health and Dutch racism. This is followed by a conceptual and theoretical framework that underpins the methodology. The third section outlines the participatory action research methodology of this study. Section four, five and six subsequently present the findings, followed by a discussion and conclusion.

The past decades, a wide variety of alternative food initiatives have emerged in response to various environmental and social problems the global, industrial agricultural system has caused (Ilieva, 2016). The industrial agriculture system, relying on fossil fuel inputs for production and distribution of food, pesticides and monocultures, is considered to be a major contributor to climate change and biodiversity loss (Ilieva, 2016). The Alternative Food (AF) movement aims to provide an alternative to this, by promoting ecological production practices on a local level). Local, community-based economies aim to make healthy, sustainably produced food more accessible to urban dwellers, bridging the gap between food production and consumption (Meenar & Hoover; Agyeman & McEntee, 2014). (Meenar &Hoover, 2011; Agyeman & McEntee, 2014). The alternative food movement criticises the way the food system is dominated by global corporations who prioritise profit over worker's rights and fair distribution of food (Meenar & Hoover, 2011). Growing food on the local level, allows for more transparency on the production process and working conditions, AF activist advocate (Agyeman & McEntee, 2014, Glennie & Alkon, 2018) More recently, awareness about the disparities in access to healthy and sustainable food between privileged and underprivileged communities grew (Agyeman & McEntee, 2014). There are also AF initiatives that aim to grow and distribute food for communities that do not have access to this, and address local food inequalities (Glennie & Alkon, 2018; Guthman, 2008).

Although the AF movement responds to ecological and social problems the industrial food system perpetuates, critical scholars recognize AF initiatives are still prone to reproduce hegemonic power structures, worldviews and practices (McClintock, 2018; Ramírez, 2015; Reynolds, 2015). For instance, AF initiatives that are mainly concerned with environmental sustainability and local food, and less explicitly with social justice, have been criticised for replicating oppressions based on race, gender, ability, religion and class (Agyeman & McEntee, 2014; Guthman, 2008). These initiatives might propose solutions that are meant to be environmentally friendly, but still fit within a capitalist, racist and unfair economic system, or even greenwash this system (Agyeman & McEntee, 2014). For instance, the typical acts of "buy local" and "vote with your fork", as promoted by alternative food activists, still exist within a market framework that creates inequalities in the first place (Agyeman & McEntee, 2014). Moreover, increasing urban green spaces for food production may lead to eco-gentrification that pushes lower-income and BIPOC communities further out of the city (McClintock, 2018; Alkon, Cadji & Moore, 2019).

2.1 Critiques on the AF movement from a racial perspective

Food justice scholars have also highlighted the importance of studying the AF movement through a racial lens. The first reason is that food injustices occur along the axis of race. For instance, in the US, decades of racist policies and investment strategies, such as redlining, have inhibited the establishment of local enterprises, among which fresh food access points (Hope & Agyeman, 2011). Moreover, accessing urban land is a challenge. Accessing positions of power where decisions about land allocation are made, is easier for white people, who are more likely to have the social and cultural capital compatible with white institutions (Reynolds, 2016).

· Find better stuff on food injustices, ideally also in a EU context

Secondly, food initiatives unintendedly perpetuate racial oppression in their ideologies, assumptions about BIPOC communities and practices (Slocum, 2007; Jones, 2019; Chennault, 2021). The alternative food movement is dominated by a white, middle-class constituency (Agyeman & McEntee, 2014; Slocum) who create certain white spaces (Slocum, 2012).A space dominated by white people is often less welcoming for BIPOC. Saldanha (2007), who describes this phenomenon of white viscosity. The bodies of a certain race are drawn towards each other and stick together. This makes the space less permeable for people of colour and may code a space of white, even though some BIPOC bodies might be present.

Additionally, this group of white people has insufficiently considered how privilege shapes their practices and politics (Guthman, 2008). Neoliberal discourses pervade the AF movement, in a way that puts the responsibility for eating healthy and sustainably on the consumer (Guthman, 2008). However, having the time and resources to access more costly “good food”, organically produced on a small scale, is not a privilege everyone holds. The elite who can afford the “real food”, simply argues that people should be willing to spend a larger share of their income on food (Alkon & McCullen, 2011a). Moreover, by individualising the problem to someone’s own choice and responsibility, the systemic inequalities that cause marginalised communities to eat in certain ways, are not recognized.

Secondly, the imaginaries of what is good food are infused with white, exclusionary and colonial lines of thought. The imaginaries of good food coincide with the diets of white, privileged people who have access to grow their own food or can afford to purchase organic and locally produced food on farmers markets. White people’s notion of good food, tends to exclude the foods of migrant and BIPOC communities simply less familiar to them (Hope & Agyeman, 2014). Besides, the notion of “real food” that is *good*, also suggests that there is another end of the binary that is *bad* (Pakh, 2022). Bad food is the fast and processed foods that marginalised communities have more easily access to (Pakh, 2021). This way, through the imaginary of good food, the Alternative Food activists might reproduce a sense of white superiority.

Furthermore, a consequence of this division of good and bad food, is that it legitimises the judgement and saving of those who eat bad. There have been critiques on the way the Alternative Food movement has tried to “bring good food to others” (Guthman, 2008). To address food insecurity among those who ate bad, missionary style programmes emerged that would aim to alleviate hunger. These missionary-style programs have been criticised for relieving the symptoms, but not addressing the systemic causes (Guthman, 2008; Agyeman & McEntee, 2014; Slocum, 2007). Furthermore, it replicates paternalistic, and white saviourist dynamics in which white people impose a framework of

"real food" onto those who eat "bad food" (Agyeman & Mcentee, 2014; Alkon & McCullen, 2011a; Billings Jr., 2000).

Moreover, scholars have unpacked how narratives of "knowing the farmer" and who are "real farmers" romanticise a European past, heteronormativity and white settler culture. For instance, slow food activists in the US, imagine "the real farmers" as the small-scale farmers in the Romantic, European countryside, an imaginary also associated with nationalistic discourses (Alkon & McCullen (2011a). In the US, this translated into an image of yeoman farmers who settled with their nuclear family onto the so-called "empty land". This image romanticises the imposition of European farmer ideals onto landscape that was colonised. It erases how the frontier of hard-working, white, settler farmers, with the man as head of the family who cultivates his deserved land, went alongside the dispossession and genocide of indigenous people (Pahk, 2022). It reifies the colonial erasure of indigenous growing practices and the notion of "terra nullius" (empty land), as well as normalises land ownership that is typically in the hands of white farmers (Guthman, 2008; McClintock, 2018).

· Find something about EU context

This imaginary is reinforced by the fact that at the nowadays farmer's markets, it is white people or white farm owners who sell the food, despite oftentimes not actually being involved with work on the land. This way, they represent "the real farmer", while the farmworkers, predominantly Latinx, remain invisible (Alkon & McCullen, 2011b)[3].

2.2 Overshadowing BIPOC-led food initiatives

White, privileged people dominate AF initiatives. However, zooming out to larger urban discourses, these Alternative food movements are better represented in the media and spaces of planning and policy-making (Reynolds, 2016). However, this is critically reflected upon by food justice scholars, who highlight that BIPOC communities have a much older legacy of urban food provisioning for food security (Sbicca, 2012, Reynolds, 2016; Chennault, 2021). Reynolds describes that in the US, discourses about alternative food in the US, urban agriculture is presented as a new trend that is brought to cities by hip, progressive farmers (Reynolds, 2016). These farmers are often white, privileged people with access to media and policy-channels to advocate for their solutions for a sustainable urban food system. However, though urban agriculture is gaining popularity in the mainstream, it is not a new trend (Reynolds, 2016; Glennie & Alkon, 2018). Rather, urban agriculture has traditionally been practised by lower-income working class and BIPOC communities to increase food security in financially uncertain times (Reynolds, 2016). Some of these might not express explicit social or environmental ideologies, yet they address food insecurity among marginalised groups. However, there are urban gardens and local food cooperatives that directly descend from black power movements such as the Free Breakfast Program of the Black Panther Party. In other words, in the US, BIPOC communities have been the leaders of the urban food movement (Reynolds, 2015; Sbicca, 2012).

· Find some stuff about Europe

○ E.g. permaculture & whiteness --> permaculture has inspired

[3] My own experiences working on a large scale biodynamic farm in the Netherlands align with this: the white, Dutch, farmowning family were on pictures in the media or shop, while the seasonal workers from Romania or Africa who did manual labour, were not visible on any pictures.

2.3 Food, health and racism in the Netherlands

Most of the literature on alternative food and racism and whiteness is based in the US[4]. However, knowledge on food injustices in the US cannot be translated directly to other contexts, since cultural, economic and regulatory frameworks differ (Helich et al., 2012). For instance, Helich and al. (2017), aiming to address a knowledge gap on food deserts in the Netherlands, found that Amsterdam did not have food deserts like the US or UK would have. There were no significant differences in the distribution of supermarkets and property values or shares of minorities. Possible explanations are the more evenly distributed racial diversity and stronger governmental influence. Moreover, the Netherlands did not follow the US trend to replace smaller stores in the city centre with large, XXL stores on the edge of the cities (Helbich et al., 2017).

Searching terms racism, whiteness, food and Netherlands did not yield useful results in academic search engines. More commonly, literature discusses the differences between the lifestyles and consumption patterns of "Western" or indigenous Dutch people and ethnic minorities or indigenous and migrant communities (De Boer et al., 2015). E.g. research on the health of diets of different racial groups in the Netherlands, found that "ethnic minorities" eat less fruit and vegetables than "Western" Dutch people. However, for religious reasons, they often drink less alcohol, which is healthy. Moreover, they eat less pastries and dairy than Dutch people (De Boer et al., 2015). "Ethnic minorities suffer more often from cardiovascular diseases than white Dutch people (Ikram et al., 2014; Ikram, 2016). Research about health disparities between white and BIPOC communities in the Netherlands seem to ascribe these to differences in consumption choices and lifestyles (e.g. Bronso, 2014; De Boer, 2015). For instance, Surinamese women eat more animal fat, and exercise less, explaining health disparities (Bronso, 2014).

However, Ikram (2016) is a pioneer in linking systemic conditions such as racism and discriminations with health issues among Dutch people of colour (Bouchallikht, 2020). Studies found systemic conditions such as harsh migration policies and discrimination are important explanations to the disparities of mental health issues between white and BIPOC Dutch citizens (Bronso, 2014; Ikram, 2014). Everyday racism, the pressure to integrate and discriminatory treatment from authorities, cause BIPOC communities to be more depressed and anxious (Ikram, 2016). Moreover, racism and discrimination pervade the healthcare system, which is built upon the white male body as default, and marginalised other bodies (Ikram, 2016).

In understanding health disparities, an intersectional point of view is important, as other socio-economic factors such as income, ability and education levels influence health as well (Raad van Volksgezondheid & Samenleving, 2020). For instance, in the Netherlands, people of lower socio-economic status are more likely to eat unhealthy food, face health issues and mental health problems. This is ascribed to differences in knowledge of healthy food, as well as environmental conditions, such as the absence of affordable food outlets. This underlines the need to consider how oppressions are prevalent in the wider society if one wants to understand health and food.

[4] Literature searches using the keywords anti-oppression, racism, whiteness, colonialism, food, urban agriculture seem to only yield studies in the US. Black women in the US have built a body of knowledge on racism already for centuries, while Dutch anti-racist scholarship is a rather recent phenomenon (Essed, 1991a), which might explain the absence of literature on whiteness and food in the Netherlands.

2.3.1 Institutional Racism in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has a self-created image of being very tolerant, yet, Dutch racism is present, and "not like anywhere else" (Rose, 2022). Black, anti-racist scholars (Esjah, 2014; Weiner, 2014) describe how the Dutch national identity is built upon glorifying the "Golden Age" in which the Netherlands trade, art and culture were thriving because of the tolerant, progressive political wind. In proudly presenting themselves as tolerant and progressive, the Dutch deny that their wealth is built on colonial violence. In this "Golden Age", the Dutch were a central player in the trans-Atlantic slave-trade and committed colonial murdering and in Indonesia so that they could "trade" in these goods from the east (Esaja, 2014; Weiner, 2014). Dutch history books and educational institutions simply ignore colonial violence, or manipulate colonial wars into a narrative that glorifies the hard work of the Dutch plantation owners and soldiers, as in the Indonesian independence wars (Weiner, 2013). This way, colonial amnesia and a misleading sense of Dutch innocence is sustained (Esaja, 2014; Weiner, 2014)

Moreover, research reveals the prevalence of institutional racism in the Netherlands. There is structural discrimination of people of colour concerning employment and housing (Felten et al., 2021). 25% of Surinamese Dutch, 20 % of Antilian Dutch and 33% of Turkish and Moroccan Dutch people feel treated racist by the police (Van der Leun & Van der Woude). In education, 50% of BIPOC students hear racist or discriminatory comments (Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau, 2020). Moreover, teachers recommend BIPOC students to do lower levels of education, than their white peers (De Winter-Koçak et al, 2021), revealing that people of colour do not get the same opportunities to follow education as white Dutch.

Additionally, racist discourses pervade Dutch society in more subtle ways. For instance, Rose describes that who can subscribe to the Dutch identity and who not, is still racialized (2022). There is an institutionalised division between "autochtoon" (indigenous) and "allochtoon"(foreign) Dutch people (Rose, 2022). "Autochtonen", are people who are Dutch and born from white, European parents. "Allochtonen", the people who have been borne in a foreign country, and their children, or had one foreign parent (Wiener, 2014) This way, people who have been borne from non-Dutch parents, despite having lived here for one or two generations, are considered separate and alien from "the Dutch" (Jacobs, 2002). It fosters the idea that "to be "Dutch" is to "be "white"" (Weiner, 2014, p. 3) and undermines that people of colour can subscribe to the dutch identity. This division has been criticised, since 2016, Dutch institutions formally remove "allochtoon" word from their vocabulary (Kennisplatform Inclusief Samenwerken, n.d.) Yet, the common popular use of the word suggests this divisional thinking proliferates[5]

Lastly, compared to the US, in Europe, religion is commonly used to divide people into categories of us and them (Andriessen, 2020). In the Netherlands, racism in the NL is very interlinked with xenophobia and islamophobia (Valk, 2012).

2.4 Taking steps to addressing whiteness and racism

[5] Based on anecdotal evidence. Muijsenbergh, Quarsie, Jako, 2020 insinuates that "allochtoon" is still commonly used.

In the literature on whiteness and racism in the food movement, suggestions were given to dismantle oppression and build an intersectional movement. First of all, sustainable food initiatives should move away from the colour blindness paradigm and make an explicit commitment to realising racial justice. This entails recognizing and repairing the historic injustices and white supremacy culture that are foundational to inequality in food access and food justice nowadays (Chennault, 2022). A commitment to racial justice requires white people to embark on a lifelong learning process of unlearning oppressions. In this process, white people should come to terms with the way their privilege is built on the oppression of others and their complicity in sustaining the system the way it is, if they do not actively fight against it.

The story of The People's Grocery, an food justice organisation in West-Oakland (US), could be an example of an organisation that integrated anti-oppression practices in its politics and practices. The People's Grocery aims to address structural injustices and oppression through providing food for underprivileged communities (Scibba, 2012). It engages a racially mixed group in sustaining a structure that feeds low-income communities on a solidarity basis. An integral part to becoming part of the organisation, is the anti-oppression training. In this, trainees become aware of their own positionality and privileges, and how they are positioned in a world with various oppressions. Moreover, in doing so, the People's Grocery nurtures the belief that food justice should contribute to "racial and economic justice, freedom from oppression and autonomy from white supremacist institutions" among a wide variety of members (Sbicca, 2012, p. 12).

Secondly, initiatives should be led by the needs of the BIPOC communities they want to serve, and put BIPOC people in leadership positions (Billings Jr., 2000; Chennault, 2022). Instead of imposing solutions, food initiatives should build relationships with the communities on the ground, to understand the local food reality. In equal dialogue, it should be determined what solutions can look like. This means that white people have to give up their monopoly in leadership positions, and open the table to others (Ramirez, 2014)

Thirdly, Chennault (2021) argues that the food movement needs to build stronger alliances with BIPOC-led organisations that have a legacy of integrating food justice with civil rights and social justice struggles. The People's Grocer, could be seen as an example of such an initiative (Scibba, 2012). Black-led groups are rooted in intersectional, and black feminist praxis and have experience in anti-oppressive organising. Moreover, these groups have created resilient mutual aid and cooperative structures that have existed in parallel with the neoliberal, capitalist economies (Penniman, 2020). They have the knowledge that can white food initiatives could use to "racially shift perspectives and practices" towards more liberatory ones (Chennault, 2021)..

Fourthly, in places where urban agriculture initiatives seem to be initiated and dominated by white people, there is the need to provide more growing spaces that are led by and inclusive to BIPOC (Penniman, 2020). In these counterspaces BIPOC people can find shelter from being in a white, oppressive system and find empowerment (Billings Jr., 2000). Penniman (2020) argues how spaces that specifically focus on empowering BIPOC farmers to feed their communities with self-grown, culturally appropriate food, can offer a pathway towards liberation from oppressions white supremacy and colonialism. For some black gardeners, doing gardening for themselves, in their own collectives, is a way to heal from the historical trauma stemming from forcibly working on plantations. Through their practices, they can reclaim certain cultural and agricultural heritage that was stolen or attempted to be erased by white people. Also, through gardening, BIPOC growers can inhabit physical space that they have been denied century-long. (Billings Jr., 2000). An example of this is the Soul Fire Farm strives for the self-determination of indigenous and Afro-American communities through food sovereignty and "uprooting racism" in the food system. The farm does so by building networks of food production

and distribution based on mutual aid and solidarity, and food justice and farming training for BIPOC growers and youth (Soulfire Farm, n.d.).

White people have to come to terms that they cannot occupy a leadership position in this process. Namely, it is exactly white leadership that reinforces whiteness in the entire communities and is unappealing to black people (Billings Jr., 2000). Black garden leaders manage to involve their communities, because they are more authentic in igniting a feeling of shared resistance and self-determination for BIPOC communities (Billings Jr., 2000). However, white people can be in solidarity with these places, and upon invitation or request come there to learn or use their privilege to support these initiatives (Chennault, 2021).

All in all, to address whiteness and racism in the food movement, white people need to explicitly commit to anti-oppression agendas and engage in the work of unlearning internalised oppression. Furthermore, in the process of building alliances, white initiatives can learn from the practices of BIPOC-led projects and be inspired to transform their ways of working. Also, they can support BIPOC-led projects when asked for. To be able to reveal and alter the white value systems and imaginaries, food movements and related scholarship, can draw from black geography and black feminist theory theory (Ramírez, 2015, Jones, 2019). In the next sections, concepts from Critical Whiteness Theory will be outlined that can be used to understand how whiteness exerts power. Moreover, the core ideas of black feminism will be explained, as they can serve as new underpinnings of food justice activism.

3. Conceptual framework of Whiteness

To make sense of the whiteness in Alternative food movements, I draw from Critical whiteness theory. Critical Whiteness theory aims to understand how whiteness is constructed. This will help understand blackness, as this exists in relationship with whiteness (Jones, 2019). Moreover, it aims to elucidate how whiteness oppresses blackness, by exerting invisible powers and imposing white norms and values. In my thesis, Critical whiteness theory provided a framework to understand and deconstruct the way white people engaged with anti-oppression topics, their own privilege and perceived race, and are complicit to the oppression of BIPOC communities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Billings, 2019)

Below, I will discuss three concepts of white normativity, white gaze, and colourblindness in relation with studies on whiteness and food. Moreover, recognising that racism manifests differently in different places (Rose, 2022), I will discuss how they apply to the Dutch context. This way, I hope to ground my thesis more in the Dutch context, despite the fact that there is little research known about whiteness, racism and the Dutch food movement.

White normativity

Whiteness is normative and takes a central position in society, through institutions and images. Through this, it marginalises values of BIPOC communities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Moreover, as a result, white people navigate more easily through and have access to educational institutions, healthcare systems and jobs than people of colour. Critical race theory assumes that white privilege is inherently paired with the oppression of non-white people. Moreover, white people can hold certain privileges, without deliberately acting racist (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

As explained above, imaginaries of good food and good farmers are determined by the eating and agricultural traditions of White, often European people. Additionally, Pakh described how at farmer's markets, there are certain unspoken rules about what is normal, that are infused with classist, racist or xenophobic ideas. For instance, behaviours such as bargain-hunting, something associated with the Chinese communities, are deemed inappropriate and should be dealt with, to protect what farmers' markets are supposed to be, according to white privileged visitors (Pakh, 2022). Likewise, what is considered "good food" coincides with diets of white, privileged people who have access to grow their own food or can afford to purchase organic and locally produced food on farmers markets. White people's notion of good food, tends to exclude the foods of migrant and BIPOC communities simply less familiar to them (Hope & Agyeman, 2014). Besides, the notion of "real food" that is good, also suggests that there is another end of the binary that is bad (Pakh, 2022). Bad food is the fast and processed foods that marginalised communities have more easily access to (Pakh, 2021). This way, through the imaginary of good food, the Alternative Food activists might reproduce a sense of white superiority.

In the Netherlands, white normativity manifests in the way non-Dutch cultures are dismissed as "not normal". A common sentiment that is deeply embedded in Dutch culture, is "doe maar normal, dan doe je al gek genoeg" (be normal, as this is already strange enough). This sentiment implies that deviance from "what is normal" is undesirable. Yet, what is considered "normal", is what the majority of Dutch, white people do. Everything that is "not normal", is marginalised, such as the cultural practices of people of colour. As a result, BIPOC people, feel like they do not fit in, or are "hypervisible" (Rose, 2022).

White gaze

White people have a white gaze when looking at the world. Culture and epistemology associated with whiteness are seen as superior, those of “the other '' as inferior, evil and savage, sustaining racial stereotypes. Similar to the way colonial thinking divides space and the world into binaries, social scientists and critical scholars often understand history as a duality of black death and white survival. In other words, black people are always those oppressed, suffering and dispossessed, and white people are those in power, dominating blacks. This justifies white saviourism and sustains stereotypes and stigma of people of colour (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Chennault, 2021).

An example of white gaze that reinforces black death, is the way the white concept of food desert has been imposed on BIPOC communities (Jones, 2019). Viewing the daily BIPOC food realities with a white gaze, this framework fails to elucidate the way systematic oppression, economic inequality and racist planning practices such as redlining have created so-called food deserts (Reese, 2019). Moreover, this framework are unable to capture the resistance and black placemaking that happens despite facing injustice and oppression (Reese, 2019).

Another effect of this division of good and bad food and the black death, white survival binary, is that it legitimises the judgement and saving of those who eat bad. There have been critiques on the way the Alternative Food movement has tried to “bring good food to others” (Guthman, 2008). To address food insecurity among those who ate bad, missionary style programmes emerged that would aim to alleviate hunger. These missionary-style programs have been criticised for relieving the symptoms, but not addressing the systemic causes (Guthman, 2008; Agyeman & McEntee, 2014; Slocum, 2007). Furthermore, it replicates paternalistic, and white saviourist dynamics in which white people impose their framework of “real food” onto those who eat “bad food” (Agyeman & Mcentee, 2014; Alkon & McCullen, 2011a; Billings Jr., 2000).

Colourblindness

Because whiteness is the default, white people view their own race as transparent. Moreover, white people may deny the fact that racism exists. Colourblindness refers to the belief that since the civil rights movement, racism now belongs to the past, and people nowadays have equal rights. Colourblindness functions as a “double-edged sword”. On one hand, the violence, racism and exclusionary patterns being caused by systemic racism is being ignored, and on the other hand, ignoring racial differences denies the reality of privileges that white people have. (Guthman**,** page 390, 2008). Denying racism and believing in colourblindness, white people might feel “white resistance” to give up certain privileges they have to address racism or make certain places more inclusive (Billings Jr., 2018).

With regards to the food movement, Chennault found that racist prejudice proliferated among white community gardens, who believed they were doing good by producing food for the BIPOC neighbourhood inhabitants. Believing they were not racist, they failed to find an explanation for the absence of BIPOC gardeners in their collective that was not based on racial prejudice (Chennault, 2021).

People who migrated from the ex-colonies to the Netherlands were told that race does not exist and that policies cannot be racist (Weiner, 2014). This was institutionalised by referring to ethnicity, rather than Black people or people of colour. Whenever it is noticed that there are certain disparities between white and BIPOC citizens, Dutch society tends to ascribe these to the cultural differences between “ethnic groups' and “the dutch” and a lack of willingness to integrate. Hence, instead of confronting

discriminatory policies, the blame is put on the minorities themselves (Weiner, 2014). This is striking, since strong cultural stereotypes of BIPOC communities are replicated in Dutch media and popular discourses on a daily basis. For instance, African-Dutch and Surinamese people are assumed to be uncivilised, lazy and dirty – replicating a colonial narrative of "uncivilised" blacks. Common stereotypes are that Moroccan and Turkish people are "violent", "dishonest", "slackers' and "complaining" and unwilling to fit into Dutch society (Weiner, 2014, p. 4). Additionally, these stereotypes and hidden racism are reinforced by islamophobia (Valk, 2012) that is growing in the Netherlands (Weiner, 2013).

Understanding what mechanisms sustain whiteness is valuable in understanding how whiteness reproduces white supremacy. It can help white people to understand their privileges and complicity to racism that are generally denied (Applebaum, 2022). It can help critique the dominant ideologies and help white people move from denial into disrupting racism by changing the focus away from "the other", towards the self. However, the knowledge generated by people experiencing oppression can only be produced by them, giving them a unique "voice of colour". (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). For this reason, I try to base my theoretical framework on the voices of black feminists and geographers.

While the focus for my thesis lies on race and culture, it is essential to recognise that race is not the only form of oppression. A central concept in black feminism is intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). In the "imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy" (bell hooks, n.d.) black women experience marginalisation from being both black and women. This marginalisation cannot simply be summed up, they reinforce each other. Other forms of marginalisation can be due to physical or mental ability, income level, education level and class. These again can reinforce and be reinforced by racialised and gendered marginalisation.

4. Theoretical framework

This section will briefly introduce the theoretical lense of social-constructivism, followed by a brief introduction to some key concepts in black feminist and black geography.

4.1 Social constructivism & relationality

My thesis will take a social constructivist, relational approach to studying food justice issues. Social constructivism refutes the notion that there is one objective truth that one can understand. Rather, it views the world as a product of social relationships and believes (Kang et al., 2017). Moreover, social constructivism views social, cultural and political patterns as responsible for creating social categories such as gender, ability, class, sexuality as well as whiteness and race, rather than that they are biologically and objectively true. A social-constructivist lense may reveal how power relations create the practical reality of racialised and gendered injustice, inequality. In doing so, they "destabilize the categories that organise people into hierarchically ordered groups" (Kang et al., 2017, p. 22) This offers potential for emancipatory research agendas of feminists scholars and activists, that strive towards liberation from capitalist, patriarchal and colonial hegemony (ibid.)[6], similar to what I aspire to do. Furthermore, critical whiteness is based on the core premise that whiteness is constructed, and can and should be deconstructed (Lazaridou & Fernando, 2022). In other words, a social-constructivist approach aligns with the use of the critical whiteness theory.

A central concept is relationality, that posts that the social and spatial are inseparable (Massey, 2004; Öztürk, Hilton, Jongerden; 2014). Spaces, for instance a city, emerges from social dynamics such as gender relationships, capitalist exchanges and colonialism. To understand space, one must look at social and political processes, and to understand these, one must look at space (Massey, 2004; Öztürk, Hilton, Jongerden; 2014). A relational perspective can also highlight how places are also connected to other places, through global forces of economic exchange, migration patterns and colonial historical and present relations (Massey, 2004).

4.2 Black feminism & black geography

More specifically, to understand issues of whiteness and racism in urban food initiatives, this thesis draws from black feminist and black geographic thought. Black feminist praxis includes a theoretical understanding of how black women are marginalised based on their colour and gender in the "imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy" (bell hooks, n.d.). In doing so, black feminism generates knowledge on the way different oppressions, especially gender and racial oppression, are in interaction with each other in a system that is built to favour white, wealthy, rational, higher-class, able-bodied, heterosexual men. Black feminist thought enables me to unravel the reality of my cases in a way that does justice to the intersectional complexity.

Black geography studies how "blackness has been lived, socially and spatially, past and present." (McKittrick, 2006). Black geographies are better at capturing and making sense of black experiences and put "black voices at the forefront" of the analysis (p.2, Ramirez, 2015). Black geographer McKittrick studies the "historic present", through which she hopes to reveal how the past and present can both proliferate in a space. Social relationships of the past are "(re)lived, (re)produced and (re)imagined" in the present (McKittrick, 2006). To illustrate, studying places where black people live presently, reveals

[6]According to my teachers in sociology classes

that the disinvestment, redlining and decline of these neighbourhoods is grounded in historical racism and environmental injustice. Daily exposure to systemic oppression, environmental chemicals have influenced the food habits and bodies of communities of colour (Jones, 2019). Moreover, from a relational perspective, it is understandable why it is challenging to engage BIPOC communities in agricultural projects. The legacy of colonialism and plantation-slavery still proliferates, reviving intergenerational memories of enslavement and forced labour on plantations among communities of colour (Ramirez, 2015; Chennault, 2021).

Moreover, black geographers can help highlight black life that can counter narratives of black death and white survival reproduced by white gaze. For instance, McKittrick explores ways to disrupt this narrative through reframing plantations as a site of black life, alongside oppressions. One hand, plantations are a site of colonial violence, dispossession of traditional owners, enslavement and cultural assimilation. However, on the other hand, the plantations were sites of resistance against colonial oppression and essential in the revitalisation and development of black culture that present anti-racist movements still built upon. Relationality, according to McKittrick, should be used not only as a way to understand how the social, in this case racism, structures the spatial, but also as a way to highlight cooperation and resistance against racial and colonial violence (McKittrick, 2011). In other words, to break the black death white survival binary, black geographers should highlight black life.

4.3 Building alliances for collective liberation

What is more, according to Chennault (2021), black feminist thought can inspire white food movements to unlearn oppressive ideologies and practices. Black feminism goes beyond a cognitive analysis of society, but also provides a framework for action, as it emerged from organising and working on the liberation and autonomy of black women in the real-world (Chennault, 2021).

Black feminists recognise that various systems of oppression interlock, but stem from the heteronormative, white patriarchy (bell hooks, n.d); Neville & Hamer, 2001). Addressing the interconnected social injustice as well as ecological crises requires collective liberation from all forms of oppression (McKittrick, 2011). To achieve this, “unexpected alliances” across the divisions colonialism has made between whites and blacks, settlers and those colonised need to be built. This resonates with literature that calls for more collaboration and solidarity between white alternative food, and BIPOC-led food justice organisations mentioned in the previous section (Chennault, 2021; **.**

A relational perspective that highlights the interconnectedness of various oppressions may help white people who strive to be an anti-racist ally to critically reflect on the motivations of their allyship. Oftentimes, white activists want to become an ally to BIPOC people out of white saviour or white guilt motivations (Klutz et al., 2020). They hope that by having certain opinions or doing certain actions, they are an ally to groups that are oppressed. They want to go through a rewarding process in which they receive gratitude from people of colour for “showing them the way. To illustrate, Chennault described how colourblind, white gardeners wanted to have “the ultimate experience” of handing out food to BIPOC families (p. 12, 2012). However, these motivations centre white feelings and reproduce white superiority (Klutz et al., 2020) Instead, people’s motivations to engage in solidarity activism should be rooted in the desire for collective liberation and a world freed from all oppressions (Klutz et al., 2020). This is illustrated by the following quote from a Murri that grew up on Gangulu [7]territory: If

[7] Murri means Aboriginal Australian. Gangalu is the Lilla Watson’s mother’s motherland, a territory settler’s call Central Queesland.

you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together" (Murri Lilla Watson as cited in p.1, Klutz, 2020).

Working towards collective liberation and being co-human together, is not merely a cognitive affair but also an (inter-)personal and emotional process. White people will have to come to terms with the privileges they have and learn how their white identities are inextricably linked to colonial, racial and capitalist violence. This may be a messy, unsettling process. (Klutz, 2020). Moreover, allyship requires authentic relationships among activists of different struggles that go beyond theoretical agreements to fight oppression (Klutz, 2020) and being co-human together despite created separations and oppression (McKittrick, 2011). Food could be used as connecting life-force between those who in Eurocentric knowledge systems are seen as superior and possessing, and those who are classically othered (Jones, 2019). Ultimately, anti-oppression ideologies also need to be put in practice. White people should use their privilege to participate in collective action against systems of oppression (Klutz, 2020) and support the autonomy and self-determination of how BIPOC communities eat, grow and distribute food (Scibba, 2012).

Together, these theories form the conceptual framework based on which my field work and data analysis was made. In Textbox 1 below a simplified and shortened overview of the theories and their key concepts can be found, that were used to translate theory into interview questions and deductive codes.

Simplified Conceptual & Theoretical framework

Black geography & feminism

- Relationality: be sensitive to how social structures shape lives, bodies and materials in the present and the past
- Intersectionality: understand how diverse forms of oppression interact and reinforce each other.

Whiteness

- White normativity: white values and norms are centered. White is taken as default/normal.
- White gaze: white epistemologies, biases and judgements are centered.
- White narratives, imaginaries and images: the stories told are white, appeal to white people, or invisibilise BIPOC. How can imaginaries include BIPOC stories and recognise the work of BIPOC
- White people believe race does not exist as social category and view their own race as invisible.
- White solutions are imposed on BIPOC.
- Privileges: What privileges are to be part of a space initiative (education, time, financial resources); How do privileged people engage which privileges are there and how are they used?

Alliances

- What are drives people to in solidarity practices. Is it white saviourism, false altruism, collective liberation, supporting the autonomy of BIPOC communities?
- In doing solidarity activism, white people engage in embodied, emotional and affective work.
- Authentic relationships are developed through solidarity practices.
- Black life is highlighted and supported through research and activism, and the binary of black death – white survival is disrupted.

Textbox 1) Simplified Conceptual & Theoretical framework

5. Methods

5.1 Research design

5.1.1 Case selection

As mentioned before, I conduct my research collaborating with two Urban Agriculture projects: PLUK and Bloei & Groei (hereinafter referred to as B&G).

B&G was chosen as it is one of the only urban agriculture projects that is founded by a black woman. B&G's purpose is to provide a space for empowerment, community and healing for women who experience financial or personal struggles, in underprivileged neighbourhoods (Bloei & Groei, n.d.). The Dutch AF movement considers their approaches to building an inclusive community unique and inspiring8. To me, B&G seemed as a "counterspace" and food justice initiative that can inspire the necessary shifting of white perspectives and practices, as described in the Background (Chennault, 2021).

PLUK was chosen because their case has many analogies with the white AF initiatives discussed in Literature and was accessible for me to study. PLUK is a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm founded by two expats and growing food for a community that is mainly white, and according to the farmers, highly educated people. A large part of the community moved to the Netherlands for their studies and or work and considers themselves expat. What makes PLUK appealing and accessible to me for my thesis, is that farmers recognised that their community is rather privileged, while the residents of the neighbourhoods surrounding PLUK differ in terms of socio-economic, cultural and racial background, but remain absent in the initiatives and expressed willingness to explore this "inclusiveness issue" further to me. Moreover, my thesis builds on Bradley's (2022) work on social justice and PLUK, and could take the issues raised, particularly those related to whiteness, further, which appealed to both the farmers and me[9]. In my thesis, I drew lessons from the differences in intention, ways of working and building community between PLUK and B&G, to shed light on directions more liberatory AF activism can take.

In this section, I will discuss my research approach, methods for data collection and analysis, and reflect on my positionality.

5.1.2 Participatory action research

I used Participatory Action Research as a guiding framework for my research. PAR originates from scholar-activists from Abya Yala (also known as Latin America), who wanted to use their privileged position as scientist to support social movements striving for the liberation of the oppressed in their countries (Gott, 2008). Currently, PAR is commonly used in a variety of feminist, ethnographic fields

[8] Based on conversations with other AF activists, the Dutch food movement that I have been part of for two years.

[9] Bradley conducted their MSc thesis with the rural sociology group in 2022. Conversations about his findings were helpful in further determining the focus of my research.

because it tries to disrupt traditional power dynamics between the researcher and participants in a way that researchers can contribute to social justice (Johnson & Flynn, 2021).

PAR critiques that researchers extract knowledge from communities that do not benefit these communities, but the researcher, and hence reinforces the marginalisation of these communities. (Gott, 2008). PAR aims to foster dialogue between different knowledges, by dismantling hierarchy and situating the researcher in daily life struggles for justice (Brown & Tandom, 1983). To do so, PAR is always situated in a place and context, as the researcher needs to immerse themselves in the community and work with them "on the ground" (Johnson & Flynn, 2021).

Ideally, PAR research is co-owned by the researchers and participants and conducted as a self-sustaining cycle: research, action and reflection. In the research phase, the researchers and participants collaboratively define what could be the focus of the research, e.g. by agreeing upon an issue they would like to address. In the action phase, actions are co-created to address this issue. In the reflection phase, researchers and participants analyse the outcomes of these actions and reflect on their impact. This way, knowledge is created in dialogue between the researcher and the lived experiences of the participant. Ideally, in this reflection phase, new topics for the next PAR cycle are surfaced (Fine & Torre, 2021).

The emancipatory nature of PAR corresponds with the black scholarship that strives towards the liberation of BIPOC communities and the dismantling of all forms of oppression (Akom, 2011). Moreover, PAR recognizes that scientific, positivist knowledge is not superior to, and needs to be complemented with embodied knowledge and the lived experiences of marginalised groups. This resonates with calls from relational and black feminist to highlight the daily, lived realities of people of colour, instead of imposing a white, quantitative analysis (Jones, 2019; McKittrick, 2011). Additionally, PAR and black feminist praxis acknowledge that knowledge stems from a combination of theory and real-world practice and activism for the liberation of black women (Neville & Hamer, 2001). This way, both PAR and black feminist praxis are situated in a real-life struggle. PAR calls for researchers to use their privilege for social justice (Johnson & Flynn, 2021), which resonates with my intention to use my privilege as white, Dutch, able-bodied and academically educated student for social justice within the Dutch food movement.

This section below outlines how the PAR cycle was followed, and where practical constraints caused me to deviate from it. Important to note is that going through this cycle was a very iterative process, and that questions central in some of these phases, came up at different times. In fig. 1 below, this process is visualised.

5.2 Research process

5.2.1 Research process PLUK

Phase 1 - Defining research focus

Based on conversations with PLUK farmers and Bradley (2022), I focused my research on whiteness and racism. This process was complemented by literature research.

Between September and Mid-October, various conversations with PLUK farmers indicated they wanted to understand what makes PLUK an exclusive place, why people were not interested or not able to join the project, and what could be done to lower the barriers for people to join. However, the

research of Bradley (2022) concludes that if PLUK wants to pursue social justice in an intersectional way, it should deconstruct how PLUK is a white space that replicates racial oppression. This, combined with strong literary calls to study AF movements from a racial perspective, made a strong case to focus on racism and whiteness, as opposed to social inclusion and justice in general.

Phase 2 - Action

In the period between mid October and mid December, I did participatory observations at PLUK. Alongside working on the farm, I discussed issues of racism, whiteness, inclusiveness and social justice with a variety of PLUK members and conducted interviews. Initially, there was the plan to organise anti-oppression workshops, go out into the neighbourhood to investigate why the local communities do not join PLUK, and facilitate a co-creative process of making an anti-oppression strategy for PLUK. However, as will be discussed in the Results section, there were a lot of diverging, and at times even contradictory, opinions among the farmers and harvesters. Also, the winterstop and staff changes, reduced the capacity of the farmers to provide me with input and guidance. Furthermore, at times, farmers proposed solutions that were in friction with my own beliefs of what was the right thing to do. I was hesitant to undertake externally oriented actions because I believed PLUK should first do internal work and determine a shared vision and commitment to anti-oppression.

Phase 3 - Reflection

As mentioned before, collaborative reflection on the outcomes of the research is an important aspect of PAR and has occurred in various ways at various times in the research process.

With PLUK, I periodically had meetings with the PLUK farmer that was my contact person to discuss my progress and thoughts. Moreover, I synthesised my preliminary findings and suggestions for PLUK in an email that was used as input to discuss the inclusiveness of PLUK in the meeting of the new team of farmers. In the email, I also listed some questions for them to discuss so I could move forward. These emails can be found in Appendix C. Moreover**,** throughout my fieldwork period, PLUK farmers and interns, but also Bradley (2022) and another WUR intern, asked me how my research went, which gave me the opportunity to verify certain findings with participants. Unfortunately, it appeared to be unfeasible to plan workshop-like, co-analysis sessions with the PLUK team in the time-span of my research, however, this is planned to happen in May or June.

In the end, I concluded that a three month time span to research a certain issue, create a strategy and implement this, is too short. In the end, I mainly had discussions with the farmers, interns and harvesters on their view on the issue and we explored opportunities for actions. On the one hand, it seems like doing the “internal work”has inhibited “action to be taken”. However, on the other hand, internal reflection and unlearning of oppression, could be regarded as the main actions to take, that will be the foundation of any further action. Instead of rushing this phase to undertake externally oriented action, my thesis was dedicated to this internal work.

5.2.2 Research process Bloei & Groei

Phase 1 - Defining research focus

In the first week of September I contacted B&G to explore the opportunities to do my thesis with them. For me, simply understanding B&G’s ways of working, could lead to valuable insights on the way colour and cultural background shapes the initiatives and initiatives can become more inclusive. Still, I wanted to make myself useful for the organisation. B&G initially wanted me to investigate how the connection with the neighbourhood could be strengthened. The founder believed that B&G’s connection with the

people from the neighbourhood could be improved, and imagined to organise events in which B&G women and the wider neighbourhood could strengthen their relationships. However, due to a lack of capacity among the B&G staff, these ambitions dropped, as will be explained below.

Phase 2 – action

From mid September until the end of October, I did participatory observation at the working days and events of B&G to get to know the organisation. However, during this period, everyone was very busy with the harvest events and closure of the season. When the winter stop started at the end of October, many staff members needed a break. Also, the founder expressed that they did not have much capacity to supervise me in the process or give me guidance. Coming from the perspective of wanting to do action research, the best action to take seemed to support the B&G staff in taking rest. The ambition to organise neighbourhood events was dropped, and instead I helped organise a New Years brunch and conducted some interviews.

Phase 3 - Reflection

With B&G, I did not have a dedicated reflection session, because I did not want to burden the staff and it seemed unnecessary since I did not do so many activities with them to address an issue. However, during conversations and interviews, I discussed observations with the community members. This was an iterative and organic process of verifying certain findings about inclusiveness, racism and social justice with the women of B&G and their knowledge about these topics.

5.2.3 Deviating from the planning

At times, I felt my research progress was chaotic and slower than anticipated or did not meet expectations to "solve" an issue set by myself or the initiatives. Fitzgerald, Streid & Enrigh describe how conducting PAR may be a messy process in which feelings of chaos and insecurity about the research quality occur (2020). Also, when conducting research with an open agenda, one should expect the focus to be different than expected or intended, as participants have their own understandings of the topic. One must prioritise doing "good research" (process), rather than generating "good data" (outcome) (Fitzgerald et al., 2020). Cook (2009) argues how the inherent messiness in action research, signifies that existing assumptions are challenged. This "messy turn", where transformation takes place. Also, in the context of working with refugees, Rosen draws attention to the fact that participation of various people, means involving various "out of sync temporalities", that are often tied into inequities (2021). Participatory research requires the different temporalities to be negotiated, as part of the process, resulting in a "anything but straight-forward journey in time" (Rosen, 2021). These reflections on PAR relate to my thesis in the sense that the internal work of PLUK deconstructing their privileges, is a slow and messy, but foundational process for anti-oppression practices. Moreover, the timescale of my thesis does not resemble the timespan that covers the process of building relationships with the neighbourhood. Likewise, my research planning did not resemble the seasonality of B&G, with winterstops in which people recovered from a busy growing season and had less capacity to guide me in my process.

Note: Appendix F contains my logbook, that mentions my research activities day by day.

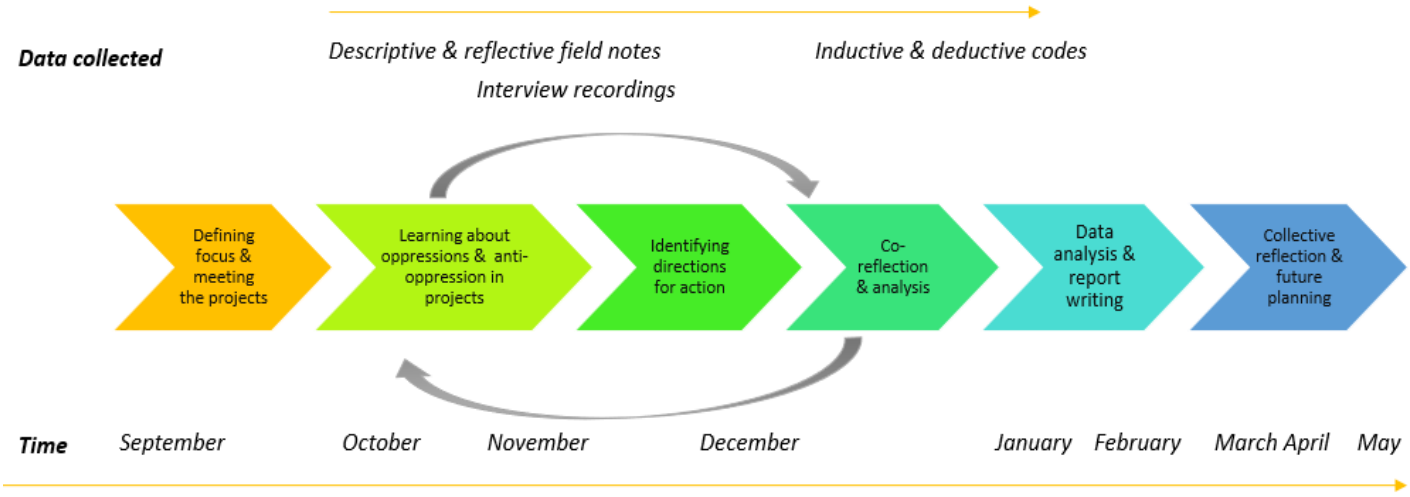

Fig 1) Research process timeline

5.3 Data collection methods

I used a combination of participatory observation, interviews and digital content analysis. This generated data in the form of written field notes, spoken field notes, and interview recordings. An overview of all the data I collected or analysed can be found in Appendix D

5.3.1 Participatory observation

Participatory observation is an essential way to understand the lives and the culture of the groups you are studying (Andriessen et al., 2020), which fits well with the aim of this research to understand how whiteness and racial oppression shape je culture of both initiatives. Another characteristic of participatory observation is the relationships the researcher forms with participants, reducing the hierarchy and distance between the researcher and participants (Bernard, 2017a). This fits well with principles of PAR.

I have done participatory observation throughout my thesis. At B&G, I have attended and volunteered at 5 events of the Gift of Colour garden and Venserpolder Community garden, both situated in Zuid-Oost: the Moestuinmarkt (garden market), harvest parties, and new years brunch. Also, I have joined 5 working sessions. I helped setting up and cleaning after events, cooked food for the potluck, made coffee and tea, and helped out in the garden, by planting cuttings and preparing beds for winter. At PLUK, I participated 17 days on the farm (12 at Fruittuin, 5 at Boterbloem), 1 farmers meeting and attended the harvest party. I joined the farmers in their daily tasks of weeding, preparing beds for winter, maintenance of the poly tunnels and tools and occasional harvesting. I spent more time at PLUK Fruittuin, because it was easier to reach from Wageningen and the farmer who was my contact person worked at Fruittuin. Also, PLUK Fruittuin usually had a bigger team of farmers and interns and volunteers present, which meant I could gain more insight into the ways people interact and get more perspectives on the issues I would raise.

Doing farm work together lent itself well to building relationships with research participants, observing and listening to small talk or in-depth conversations that emerged naturally, as well as asking questions related to the topic of my thesis. The participants found the work enjoyable, people were in a good mood and if there were silences, they were not awkward, because we still had something at hand. When meeting new people, I would ask them about their involvement and experiences in the project,

and if we had the time and built up trust or a good connection, how they looked at inclusion, social justice of the project, and racism in the food movement. Generally, people were curious who I was and why I would come all the way from Wageningen. I would explain my thesis, which would often lead to a conversation, as many people had an opinion on the topic.

During the participation period, I paid attention to various elements of white spaces and narratives that were identified through the literature research, for instance what food practices were taken as default, or in what way privilege was needed to participate in the project. This framework can be found in Appendix B**.**

Besides doing participatory observation at the projects, I also spend some time in both neighbourhoods. I cycled around and sporadically consumed some food and a coffee on a bench in a public space. This was insufficient to thoroughly familiarise myself with the neighbourhood and its communities. Yet, it helped me to put the initiatives in the context they are situated in instead of understanding them in a vacuum.

5.3.2. Interviews

To complement the more rich, descriptive field notes from participatory observation and dive into specific topics further, I planned to conduct interviews. I ended up doing four interviews with people from B&G. I aimed to have a sample of diversity in age and involvement in the organisation. The estimated age range was 25-65. One of them was a staff member, and three gardened in the Venserpolder garden. One of them was also an active volunteer at this garden. Regarding privileges they had or did not have, one person brought up one mentioned to be recovering from surgery and illness and come from a lower-income family, one from depression. One mentioned to feel privileged in terms of able-bodiedness and income. Except for the B&G staff member, they all lived in Zuid-Oost.

This sample came to be through purposive sampling and inviting all women for an interview through a message in the WhatsApp group chat and a few women responding to me. The two purposefully sampled people were asked because they were already indicated to be willing to help me, and also could share the perspectives of being a staff member and being disabled. However, for the other women, I preferred inviting everyone over asking people personally, because I believed this would reduce the chance people would agree with doing an interview, because they felt obliged to say yes because I asked them personally. Also, this way everyone was given the chance to participate if they felt the motivation to share something, not only the people I knew better or thought had something important to say. This way, I hoped to be less of an “extractivist researcher” and let my judgement of what was useful determine who would be asked.

At PLUK, conversations and observations with farmers, interns and harvesters provided already in-depth data on their views on the topic of whiteness, racism and oppression. Consequently, purposefully sampled certain people who could offer perspectives or had certain knowledge that was specifically useful for my thesis. One interview was with a harvester recommended to me by one of the farmers, because she has been a socially and politically active inhabitant of the neighbourhood for years and knows a lot about the local communities. The second could offer a critical perspective on PLUK, thanks to their (lived) experience with anti-oppression work in the food movement, specifically related to transphobia and oppression of nonbinary people. The third interviewee was a municipality official working for the Stadspas, and was contacted to explore collaboration opportunities between PLUK and Stadspas. The fourth interview was with two interns, who indicated to be critical of PLUK’s inclusiveness and are starting a social-justice focused spin-off project from PLUK.

I followed the principles of a semi-structured interview (Heigham & Croker, 2009; Yost, & Chmielewski, 2013). My interview questions (see Appendix A), started with rather open questions about people's involvement in the initiative and their experiences. These would be followed by questions about specific topics, that aimed to generate reflection on the different aspects of the Theoretical framework. To deconstruct the hierarchy between me and the participants, my questions were open and left space for the interviewees to bring up what they found important and felt comfortable with to share (Yost, & Chmielewski, 2013). Also, I avoided using academic terms and used accessible language. I asked them in what setting they would feel most comfortable to do the interview, instead of inviting them to a space I chose. The interviewees were conducted in different settings. Two interviewees invited me in their co-working space; one was conducted while weeding; one in someone's home, accompanied by tea, extensive chats, tea and lunch; one in the Botanical garden as an outing for the both of us. All interviews were recorded (with consent) and transcribed afterwards.

5.3.3 Data collection & management

As mentioned, I tried to contribute as much to the projects as possible by participating in the working days. It soon became clear that working with soil and plants, while wearing gardening gloves, is not combinable with taking field notes in a notebook. Also, it felt inappropriate to sit in a corner during the community events of Bloei & Groei and take notes, while I did not know the people. To still document important observations, I took quick notes of voice messages on my phone in "in-between" moments, for instance when I had to pick up a certain tool, or went to the bathroom to write down notes from interesting conversations as suggested by Bernard (2013). This way, I reduced the reactivity effect that causes people to change their behaviour, due to my presence (ibid.). I transcribed these afterwards, and copied the transcripts in the field note document of that day.

I used the train commute to write extensive, descriptive field notes on who was present, what was discussed, how the atmosphere was, what food was eaten, how people were sitting, interacting with each other and what tasks and activities people did. I would also write down personal reflections, or feelings that came up throughout the day, followed by a reflection on the meaning of certain observations. To clarify what were factual observations and what were my interpretations, interpretations and reflections were italicised. I wrote and stored the field notes on my laptop. Occasionally, I took notes on paper, and digitalised these after, following the same process.

Microsoft Teams transcribing software was used to make transcriptions of interview recordings. Since these contained many mistakes, I would listen to the interview again, and correct mistakes and add notes about the intonation of the interviewee.

In Appendix D, an overview of the data collected can be found. Throughout my report, data for PLUK will be referred to with "[Interview]/[Field Notes]P[day]-[month]" and "[Interview]/[Field Notes B&G][day]-[month]".

5.4 Data analysis

From January onwards, I coded the field notes and interview transcripts, using ATLAS.ti. For this, I used a combination of inductive and deductive coding. I used the list of aspects of whiteness, found in Appendix B, to make codes and deductively go through the data. However, I also created new codes when the content would not be covered by the theoretical framework. All codes would be grouped into certain themes that informed the structure of the results section from which my final conclusions emerged.

As mentioned before, I reflected throughout my fieldwork period on preliminary findings, and also discussed these with the research participants during the field work. For instance, I would ask the women from B&G how they viewed a certain explanation for the absence of lower-income groups PLUK farmers had brought up. Although there has been a coding bias, because I was the single researcher doing the coding, this way a wider network of people has been involved in interpreting my findings and putting them into their perspective.

5.5 Dealing with my positionality

As a participatory researcher I become part of, and hence also have an influence on, the places and their social fabric. In doing so, I am driven by my research agenda, but also consciously or unconsciously directed by my own positionality (Johnson & Flynn, 202).

Without constantly asking myself what my motivations are, and what informs my thoughts and actions, this thesis could easily fall into the category of a "somewhat critical student who suffers from white guilt about all their privileges and therefore wants to "save BIPOC" communities by including them". To avoid this, I tried to critically reflect on the way I might have replicated certain oppressive patterns and how I can use my privilege as I intended to - as I will reflect upon below.

5.5.1 Socio-cultural identity as white Dutch citizen

I have grown up in a fully white family, in a predominantly white, culturally Christian, environment. My hometown is positioned in one of the more conservative areas of the Netherlands, exemplified by the fact that it is one of the last remaining regions where they still have Zwarte Piet (Black Pete)[10]. Except for two adopted cousins of colour, I did not have family or friendship connections with BIPOC people during my upbringing.

My parents are highly educated, belong to the middle class and have been employed at high schools. This meant there was financial stability and relatively many holidays. I have never experienced financial stress or been inhibited to do a hobby, a privilege I extensively used playing competitive sports and learning a music instrument. I went to high school that was known to be posh. My circle of friends all did gymnasium (highest educational level) and university education afterwards. With children from lower income parents or BIPOC children, I did not share friend groups. I am personally able-bodied and in my family, there were no physical disabilities (visible to me). However, in my direct family there have been severe mental health issues and neurodivergence.

I have had a rather white, privileged upbringing, implicating that I have blind spots for certain oppression. They will pass me unnoticed, because they do not affect me. Also, my positionality influences my interaction with research participants. Despite having put effort into deconstructing

[10] Zwarte Piet is a caricature of black people, associated with blackface traditions. Zwarte Piet accompanies the Dutch Santa, Sinterklaas, as a clown-like servant that delivers presents through the chimney. The Dutch dismissed concerns of Black people as misunderstanding about the history of the tradition, or exaggerated complaints about an innocent children's tradition. Namaley, Zwarte Piet, is not a racist caricature, but simply black because of the chimney dust (Esjajas, 2014).

internalised oppressions, there are still internalised racist, classist, ableist and colonial patterns present in my thinking and being. It was challenging to balance the need to collect data with the need to respect the topic's sensitivity. I When I was doubting if I was asking too much emotional labour from people of colour, I chose to be “better safe than sorry”, and not ask sensitive questions or push for their responses. I put myself in a humble, listening position and made myself as useful as possible to the initiatives.

Moreover, having always been in predominantly white spaces where I fitted the norm, I felt awkward being one of the only white people in a group. I sometimes did not know how to behave and felt worried to share micro-aggression or make a mistake. However, I noticed that the women wanted me to feel welcome and participate in the social moments, which helped me to loosen up and eventually be more authentic with them. Being assigned female at birth, also gave me a ground to connect with the women from B&G, and made it easier for me to engage in participatory observation, as their gardens target women specifically. I also tried to get participants to know besides their function, and contribute to the social aspect of the community by baking a cake or bringing a snack. This way, I hoped to mitigate for an extractivist researcher approach who is merely interested in their own questions (Johnson & Flynn, 2021, I tried to not take space in discussions to tell about myself or draw a lot of attention by wearing extravagant clothing. Also I tried to use accessible language, and not academic concepts. Through giving small gifts, I also tried to show gratitude and recognition for people’s contribution to my thesis.

At PLUK, I spent more time with the people, and consequently built up more close relationships. Over time, I learned that critical feedback and questions that foster self-reflection were valued, so I tried to be critical and play the devil’s advocate. Also, I joined leisure time activities with some of the farmers, as they became friends or were part of similar activist networks as me.

5.5.2 Epistemological background

The primary education I have followed was based on anthroposophy and attached much importance to experiential, creative and spiritual learning besides cognitive development. Throughout my secondary and academic education, people and cultures from other places have interested me. However, I have often engaged in an exoticizing or white saviourist way. My university setting has always been very international, and I have been exposed to perspectives from around the globe.

However, the dominant culture was rather expat, middle-class and highly educated. Discussions about race were held in the diversity paradigm, rather than an anti-oppression framework, which might mean the harsh reality of racism is being glossed over.

In my education, the dominant ways of knowing were predominantly rooted in positivist, binary thinking that black feminist and anti-colonial theory would criticise. For instance, my bachelor was at an engineering university, where technocratic ideologies about solving global issues were dominant. Only during my exchange to Melbourne, I have been exposed to critical social sciences and other epistemologies. I was lucky to follow environmental politics, philosophy and Australian indigenous philosophy. Moreover, for four years, I have been involved in social and environmental justice activism. Thanks to this, I have learned about these topics in an experiential way. Also, through my activism, I have followed workshops from BIPOC, migrant and queer activists whose praxis forms a real-world context to the literature on anti-oppression.

In my research, I have tried to address my personal and epistemological blind spots by centering black feminist thought and critical whiteness frameworks that help dismantle hegemonic structures.

Moreover, due to being educated in a white, western academic institution, I am likely to assimilate my findings to these frameworks. While I cannot overcome all of these things in my thesis or life, they are important to consider. I did so by complementing literature with media created by people in the neighbourhoods. By asking open questions during the participatory observation period, I tried to avoid that people who experience racism or poverty have to do emotional labour unwantedly. Moreover, open questions give more space to the lived experiences and perspectives that are not captured by literature (Yost, & Chmielewski, 2013).

6. Results

6.1 Introduction to both projects and their surroundings

Below, both PLUK and B&G are briefly introduced. This is followed by a description of the working days and events at both farms and other notes about the ways of working of both initiatives.

6.1.1 Introduction to Bloei & Groei

Bloei & Groei (B&G) was founded by a black social entrepeneur who lived in de Bijlmer. She noticed that many of the women, her mom being one of them, raised and provided for their families on their own. In being strong, hard-working women, they lacked spaces and moments for themselves. Having the time or access to a garden to grow organic, healthy food, is a privilege many women in Zuid-Oost do not have. B&G was founded to create gardens as a space for self-care and community for women in their neighbourhood. Additionally, the harvests could support women in making ends meet and improve their access to fresh food. In 2013, a school in Gaasperdam offered their land to a first group of 10 women. Presently, there are eight gardens and four hundred women are part or have been part of the garden communities ever since. Moreover, B&G started the Bloei Academy, where they offer workshops and educate people to become a tuincoach (garden coach).

At the gardens there are three weekly working days during which the women take care of their personal plot and in turns of the communal garden. The vegetables produced in this communal garden are sold at a monthly harvest market, to raise money from which the group can go on excursions or do activities together. On these days, a garden coach is present to open the toolshed, provide help and knowledge, and coordinate the communal garden.

B&G is funded by a yearly contribution of 90 euros per women with discounts for women who have a stadspas[11] and funds that are raised (Interview B&G16-11b). Sixteen paid employees and a much larger group of volunteers of varying commitments runs the organisation. Most people are people of colour or black. The main language is Dutch, however, there are some women who do not speak Dutch fluently. The gardens spread over Amsterdam Zuid-Oost, although there are some in other parts of the city (B&G, n.d.)

Working days and events at B&G

Most of my time spent at B&G was at the Venserpolder garden. A group between twelve and twenty women gardens here Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Some days, we did more maintenance and cleaning work, other days we planted new perennial flowers. The working days usually started with a garden coach and me, but around 12.00h more people would start to come in. While working, knowledge about plants, but also news about family and health were exchanged. Usually, when someone arrived, there was a moment of checking in, in which people seemed to share how they were doing quite openly. There were some women that would bring a lot of lifely/strong energy in the group. They were active, busy, and motivated to help out. When no task was given, they would find their own

[11] The Stadspas (city pass), is a card people below a certain income level can apply to. Through the city pass, people can receive discounts at museums, cultural events but also in certain shops (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.)

task. Though not punctually planned, there was always a Tea break, during which more extensive conversations about family, Suriname, and people's lives were held. While the garden coaches often left around 14.00h, some of the women usually stayed to work more in their gardens or to chat with each other. Generally, people seemed to know each other well, and were keen to invite their family and friends to get to know the garden and the other women.

I also attended some B&G events, to obtain further insight into the social dynamics, atmosphere and culture of the communities. For instance, the Moestuinmarkt is the moment when the Venserpolder garden invites the neighbourhood to come and buy harvest and enjoy delicious self-made "hapjes" (snacks) sold by the women and their acquaintances. Before the market started, we harvested kale, carrots and New Zealand spinach. We washed them, weighed the leaves and put them into paper bags. During the setting up the lively chats were interchanged with chaotic, semi-stressed preparation of tables. It seemed like just in time people were ready. It seemed like people cared a lot about the presentation of the vegetables. From 12 onwards, people started to drip in. At the busy moments, there were 20 people, of which the majority were women. People were diverse in age, there were three women with children. Even though some neighbours do not garden there, everyone seems to know each other. People stand in small groups, catching up and discussing what is going on with their families. People were were excited to taste and treat each other on "baras" and broad leave thyme tea that was new to many people. The atmosphere was festive and "gezellig" (good, vibrant social vibes). The arrival of a Surinamese women, dressed in a sopropo-themed costume, bright green with sopropo-earrings, and her old mother who sang the Sopropo song, reinforced the festive and "gezellig (good, vibrant social vibes) atmosphere. That day, people explained to me what sopropo was (a bitter lemon, commonly eaten in Surinamese cuisine) and was given a variety of self-made chutney, tea and bara.

I also attended harvest parties at the Gift of Colour and Venserpolder garden group and the wider B&G community at the GoC harvest party. The atmosphere was festive and people seemed proud and appreciative of the garden and community. At the Gift of Colour garden, there was an extensive potluck lunch, with a mix of cuisines, sweet and savoury dishes made by many of the community members. Also, there was a variety of creative workshops, e.g. embroidering, making soap or making candle-lights with dried flowers. This event seemed larger and more mixed: there were more white people, and a larger diversity of other cultures. At the Venserpolder party, the garden coaches made soup from vegetables from the garden, and some other women additional dishes.

In terms of social dynamics, it seems like people make an effort to make each other feel welcome. Central to this are the garden coaches, who are skilled facilitators of social tea breaks and well-timed check-in moments, but also outspoken and caring women themselves. The women kept an eye out for each other's well-being and were curious to get to know new people.The women would check if people in the mobility scooters need anything and make sure to invite women who are not part of the WhatsApp group chat in other ways.

People were also very welcoming to me, and every time I visited the garden, the place and people felt more familiar to me. I was quite nervous for my first visit to B&G, the last Moestuinmarkt of the season (Field notes B&G, 16-10). What would people think of me, entering a predominantly black community, as a white person, to study? However, there was little time to worry. Upon arrival, a garden coach told me to put my bag down, make myself a coffee, and come help as soon as I was ready. While working, I had a variety of conversations. People were curious to hear why a person would come all the way from Wageningen. In the time I spent there, polite conversations turned into those of more jokes and stories that had more of a tone of friendship. I left with a sense of gratitude and feeling lucky that I was so warmly welcomed in a community I had never been part of before.

6.1.2 Amterdam Zuidoost (De Bijlmer)

The Venserpolder and Gift of Colour gardens are both in Amsterdam Zuid-Oost, also known as the Bijlmer. The Bijlmer has a bad image, if not stigma, in the Netherlands (Pinkster, Ferrier & Hoekstra, 2019).First of all, it is considered an urban planning failure: the neighbourhood was built as a modernist utopia in the sixties (99% invisible, 2018). However, it never became popular among the middle class that was meant to be attracted. Instead, housing prices dropped and it became home to a variety of migrant communities. In this time, the neighbourhood became a "black neighbourhood", due to the high numbers of people from Surinamese, Antillan and African descent moving there. These communities were socio-economically marginalised, and unemployment, illiteracy and poverty rates were high. The media's and government's focus on the Bijlmer's blackness and socio-economic issues fueled a stigma criminality and problems, with that recreating a *Black Death*[12] narrative of the Bijlmer (Pinkster et al., 2019)

Approximately thirty years ago, the Bijlmer was redeveloped. Flats were demolished and replaced by suburban terraced houses that were meant to make the neighbourhood more attractive to a racially mixed group. While these redevelopments reduced drug addiction and criminality, however, the numbers of unemployment, illiteracy and single parenthood remained high. Urban planners would have hoped that with the renovations, the neighbourhood would become more mixed, which is not happening. Currently, the number of white people has decreased from 25% to 19%. Also, the settlement of companies that can bring jobs and economic development, as well as white middle class people, is not happening. Also housing prices are more than half of that in the other parts of the city (Van Engelen, 2012).

A stigma of a dangerous, problem-neighbourhood remains present in Dutch society. Yet, critical voices highlight how experiences from inhabitants divert from the negative image: people don't perceive the neighbourhood as dangerous, they are happy to live there. Instead of it *being* a place of Black Death, the media focus on the things that confirm "the ghetto" stereotype and marketing slogans like "beer from the urban jungle" keep this in place (Pinkster et al., 2019). Considering the blackness of the BIjlmer, the stigma, as well as the statistics and political/policy interventions should be studied more with critical sensitivity to race.

Being aware that black neighbourhoods are stigmatised, I was prepared to hear stories of poverty, marginalisation and struggles, but to also get this stigma proven wrong. Local news channels mainly reported on issues around hangyouth and hang adults. Bijlmer inhabitants ascribe the hangyouth nuisance and intimidation to lagging intervention from authorities like the police, others to a lack of hangout facilities for the youth (Cleans, 2015; Buurttelevisie Amsterdam Zuidoost, 2016a). Similarly, a video about hang-adults (Buurttelevisie Amsterdam Zuidoost, 2016b), concludes that people need better public spaces to come together, ideally covered or warm one's during the winter months. Chatting on the street, namely, is part of the culture of people with tropical descent.

After several visits, the Bijlmer did not leave me with the impression it is a terrible place. I have to admit, the streets, shopping malls and high rise that were once a modernist dream, are rather grey to

[12] Black death is the way McKittrick used the concept Black Death to describe the way white people focus on the marginalisation, criminality and oppression of BIPOC communities. This obscures the resistance and solidarity structures in the community and fuels white supremacy (2011)

my liking, and do not feel human scale to me. However, the people taking the transport at Duivendrecht looked like a lively mix of professional commuters, family members travelling together. Places like the Multibron “buurtwerkkamer” (neighbourhood office) were little veins of life, and the shopping centre at Amsterdamse poort had a very bubbly atmosphere. People doing their shopping, meeting on the bench to get a coffee or takeaway food. People in mobility scooters stand next to each other having a chat, mothers with children rush from shop to shop, and teenagers spend time together getting fast food or fast fashion. The criminal youth people said should be watched out for, were actually very good boys, one B&G women explained. They call her “mama” (field notes). Generally, the B&G women spoke with love and pride about their neighbourhood. Through their stories, I heard about extensive social networks, a wide variety of community initiatives and a thriving food culture (field notes).

This resonates with the aim of Black Geography to highlight black life, in order to disrupt binaries of black death and white survival (McKittrick, 2011; Jones, 2019). The lived experience perspectives of Zuid-Oost inhabitants, challenge the way the public discourse stigmatises the Bijlmer. Also, they show Zuid-Oost as a lively, thriving place where people are happy to live. These stigmas are not an absolute truth for Bijlmer inhabitants, but perhaps are the result of a white, xenophobic gaze imposed on the area.

6.1.3 PLUK

PLUK is a community supported agriculture farm (CSA) in the far-west of Amsterdam. PLUK was founded in 2017 by two members of the urban agriculture collective Cityplot. They started on the land of Fruittuin van West, a self-pick orchard and organic shop/restaurant. In 2021, they opened another location on the land of organic farm De Boterbloem. Currently, there is a team of six farmers, 10-12 interns who come 2-3 days a week and a fluctuating group of volunteers growing vegetables for nearly 200 households. The volunteers are often friends or acquaintances of the farmers, or harvesters who like to spend extra time on the farm. Some sporadically come and help out, others come on fixed days every week.

PLUK is a self-harvest Community Supported Agriculture farm. The financial model of CSAs can be understood as a cooperative, in which each community member pays a share in the farm at the start of a year. From this money, a (group of) farmer(s) is paid to run the farm[13]. However, farmers and interns mention that they feel the workload is high and some of them financially struggle.

At PLUK, not only the vegetables, but also the community aspect of visiting the farm and getting to know the farmers and other harvesters, is important (PLUK, n.d.; field notes). The people with a share are not considered “customers” who have no connection with the farm besides paying for the vegetables, but harvesters who are part of the community that supports the farm. Among the harvesters, there are some who frequently volunteer and spend a day or half a day a week working along with the farmers. However, other harvesters harvest their vegetables, PLUK, perhaps greet or make a small chat about the weather with the farmers and each other, and then leave again.

[13] The benefits of the CSA model is that it ensures an income, regardless of the harvest turn-out. Being in a more secure position, they can practise more ecological methods that conventional farmers do not use, because they have to produce certain quantities and similar kinds of crops.

Relevant to note is that PLUK consists of two farms: PLUK Boterbloem and Pluk Fruittuin. PLUK Fruittuin is run by an international team of farmers who mainly speak English. PLUK Fruittuin is embedded in the Fruittuin orchard, a buzzing, eventful place with many visitors. PLUK Boterbloem feels more like a calm, "family farm". Though there is a farmer and an intern that do not have Dutch as native language, this is mainly spoken there. Even though PLUK Boterbloem and PLUK Fruittuin are both distinct places with their own character and people, I will discuss them together, as what binds them together is stronger than their differences.

Working days at PLUK

The atmosphere at PLUK seemed to be laidback, "gezellig" and open to new people, although farmers and interns work hard. PLUK is open, even if you do not have farming experience, or when you cannot commit for a full day. Arriving volunteers seem to smoothly blend in with the weeding and ongoing conversations. The PLUK community seems to be a mix of hipster people that are into permaculture and arrive with a vintage racing bike, some biodynamic people with self-knitted scarfs, and middle-class Amterdammers who's good quality hiking shoes and rain clothing hint they like to escape the city to do outdoor activities.

Regarding the work and working days, the daily rhythm was to 9.30 AM sharp, and finishes around 5PM, although this might vary throughout the season. One cannot describe a day at PLUK, without describing the breaks, as they felt like distinct moments that were appreciated by the interns and volunteers. For me, the breaks were valuable moments to pose questions or spark discussion in a larger group, about the way PLUK should engage with topics like racism, whiteness and social justice. In the months October, November and December I was there, the main tasks were to prepare beds for winter. This entailed clearing the beds from weed, wheelbarrowing compost and raking it out and subsequently covering them up with a layer of straw. Occasionally, we did other jobs, such as harvesting vegetables for the harvesters or doing maintenance jobs. Throughout these months, the amount of crops and leafy greens to a stable repertoire of kale and brussel sprouts. We were subject to the harsh progression of autumn into winter. The last weeks before the winter stop, we could not do much because the soil was frozen, as were our feet and fingers.

At both farms, there are three farmers who all work part time for PLUK. Both farms also have a team of 3-5 interns from Warmonderhof[14] that spend two days on the farm for one or two years. The relationships between the farmers and interns seems horizontal in the sense that people get along well and everyone could share ideas or propose to have a break. After some time, some interns also became responsible for certain projects, such as building a seedling greenhouse. However, the farmers who have an overview and were responsible for the yearly, weekly and daily planning.

When I arrive at PLUK, I was always greeted with enthusiasm and warmth. The farmers knew the names of the volunteers and me, and I also felt like the interns knew me, or were keen to get to know me, because the farmers had told about me and my research already. During the work, I could easily start a discussion on topics related to topics like inclusiveness, social justice, whiteness and privilege with people.

Regarding my own relationships to the farmers, I felt like the farmers had high expectations from my thesis, both in terms of how much I could do and how much expertise I had regarding these topics. However, I felt very "free" in how I conducted my research and encouraged to provide critical feedback

[14] The Warmonderhof is a Dutch biodynamic farming institution, and the only formally recognised organic farming school in the Netherlands.

to the farmers. What was helpful in creating this horizontal relationship, was that through food activism I already knew some of the farmers and interns at Fruittuin. During my time at PLUK, these relationships strengthened, as we would have dinner or go out afterwards.

6.1.4 Amsterdam Nieuw-West

The neighbourhoods adjacent to the PLUK farms are part of Amsterdam Nieuw-West, which was built in the 50s, and used to be celebrated for its greenery and space, as quality of life for the residents was a guiding principle in the development. Currently, a mix of people of Dutch cultural heritage, whose lineage of living in Amsterdam goes back five generations, and more recent Turkish and Moroccan people reside there.

Municipality documents, of which one is ironically called “Krachtige mensen, krachtige wijk” (powerful people, powerful neigbhourhood), depicts as Nieuw-West a struggling, worrisome place. The neighbourhood is part of the forty “aandachtswijken” of NL, neighbourhoods that require “attention” from the government, because there are many issues of unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, youth issues, domestic violence, school dropouts (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2007)**.**

According to the municipality, a lot of investment is needed to motivate and empower the people to “participate” in society. “Participation is working and going to school, living and knowing *how* to live in our society. To be and become equipped for that. Strengthening the resilience, empowerment and independence of inhabitants is in all selected neighbourhoods the most important job […].” Although the municipality mentions how a lack of opportunities makes it harder to integrate, they simultaneously frame it as individual responsibility: “besides there is a substantial task to move all inhabitants, man and women, young and old, “allochtoon” and “autochtoon”, to participate and integrate.” (p. 14, Gemeente Amsterdam, 2007) . By focusing on individuals’ ability and responsibility, the municipality shies away from questioning if systemic conditions perpetuate these inequalities, a typical form of Dutch racism as Esajah (2020) and Weiner (2014) described. Also a (hopefully) satirical video about Nieuw West, made by Noord-holland Nieuws, reveals a racist and xenophobic narrative on the bad state of the neighbourhood: “[it used to be a real Dutch part of the city, but] the real Amsterdammers are disappearing. Their houses are increasingly inhabited by “allochtonen”, the narrator explains. An elderly white person tells how “it was never this bad. I lived here for 58 years. The Molenstraat was perfect, but this was completely destroyed. I told the housing cooperation put 2 on one stairs, then they will integrate [referring to “allochtonen”] but then you discriminate they said”, again, putting the blame on the migrants who do not integrate well (NH Nieuws, 2018)

In contrast with the abovementioned reports, videos of bloggers and local news channels highlight the the positive aspects of Nieuw-West. These celebrate the cultural diversity, the market and variety of best local foods. Some of these videos were made in response to the fact that Nieuw-West was the only neighbourhood not mentioned in the I AMsterdam city guide, to some of the locals indignation (AT5, 2022a). AT5 (2022b) reports how Buurtmoeders (neighbourhood mothers), women who patrol the neighbourhood to address hangyouth, are successfully ensuring they behave well. Where authorities and cameras fail to temper the hangyouth, they reap respect with their honest, yet clear conversation. From this, it becomes clear that different narratives about Nieuw West proliferate. The municipality, a predominantly white institution, presents a narrative of “aandachtswijk” and “lack of integration”, that suggests it is a place of black death (McKittrick, 2011). This does not recognise that at the same time, it is a resilient, culturally rich and accountable neighbourhood, as the reports from local news channels and residents seem to suggest.

From the cycling trips from the station to the farm, and occasional visits to a local shop, I got the impression that residential areas in Nieuw-West are calm, and that life revolves around the market at Plein '45-'50 and the busy Burgemeester de Vlugtlaan. Here a wide variety of foods, baked goods, clothes and launderettes are offered. The names of the shop and the products are signs of the strong presence of Moroccan and Turkish culture. I was one of the only white people in the shops or park, besides for elderly white people. Local businesses are interchanged with shopping centres with the major fashion chains and Dutch big brand supermarkets like Albert Heijn and Jumbo.

The absence of organic shops and hipster cafes suggests that the area has not fallen prey to investors and gentrification, and is of little interest to hipsters and middle-class expats. The opposite counts for Fruittuin and the area around. Next to Fruittuin, there are off-grid holidays, that seem very sustainable, and very expensive and target Young Urban Professionals who can be lured into nature . The Fruittuin visitors resemble the PLUK community. However, it also attracts more posh, wealthy-looking people. They wear trendy clothing that seem to be specifically bought for their excursions to urban nature and arrive in big SUVs or expensive electric bikes. These people match the stereotypical white middle class constituency who dominates the AF movement according to the literature. At the same time, the Fruittuin self-pick orchard (not the PLUK fields) is a popular outing food for local neighbourhoods residents, of whom many are people of colour. A relevant contextual factor is the struggle for land in the Lutkemeerpolder. PLUK! Boterbloem used to be the more calm, spacious one of both farms, being surrounded by the Lutkemeerpolder meadows. The farm fields are at the epicentre of the local land struggle for the Lutkemeerpolder, between the supposedly "greenleft" municipality of Amsterdam and local environmental and agricultural activists (Behoud Lutkemeer, n.d.; van Zoelen, 2022). While activists successfully deterred one of the developers and gained nation-wide attention for the struggle of the Lutkemeer polder (Boeddhistisch Dagblad, 2021) , the municipality sold more and more parcels to distribution companies, that are building boxes that are slowly encroaching on the fields of PLUK and the Boterbloem (van Zoelen, 2021). This means that meadow birds, human nature lovers and PLUK the green space of the Lutkemeerpolder around them (Behoud Lutkemeer, n.d.). However, the lease of the land is feared to spike so much that running the CSA might get economically infeasible, which will threaten the future of all small-scale agricultural enterprises including PLUK (field notes).

6.2 Self-reinforcing patterns of inclusion, ways of working and culture

In this section, I will discuss how the intention of the initiatives, their ways of working and food cultures, and the social structures of the wider society and neighbourhood are interlinked with each other. First, I will explain how a the PLUK community was formed as priviliged bubble of like-minded people. I will briefly discuss and reflect on people's motivation to join the project. Secondly, I will outline how the culture of the project is shaped by the fact that many members come from rather privileged, and white backgrounds. Secondly, I will reflect on the motivation of B&G women, and the way values of care and inclusiveness shaped their ways of working. This is followed by a discussion on the food culture of B&G and PLUK, reflecting on the way whiteness, class and histories of migration shape the food culture in both initiatives differently.

6.2.1 Motivation of PLUK members

While the PLUK community is described as like-minded bubble, members homogeneous regarding their level of involvement, motivation to join PLUK and affinity with anti-oppression politics, as the following quote illustrates: "There's the students, the kind of younger people that are maybe a bit

more idealistic or more politically driven. Then there's the rich business people that want to have a break from their business life. And then there's kind of the people that come from a bit of like a maybe messy working life or just like trying out a lot of different things and or having done things that they don't really like doing and now have found farming, that are a bit like older maybe." (Interview, P10-2). During my time at PLUK, I discovered that the idealistic and political people have a background in food justice and climate justice activism and are affiliated with organisations like ASEED, Extinction Rebellion and La Via Campesina. This group is highly educated, conscious of their privilege and is committed to an anti-oppression agenda. However, a large group of the harvesters does not go to PLUK because it is the only way to access healthy food, but for agrileisure[15]. For instance, some harvesters use the harvesting to meet a friend and afterwards have a coffee at the Fruittuin café or that people go to PLUK as an outing from their normal city life and office job. People also explain that for them, volunteering at PLUK, is an opportunity to work outside, spend time in nature and "switch your head off and work with your hands". Two middle-aged volunteers decided to work less after years of working full time, and decided to dedicate their free day to doing something pleasant and useful by volunteering at PLUK (Field notes, P24-11). Being engaged with food for leisure purposes, has been associated with privileges most commonly held by white, highly-educated people (Farmer et al., 2014). Moreover, for people of colour descended from people who were enslaved, agriculture is not associated with leisure but intergenerational trauma of forced slave labour (Jones, 2019; Ramirez, 2007). This way, agrileisure can be understood as a white practice.

Moreover, among the harvesters, there were some who frequently spent hours working on the field, while others did not interact with the community besides making a short chat with each other or the farmers before putting in their headphones and harvesting their weekly share of vegetables. The sense of community and connection between the farmers and this group of the harvesters seemed rather shallow, some interns brought up. This made certain farmers hesitant to raise anti-oppression topics, or speak up when they witnessed a racist or sexist comment (Field notes P27-2)

6.2.2 PLUK: Inclusiveness of a privileged bubble

Although there is diversity in involvement and motivations to join PLUK, people seem to agree that a common denominator is that people hold certain privileges that allow them to participate. This is based on anecdotal evidence and the fact that harvesters' addresses are in the more expensive parts of Amsterdam, the inner city. According to Critical Race Theory, white people, holding certain privileges, shape what is normal but also marginalise and oppress those who do not have these privileges (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In this section I will outline how the prominence of a privileged community shapes what is normal within the space. This section will not be restricted to race and whiteness, as the privileges PLUK hold encompass also class, ability and gender.

Belonging to the like-minded bubble

People describe PLUK as a "bubble" of likeminded people who support the CSA structure: "It is expat-focused. It's started by expats, and you attract who is already part of your network" (Field notes, P28-10). The PLUK farmers also have a distinct pathway in. They become farmers after having been a volunteer or Warmonderhof intern. Every year, this network draws in sufficient harvesters, volunteers and interns, meaning that the patterns in the social composition are sustained. An interesting tension

[15] Agrileisure originates from the combination of agriculture, leisure and recreation in a way that connects the food production and consumption for both productive, environmental and recreational purposes.

of being a bubble of like-minded people is that for those who “fit in”, PLUK is a welcoming and comfortable space. However, others explained that they felt like an outsider in the beginning, because everyone seemed to know each other (Field Notes P11-3).

Being able to afford and access PLUK

To become a harvester, you need the money to be able to pay the 496 euros of annual share. It is possible to request a lower amount, however, this means the farmers will make less than minimum wage. Secondly, PLUK harvesters explain that the harvesting, but also the cleaning and storage of the organically produced vegetables is time-consuming. They explain they often need half a day for one harvest. Thirdly, despite the fact that PLUK is an urban farm relatively close to the city, people mention the inaccessibility of PLUK as a barrier. One needs to cycle for forty minutes or take the car to PLUK, as it is hard to reach by public transport. The Stadspas staff member indeed emphasises that not everyone has the time or access to transportation to make it out of the city, especially not when you are in survival mode to make it to the next day (Field notes, P2-12).

People at PLUK first of all have the financial means to become a member. However, they also have other resources to come or do the work to PLUK, such as good bikes, cars and high quality, waterproof boots, clothing and thermo underwear and wind and rainproof clothing. T The following quote illustrates how good quality clothing became essential to do the work "It was very cold in the afternoon. Rain, wind. I was not reallllllly feeling it, but then I got rain pants, and they made everything sooo much better."(Field notes P24-11). There are a few communal rain pants and rubber boots at PLUK, but apart from that, it seems to be normal that everyone can bring their own clothing.

B&G women confirmed that inclusiveness and accessibility for lower-income groups was an important factor in the inclusiveness of AF initiatives. One interviewee recognised AF initiatives are mostly led by a “small highly educated group. She ascribed this to the fact that they have “more time, they have less struggles, and maybe more purchasing power, more money to do this and also just a network to do this”. Another interviewee explains that AF initiatives are less accessible for women raising children alone: “You love something [gardening], but then you have to raise children or work. And then I didn’t have a garden. You move it aside, you know. But now I don’t work anymore, so I have time for other stuff” (Interview B&G16-11a). Another interviewee explains: If you need to rush the whole time, and are in survival mode, then you don’t really have the time to be concerned with the wider society” (Interview B&G3-11)**.**

Non-linear, highly-educated career paths

One interviewee described PLUK as “definitely not a lower class assembly of people”, and was struggling to pinpoint why exactly they thought so. However, throughout the interview we realised travelling and having lived in different places in the world, is a common conversation topic among farmers, interns and volunteers. Additionally, “And the people, yeah, maybe also don't have such linear lives. I think that can come with a lot of privilege, if you can do random stuff. You have the privilege of choosing. Or having a time [in your life] where you don't earn so much money because you have a safety net, [...] or do not have to feed other people or care for parents.” (Interview P11-2)

To illustrate, Fruittuin is fully run by English-speaking people, at Boterbloem here’s 2 Dutch farmers, and one who speaks Dutch and has lived here long but is originally from the US. The PLUK farmers and interns have made a career switch to become a farmer. Most of them followed higher education and worked in other professions before, such as social work, professional dancing or environmental campaigning with NGOs. The interns are predominantly Dutch, as most of them are following Warmonderhof education, which is a Dutch Biodynamic Farming educational institution. To complete this education, people follow one day of classes, and spend two other days doing unpaid internships

at farms, which is more accessible for people who have other safety nets. However, many interns need to work besides their education, to be able to pay rent (Field notes P2-11).

Also among the harvesters who took a break from their working life, and see PLUK as a place where they can get a taste of a different direction their life could go. For instance, one volunteer explained how “They [harvester] realised they are a bit tired of working in an institution where it’s a lot about money and a very large, big, academic institution. Also, their field is so niche, they don’t see how this [their job] is going to help the planet right now. […]. Now [they] are really looking for what to do. They realise they enjoy working outside a lot. They also said: maybe I should have studied biology." (Field notes P25-11).

Moreover, it seems like the PLUK constituency possesses a lot of cultural and social capital. At PLUK, many harvesters work in jobs that require higher education. For instance, there were researchers at the university, doctors, people working at NGOs that consult policy makers on social and environmental justice, or people with a background in business and finance. Also, there were people who have been professional artists. Moreover, throughout the discussions it became clear that people valued going to cultural events, theatres, art exhibitions and concerts in their free time. Moreover, people’s intercontinental travels and living were popular topics of discussion. These are things also associated with having the privilege to travel and go pay for cultural activities (E.g. Moore, 2009; Dutta, n.d.).

This privilege of having social and cultural capital set a certain standard in conversations. For instance, I noticed that people would often talk about work. At PLUK, people talk a lot about each other’s work. One interviewee feels like “you're kind of graded by what you do [for work]. Either because you're doing something that is practical on the farm, or because you've made it in a business or something like that. That is, I think, macho, but it's also definitely a cultural thing.” (Interview, P11-2). Personally, I noticed that when people who are involved in food justice activism or scholarship were present, the conversations would be of rather academic and conceptual nature. It felt like the more highly educated, activist and/or eloquent people would dominate the discussions and determine the topics of fierce and critical discussions on feminism, colonisation, intersectionality and capitalism. It sometimes even seemed like then people who did not have a background in these topics, would become more silent or distant.

Ability & gender oppression

At PLUK, appreciation for the inclusiveness and care of the community as well as critiques exist in parallel. For instance, one volunteer expressed appreciation for the fact that if they have a more introvert day, it is fine to be by themselves in a corner (Field notes P2-11). Many volunteers describe the atmosphere at PLUK as “alles mag, niks moet”[16] (everything is fine, nothing obligatory). However, an intern expressed she found PLUK quite socially overwhelming, as there is little space and time to withdraw myself. She wonders how inclusive PLUK is to neurodivergent people who are easily over-stimulated (Field notes P18-10). Also, farmers and interns seemed to be considerate of each other’s well-being and supported self care, for instance by interchanging physically challenging and easy jobs , encouraging people to leave early or take another day off in case of illness or mental health issues.

However, it appeared that adopting a certain lense, for instance ableism, oppressions are identified differently than when you look at the place from your own positionality. I am able-bodied and used to

[16] This is common a Dutch phrase to describe that you are free to do what you feel like, and do not have to feel pressure to do something

farmwork that was much more physically intense with less breaks, and experienced PLUK as rather “chill”, however, taking these privileges as the norm, make me less able to assess how inclusive PLUK is. One intern, being passionate about disability justice, explained: “PLUK really doesn't accommodate people who are not able-bodied. And I mean the whole farm is totally inaccessible [for wheelchairs].” The dominance of able-bodied people also shapes what is considered normal: “the breaks that are taken are not that often. It's not that much encouraged: you should just take breaks by yourself. Or, it feels a bit strange. Just be like, OK, I'm just goin back now. Even though it's possible, it might just still not be “seen that well”. Especially when this intern works with men only, they explained they sense a macho or performance-focused culture in which they feel like they cannot take a break (Interview, P11-2).

With regards to gender oppression, task and power divisions seemed to be distributed among all farmers and did not seem gendered. However, some tasks were more often done by the men, or men felt the need to show they were strong, or how much they knew about plants (Interview, P11-2). One nonbinary intern explained how PLUK, even though being much more aware than other places, is still a challenging place to be for them. For instance, the toilets are gendered. But also, they feel like they need to correct someone who misgenders them, and fear that no one would speak up if people would misgender them if they would not be there (Field notes P2511). However, this person does say that PLUK is already much better than the rest of the CSA world, thanks to some of the interns and farmers being part of intersectional feminist and queer activist movements (Interview P11-2).

All in all, it becomes clear that the PLUK community consists of socio-economically and culturally privileged people. This sets a certain standard of how people interact, what is expected from each other, and how one must fit in. Access to resources, financial safety-nets, education as well as being able-bodied are privileges that are not necessarily linked with whiteness. However, society grants white people much easier access to education , jobs and healthcare (Neville & Hamer, 2001). Moreover, the educational and cultural institutions that strengthen people’s social and cultural capital tend to be infused with whiteness, as whiteness is pervasive in the whole society (Weinder, 2014; Delgado & Mulder, 2017) Hence, the normativity of being privileged, could reinforce the whiteness of PLUK as well as exclusiveness to lower-income, lower-educated and disabled people.

6.2.3 Motivations of B&G women

As explained before, B&G was founded with a clear purpose to create a supportive community in which underprivileged women could grow their own food. From a relational point of view, B&G could be understood as a response to the social patterns of financial hardship and single-motherhood in the Bijlmer neighbourhood. The intentionality regarding who B&G wants to reach and what they want to provide, is reflected in the social composition of the women as well as their motivation to join. Also, it shapes what values and practices are central to B&G’s ways of working.

One staff member of B&G explains how she thinks that the women go to the gardens to have a moment for themselves, something rare to single mothers: “a moment without worries like: o, we need to eat tonight, my children have to… just really a moment of silence and with likeminded people, in your garden.” (Interview B&G3-11) One women explains how she joined the garden to recover from being very ill and becoming socially isolated because of that: “I’m trying to recover and build up, and that goes very well in the garden” (Interview B&G16-11b). People describe how working with their hands in the garden and spending time outside has indeed a healing and connecting effect. A phrase that many women, especially those who have experienced a burn-out, describe the gardens as a place

where “niks moet, alles mag” (Field notes B&G 26-10). This atmosphere helps the women to calm down and provides a space for self-care and personal development, they explain.

Another important motivation for the women to join B&G is the desire to learn about nature and growing food. One women explained that when she was a child, she always loved to help in the garden of her grandparents in Suriname. However, while raising children having her own garden was not possible. However, she suddenly really felt like learning how to do this in the Dutch climate, and started looking for garden initiatives, and this way found B&G (Interview B&G16-11a). Another women explained how especially after the pandemic, she realised how little she knew about nature “you should not ask me which plants you can eat and which not” (Interview B&G22-11). When a friend invited her, she joined so she could learn how to sow seeds and grow plants. People explained: once you’re there, you do not want to leave anymore”. Likewise, people grew fond of eating self-grown vegetables. “I ate silverbeets in three colours, yellow, purple and green. […] green beans, klaroen, that is a Surinamese tulip that grew spontaneously, [...] and spinach, it was so tasty from my garden, you do not want to know! [...] I would eat it half raw. Just like this, turn it a bit [referring to the cooking process]. […] If you start in the gardens, you don’t want to stop anymore. You have tasty vegetables, without pesticides, without the crap. Lekker! (tasty)”. (Interview B&G16-11a)

This suggests that gardening is not inherently something that white people see as a hobby, but does not appeal to any BIPOC people because it would remind them of slave labour on the plantations (as mentioned by Jones, 2019). This way, it undermines arguments given by a variety of people in PLUK that BIPOC communities are simply not interested in gardening. Moreover, it illustrates the relevance of the relationships and joy from eating good food. This resonates with the call to engage not only the cognitive, but also personal and emotional dimensions in food activism (Jones, 2019; Klutz et al., 2021).

Where at PLUK, ecology and the environment are strong arguments against industrial agriculture, health narratives are more present in the discussions of B&G women about agriculture and gardening. Most women see eating organic vegetables as a way to stay healthy, or to recover from being ill, since “nature is the best medicine” (Interview 15-11). A lot of learning about ecology, plants and gardening is combined with learning about medicinal properties of plants. Women express great disagreement with the amount of pesticides and artificial fertiliser used to industrially produced food. They see how this is destructive for the environment, but also for human health. Moreover, they are upset about how supermarket food contains many additives, E-numbers and sugars. Some express the worry this food makes people sick. “People eat unhealthy food. A lot of people don’t pay attention. Almost everyone has cholesterol. Really, a lot. For example, if I have ten friends, then there’s eight who have all kinds of things. Two not, they are paying attention. Diabetes from a certain age […], cholesterol is too high. This is too high, that is too high. This is all caused by unhealthy food” (Interview B&G16-11b). However, organic products are too expensive for many of the B&G women. Thanks to B&G, they have access to self-grown, organic food that is affordable.

The health narrative is common in the alternative food movement (Slocum, 2012). At B&G, however, the health narrative is tied into issues of affordability of health and access to healthcare. Some women mentioned they do not feel the healthcare system prioritises helping them, and emphasise the importance of natural medicine. There is little research about racism in the Dutch healthcare system, however, it was found that people with a migration background experience the Dutch healthcare system as discriminatory and not designed for them (Pharos, 2022). The use of natural medicine is common in the Surinamese community for spiritual, cultural and traditional reasons (Andel & Westers, 2009). However, perhaps, natural medicines provide resilience, independence and autonomy where the Dutch healthcare system fails to care for people of colour.

Care embedded in B&G

Throughout my time, I noticed how people tried to create a supportive, caring space and be helpful to people with different physical ability was present at B&G. The garden coaches and women supported each other in recovering from mental or physical health issues and their personal development. One interviewee describes that the women are "super nice, super sweet. They understand you very well. But especially because they went through a lot themselves" (Interview B&G16-10b)**.** Additionally, the women seem to be attentive to each other's needs. Some women are not in the WhatsApp group or cannot come to the garden regularly, so they might miss important announcements or invitations for a gathering. These women are then invited through another channel by other women. Likewise, it is self-evident for the women they help water the plants if someone is ill or cannot make it. "We do this for each other. We care for each other. If everything needs to go according to the rules, these kinds of things don't work. That's what I mean." (Interview B&G22-11). Also, during events, I noticed people made active efforts to make elderly people or disabled people, as well as newcomers feel welcome. Moreover, people were very concerned with each others' health and wellbeing. There are various women who are recovering from being ill or who have had mental health issues. The women would check in with each other about the latest medical updates, how the recovery process went. Moreover, women would exchange a lot of advice and knowledge on how to live healthily as well as natural medicines. This contrasted with PLUK, where health or medicinal properties were, to my knowledge, no topics of conversation.

Moreover, I noticed there was a kind of gift economy that I understand as an extension of the care the garden community provides to the women. For instance, one of the women makes alkaline water, which she ascribes many medicinal properties too. She hands it out to people who have specific health complains. Another women brought back a specific tea from her Suriname trip, someone suffering from a disease that could be treated with this tea (Field notes B&G6-1). Moreover, people insisted some women would take the leftovers home, or would give it to their family or neighbours. This way, the women could support people who cannot cook because of a lack of time, money or skill.

Women-only space

An additional feature of the B&G community is that they are, except for the Gift of Colour garden, exclusively for women. Besides, the B&G community mainly consists of women. One garden coach explains that the absence of men makes it possible for women with certain religions to come. Moreover, being with women only creates a certain sense of familiarity and feeling comfortable. "You can talk about things that women go through". At the garden, "you come as women. We are not coming together like: you are this culture, you are that. You come together as a women" (Interview B&G16-11). Perhaps, the fact that everyone was women, who also were used to do care work as parents in their profession, reinforced a sense of care and supportiveness at the community. Not at all, did I notice a macho atmosphere at B&G about who could lift most or knew most about plants, something that was noticed at PLUK. Also, it seemed like everyone contributed to reproductive tasks such as cleaning up the space afterwards, traditionally considered as women's work.

Embeddedness in the neighbourhood

When asked to describe the community, interviewees mention how they are women who live in the neighbourhood. One participant said: "It's a specific group at this garden. […]. Its people from the neighbourhood. People who just live in Bijlmer. And mainly people who do not work, retired, are unemployed because of their disease, or who work part-time." (Interview B&G22-11). Most women seem to have raised their children as a single parent and their children stay in their parent's house for a long time. Also, it is common mothers still cook food for their sons regularly, because they do not have the time or skills to cook for themselves, even though they moved out. Besides being a mother,

some jobs that women had were taking care of elderly people, cleaning or doing secretarial work at companies. We did not discuss education a lot, although some younger women seem to have followed applied sciences education. The women regularly discuss how food has gotten very expensive and how they do not buy certain products anymore because they are too expensive. Also, some women mentioned to have a Stadspas. Based on this, I conclude that the majority of the B&G women has a relatively low income. However, there are a few women who saw themselves as financially privileged, thanks to their own work or their partner, and some who could work part-time, which was earlier mentioned as a privilege many PLUK people have.

This local character of the B&G community is self-sustaining because most promotion to join B&G happens mouth-to-mouth among people who live in Bijlmer. One interviewee describes this process: "everybody was like, for example, I have a plot, and I say to you, boy/neighbour, you should drop by, we'll be there until three for sure. And then you cycle past and come. And maybe you like to have a garden too? […] It is nice to invite people to something you've worked on. Or where you are a part of. And that you can share something [you grew] or can talk about that. […] And this is how it becomes a community, because it's all people from the neighbourhood". (Interview B&G22-11).

Additionally, the family of the B&G women was more present, physically as well as in conversations. People would exchange extensive updates about their relatives and bring mothers, sisters, cousins and children to the garden (Fieldnotes B&G12-10). Sometimes women would bring their mother, sister or cousin, to show them the project they are part of. Also, some women worked together on their personal plots with their mom or sister.

B&G as mixed space

The following quote from my field notes illustrates how I viewed B&G as a mixed space, where people from a variety would interact with each other. "[The harvest party] seemed a mixed space. At the GoC were more white people than at Venserpolder. Some of the white people there were not part of the community, but B&G staff or volunteers from other parts of the city. […] There were also people who were financial people/employees of B&G. It felt more like an open event [compared to the Venserpolder harvest party]. There were also people from the neighbourhood. There were groups, but it seemed like an organically integrated whole." (Field notes 23-10).

This cultural, religious and racial diversity would manifest in the dishes that were served: "There were two long tables where all the food was displayed**.** There were many sweet things. Marble cake. A cake with poppy seeds. Something that looked like Baklava. My carrot cake. The poached pears. There were biscuits that were bought. There were two "stampots" (Dutch mashed potato-vegetable dish), and there was a rice-dish with some meat. I just ate it. There was potato salad of A. There were pancakes. Normal ones and pumpkin. Bread and humus, and some other spreads I don't know."(field notes B&G23-10)**.** In the section below, I will also discuss how food culture as well as growing practices were different at PLUK and B&G.

B&G always had a strong intentionality to strive towards superdiversity in their organisation, and bring people of all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds together (Bloei & Groei, 2018). Specifically, B&G strives to reach people with a migration background, as these women often need it most (Interview B&G3-11). The following quote suggests this works out well in practice: "most women are from different cultures, from different cultures who came to the Netherlands, and who are not born in the Netherlands. And most of them come from tropical countries" (Interview B&G16-11b). Upon the question how B&G created a space that is welcoming to a diversity of people, B&G women answered that simply "everyone is welcome".

Although B&G was a welcoming space to everyone, there were still challenges. Some women expressed frustration that it was hard to work with women who did not speak Dutch that well (B&G16-11b). There seemed to be a dominance of Surinamese culture at the Venserpolder garden. This could be that most women were Surinamese, but also, the people who were slightly more proactive or extravert figures in the groups, were Surinamese (Field notes B&G6-1) Conversations would be about family in Suriname, the tropical vegetables in the greenhouses would be Surinamese, and the events shared in the group chat were often marked with the Surinamese flag. Also, during one event, I followed a discussion between a few Surinamese women. They expressed their frustration with the pandemic, which was infused with some anti-Asian sentiment. Some of the women noticed how it was uncomfortable, especially because someone of Asian descendance was present, and tried to direct the conversation to another topic (FielD notes B&G6-1).

Furthermore, cultural diversity of B&G also brought a strong presence of religion along. For instance, during events, meals would be preceded with a moment to pray or a prayer led by one of the women. In the group chat on WhatsApp, people would wish each other blessings from god. Moreover, some women would infuse life advice to me with religious references, such as “God will tell you what to do”. Also, during events, the music played was often religious (Field notes B&G21-10; B&G6-1). The aforementioned seemed to be Christian, however, there were also Muslimas at the garden. I did not witness any friction regarding religions, and women ascribed this to the mindset of accepting differences and “everyone is welcome”. The presence of religion contrasts with PLUK, where people seemed to be raised atheist, or abandoned their childhood religion, or explored more animist and agnost spirituality through meditation and yoga.

All in all, it becomes clear that the social patterns from Zuid-Oost manifest in the way B&G functions and the reasons why B&G women are involved. In Zuid-Oost, women commonly do not enjoy the privilege of having time and space for themselves. Additionally, women with a migration background sometimes lack the social network and experience stress. Moreover, for many women in B&G, organic products at the shop are not affordable or accessible (Interview B&G3-11). Likewise, disparities in access to healthcare, may cultivate interests in natural medicines that women can grow themselves. B&G responds to these challenges, which manifests in the way care for oneself and each other is omnipresent in the organisation and community. Also, on a practical level, the B&G gardens provide access to self-grown, organic food and medicinal plants. Moreover, patterns of cultural and racial diversity, as well as values of family, religion and mutual aid, present in Bijlmer according to people’s stories, also tickle down to the B&G community. This shows in the way people extensively exchange updates on health and wellbeing, prayers, leftovers, knowledge of natural medicine and tips on where to get the cheapest deals. This is very different from the discussions about travelling, work and politics common in PLUK. Also, B&G has a clear intentionality to reach people from the local neighbourhood, especially those who need it the most. The B&G constituency reflects Zuid-Oost’s cultural, racial and socio-economic diversity.

6.3 Different food cultures from a relational perspective

At PLUK, food culture became more apparent in the lunch breaks and 4PM coffee and tea breaks. Around 12.30, when stomachs started to rumble, one farmer or intern went off to boil water for tea and coffee. 10 minutes later, everyone gathers at “de kas”, the greenhouse and toolshed, to have lunch. People brought a collection of tupperwares with leftovers from (generally vegan) dinners, or bought bread with spreads or cheese at the Fruittuin shop. When the field allowed, we harvested some

leafy greens to make a quick salad. Most of the time, people take some of their own food, but also offer it to the rest to share. Occasionally, someone bakes something for the entire group. During the tea and coffee breaks, people eat vegan, gluten free biscuits. These are not the cheapest, and take up a thousand euros of the PLUK budget per year, as some farmers repeatedly explain, half-embarrassed, half-jokingly.

Most of the time, food was vegan. A visiting friend from abroad made the comment that the food they brought was “of course” vegan. In a subtle way, this suggests a certain vegan normativity. However, some farmers eat cheese from the organic Fruittuin shop. Although veganism is not advocated for in an outspoken way, some farmers did bring up that there were painful instances of white vegans judging or frowning upon the meat consumption of BIPOC people. This insinuates a sense of superiority that some food politics are superior to others.

I would summarise the PLUK good food imaginary as a self-cooked, vegan, organic, either produced at the farm and supplemented by an organic shop, and seasonal meal. I noticed that if I brought food from the supermarket, I felt self-conscious, because I expected all these farmers to have a perfectly self-made, zero-waste, organic lunch. However, after a few days there, I noticed that people also did not always have the time to cook lunch, and those who could not afford the Fruittuin shop would bring supermarket bread and spreads as well. Sometimes excuse themselves for this, insinuating that there was a certain norm that valued self-cooked, healthy food over supermarket food.

At B&G, the culture and migrations history of the women were present in imaginaries of good food as well as growing practices. At B&G, people valued organic and fresh vegetables, certainly as the PLUK community would, albeit more for health than environmental reasons. However, dishes that were traditional in the culture of people’s families or homeland generated most excitement among the women. It did not matter that an “Eksie Koekoe” (Surinamese egg cake) was from a very processed bake-mix, and not self-made from scratch and accompanied by sugar-heavy soda (something I would not imagine PLUK people to bring to the farm).

Unfortunately, the vegetables of their traditional cuisines are not always accessible or affordable to the women. A woman who grew up in Peru explains how she misses potatoes. In Peru there would be dozens of varieties, while here there are just a few. Other women describe how often the meat or specific vegetables, such as the bakkeljauw (cod fish) or sopropos (tropical bitter melon)are too expensive these days. Therefore, B&G events such as the harvest party or the new years lunch are a great opportunity for them to indulge in the Surinamese cuisine. Even though some women mention how getting certain food from their culture became too expensive, they also urged me that one cannot take money with you in the grave, and you should spend it on eating well. When their children come to visit, they can choose whatever they want to eat, whether it is expensive or not.

People seem to be critical of what is good food, and how certain dishes should be prepared. When food was cooked well, this would be recognised and celebrated with compliments and excitement. Also, for special occasions, the women sometimes would order dishes from people who were known to cook that dish well, in a format of informal exchange. For instance, one interviewee explained: “the bara [Surinamese fried dough snack] from [name of the cook] is soft, I ordered it a few times, for at home. Yes, because my grandson and daughter sometimes come to visit. […]. It is so delicious. She bakes it and she brings it while it’s still warm. For €1 the bara they bring, and also the chilli for me. Well, then we “smullen” (feast), my grandson and daughter. Really tasty.” (Interview B&G16-11a).

The relationship between the women and their tropical backgrounds also manifests in their garden practices. First of all, people explained they like gardening, because their families back home used to do it, or still do it in the Netherlands. For instance, in Suriname, everyone had a garden, the women

explained, and children would commonly help their grandmothers out. One interviewees tells about her family's garden practices: "in NL it's not tropical, the plants they have over there [Suriname], they do not have here. And they miss this. And that's why they now try [to grow these] outside, or on the balcony or in the garden […]. To have their own plants with them" (Interview B&G16-11b) One of the assistant garden coaches grew up in Peru. Her father had a big organic farm, and cultivated her appreciation and knowledge of gardening. Here in the Netherlands, she misses the many different potatoes varieties but she still cooks Peruan food at home (Field notes B&G12-10). The women from B&G respect her knowledge of gardening a lot, her plot was considered one of the more beautiful.

At PLUK, farmers try to integrate local varieties, and forgotten vegetables in their crop rotation plans. The selection of what is grown seems to be based on what would do best locally, and can be sourced by themselves. Occasionally, farmers would experiment with a plant species from further away, such as the Kailan (Also known as Chinese broccoli). However, generally, the harvesters seem to always demand classic vegetables like aubergines, pumpkin, tomatoes and courgettes, the farmers explain). At B&G, some women joined the community because they wanted to learn about growing vegetables in the Dutch climate. However, in addition to that, there is a wish to bring plants from their culture into the Netherlands. Many of the women cannot afford to travel to Suriname every year. However, they seem to enjoy explaining to me how they would love to live in this country that was much more beautiful than the Netherlands, if only the economic situation in Suriname would not be so bad. Repeatedly, the women mentioned how their biggest dream is to have a gigantic greenhouse, like the one at Almere[17] (ONZE Volkstuinen, n.d.): "I have had this wish for a few years already, I would love there to be a big greenhouse in Amsterdam Zuid-Oost. Everyone can rent a piece, and grow vegetables, tropical vegetables that do not grow here in winter. And in summer these also don't grow well, but in the kas they do. So my wish is for everyone, that in Amsterdam […] would have such a greenhouse, but because I live in Zuid-Oost, I would like it to be in Zuidoost. To not travel too far." (Interview B&G16-11b). Another woman explains how a greenhouse would allow people to grow plants from their culture. She is Molukkan and would love to grow cloves. She is proud of her culture and believes it is important to keep it alive for the younger generations (Field notes B&G26-10). Based on this, I would conclude that for the B&G women, gardening has an additional dimension of connecting to other cultures besides the ecological aspect.

Additionally, I noticed a difference in how both projects were organised around the weather. At B&G, the gardening season ends at the end of October, and the organisation "goes hibernating" according to the women. People say how winter is a difficult time for many women because of the cold and grey weather, winter depressions and missing the garden and the community. Being aware of this, the B&G organisation tries to make sure there are still activities to encourage the women to go out, in collaboration with partner organisations (Interview B&G3-11).

One interviewee explains: "Hindoestan women are maybe less active than Dutch women. Dutch women… take initiative to go outside, to walk, to cycle to home or work. Why…? I hear a lot 'it's so cold, it's so cold'. They come from a tropical country, it's that why they are cold and cycle or go outside less? The Hindustan women prefers to be at home, I experienced" (Interview B&G16-11b). At PLUK, all work continued until mid December, and was starting again in February. The farmers and interns, and

[17] In Almere, there are some community gardens where people can rent a personal plot, in old, industrial sized greenhouses. Many people from Suriname have grown tropical plants on their plots. B&G once visited these greenhouses as an outing, which ignited a dream of a Greenhouse in Amsterdam Zuid-Oost among many of the women.

a smaller group of volunteers, would put on extra layers, continue to work and still enjoy spending time outside.

All in all, a relational perspective can reveal how certain social patterns have shaped food cultures. As mentioned before, social structures of privilege, whiteness and class are differently present in the way PLUK and B&G function. Likewise, the food cultures at B&G and PLUK were very different from each other, which could be understood from a relational point of view.

At PLUK, the norm and ideal food consumed is self-cooked vegan food from seasonal, local and organic vegetables. The preference for local and seasonal translates in a preference and normativity of vegetables that can grow in a Dutch climate. While the climate, and not necessary senses of superiority causes these Dutch vegetables to be the norm, it may perpetuate the culinary whiteness of the foods grown in NL. Moreover, the norm of veganism or vegetarianism could be tied into whiteness. For instance, veganism in Europe is associated with a white middle class constituency, although scholars emphasise that this association does not recognise the BIPOC vegans, and hence further marginalises them (Greenebaum, 2018; Murphey & Mook, 2022). Yet, within the vegan movement, some groups adopt a colourblind, racially depoliticised ideology, adhere to racist stigmas and replicate whiteness (Harper, 2011). It was beyond the scope of this study to see to what extent racism and whiteness manifested through veganism. However, I would recommend white vegans in the Dutch AF movement to be cautious to judge food practices of communities in which eating meat is common without considering how privilege and superiority-thinking is at play.

At B&G, migration histories and the desire to maintain a connection with the homelands and cultures of their predecessors are manifested in imaginaries of good food and people's motivation to garden. This reveals a relationality between B&G gardens and other places, as well as other pasts. Furthermore, it hints towards the colonial history of the Netherlands. Many of the Surinamese and Indonesian communities migrated to the Netherlands when the colonies gained independence. Where they came for jobs, housing and prosperity, they were received with xenophobia and racism (Weiner, 2014). This legacy proliferates in the negative stigma of Bijlmer. However, the way people support each other and engage in informal economic exchanges, can be associated with the mutual aid practices that food justice scholars identified among BIPOC and socio-economically disadvantaged people (e.g. Jones, 2019; Penniman, 2020). Although these support structures are necessary because of socio-economic marginalisation of lower-income and BIPOC communities, they can also be understood as a sign of black life (Jones, 2019; McKittrick, 2011).

6.4 Nuances to the exclusiveness of PLUK and blackness of B&G

In my research, B&G is used as an example of a counterspace that is contrasted with PLUK, a space of privileged people. Counterspaces promote healing from oppression, the strengthening of black empowerment and resist racial oppression and stereotypes (Billings, 2018). However, in this contrast, there are nuances to be made. In this section I will explain what work is already done in PLUK to address whiteness, but also where B&G practices are tied into whiteness.

6.4.1 Inclusiveness efforts at PLUK

Various people mentioned how they view PLUK as a very open, laid-back space where anyone could come regardless of their knowledge and experiences in agriculture and "alles mag, niks moet". Also, PLUK strives to be more financially accessible by providing a sliding scale for the annual share: people

can choose if they give an annual share that corresponds with a minimum wage for the farmer, or more. Ideally, this would result in wealthier members paying more, so that lower-income groups need to pay less. Additionally, in the contract, it is stated that instalment payment is possible if you let the farmers know. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate whether the sliding scale encouraged people with lower-income to join. However, PLUK volunteers and interns were positive about the model, and I spoke to some financially privileged harvesters who indicated they were willing to pay more.

Moreover, some interns mention that PLUK is on average more aware of anti-oppression issues, since some of the farmers and interns have experience doing social justice, feminist and agroecological activism. They often raise topics related to anti-oppression and social justice that raise awareness among other interns or volunteers who were never exposed to this, and can consequently bring this to other projects. When discussing awareness of queer identities and racism, one interviewee explained that compared to other farms, PLUK is that bad.

6.4.2 Whiteness in B&G

Throughout my thesis, I have spoken to a few white farmers who also worked for B&G in the past. They explained how B&G in the beginning was dependent on the urban farmers from cityplot to teach the Garden Academy students. On the one hand, this reproduces the pattern of white people being the expert, teaching people of colour that could be associated with white saviourism. On the other hand, the intention behind this was to share knowledge with B&G own women, so that in the longer term, the organisation would not exclusively rely on white people as agriculture experts and teachers. This way, it could be seen as an example in which a white person uses their privilege for the self-determination of BIPOC communities, as Sbicca (2012) advocates for. It would be interesting to see if B&Gs ecological practices and knowledge will evolve if they become more independent from white and Warmonderhof-educated garden coaches.

Moreover, there are critiques to the organisational structure of B&G. Firstly, one interviewee observed that the Venserpolder garden became less spontaneous and shaped by the women's own initiative, because the garden coaches wanted to run the garden more professionally and efficiently (Interview B&G22-11). She observed that this reduced the sense of ownership and initiative among the initial members of the garden. Also, she imagined how in the long term, this could lead to women of a certain background not feeling as attracted to the garden anymore: "people from other cultures, who emphasise that [efficient and delineated rules] less, or [people who] give less priority to that, because they come to the garden for relaxation, do not want to hear "you can be here from 10 onwards, and until 11 there's the hose" (Interview B&G22-11). In other words, this interviewee says that making B&G more structured, punctual and efficient, could deter a certain, currently BIPOC group that has different needs and visions, and attract those who are more interested in structure. Secondly, this interviewee explained how the hierarchical nature of the organization reduces that initiative and ownership of the women. Namely, all initiatives need to be run past the correct manager. Another issue pointed out by a garden coach was that decisions were often made "from the top" without considering how this would impact the women (Field notes, 19-10). Often, extra projects created "from the top", or guests that needed to be received, were tied into raising funds. However, it did create extra work for the garden coaches and would affect the calm atmosphere of the gardens.

Additionally, visits and the staff page on the website seem to indicate that people employed in managerial roles, such as project leaders of the garden and finances, are often white people. More community and care related functions, such as doing outreach or being assistant garden coach, were

done by women of colour. The winter walk event was led by a white woman. In the conversation afterwards, in which the women could give their opinions on the Diemerbos, only a small group frequently spoke up in the discussion, of which a white woman had the loudest voice. Though based on a few moments of observations, this might suggest that white people still have a larger presence in higher layers of the organisation.

Lastly, I noticed that the women at B&G see themselves as critical and aware compared to individual consumers who still consume industrially produced food. People recognise that it is especially the poor people who still eat things like “plofkip” (chicken whose rapid growth is accelerated by lots of hormones and medicines). Still, the women express frustration and disapproval of people who still eat “troep” (trash/crap) and have so many diseases. (Interview B&G 16-11b). This is not needed, because healthy food is “the best medicine” to all kinds of diseases, as “nature is the best pharmacy”. These narratives are prone to reduce complex issues of social injustice to a matter of consumer responsibility and validate neoliberal approaches to food security, which the AFmovement has been critiqued for (Agyeman & McEntee, 2014). This transfers the blame of not eating healthy and sustainably on individuals, not socio-economic inequalities in the system.

6.4.3 Reflection on findings 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.5

In the theoretical framework I discussed how the concept of relationality is central to social-constructivist (Massey, 2004) and black feminist research (McKittrick, 2011; Jones, 2019). Places do not exist in a vacuum, instead they are shaped by social relations of the past and present. To understand the geographies of the present, one must consider how social structures such as capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, racism and ableism have been present in both the past and the present (McKittrick, 2011).

Adopting a relational perspective, B&G could be considered a product of the social, cultural and political forces that pervade Dutch society and are at play in the neighbourhoods. The Bijlmer area has been subjected to racist, xenophobic and classist stigma and policies for decades and is currently facing the Netherland’s highest poverty, unemployment and illiteracy rates (Pinkster, 2019). Women, often being a single parent, or discriminated against or extra vulnerable because of their gender, bear the brunt of this. These social patterns present in Bijlmer are the reason B&G was founded. Also, it shapes the way the project functions: what decisions have been made on who to reach out to, how to make sure it’s a caring and supportive place, and what food is being produced. At the same time, the shared experiences of being a woman, surviving disease or economic hardship and their embeddedness in the neighbourhood is what binds the B&G community together. B&G is also a network of mutual aid, caring for each other, and knowledge exchange. In that, it resists oppression and hardship the women face, and it could be understood as a place where black life is created (McKittrick, 2011).

Also at PLUK one can see how the social relations in the wider society, that make becoming a CSA farmer or harvester a privilege, shapes who is part of the community. The PLUK community was started by two farmers and food activists who set up their CSA drawing harvesters in from their own network. Initially, there was little intentionality to reach specific groups not part of their network yet, and as a result, the farmers attracted people of similar socio-economic status and culture to them. Presently, PLUK is a tight knit community, to some a bubble, of mainly white, environmentally oriented, global northern, highly educated expats. This privileged social composition also shaped the culture of PLUK and to whom it is inclusive. To thrive in PLUK, one must be able-bodied and have the social skills to integrate in a socially tight-knit community. Also, one ideally is able to contribute to discussions about work in social or environmental NGOs, on academic topics or their travels around the world. PLUK

welcomes people with less agriculture experience, yet, I wonder how likeminded someone will feel who does not travel, make career switches or work for an environmental NGO. Additionally, the institutions where PLUK expats work, and are educated often built upon capitalist, colonial and white supremacist foundations and far from coming to terms with racism and whiteness (Delgado & Mulder, 2017)

Moreover, for many harvesters, PLUK is not the only access to healthy food. It is an enjoyable outing for them that supports an initiative they ideologically believe in. This contrasts with the fact that for many women in B&G, being part of the garden is the only way organic vegetables are affordable for them, and reveals another way in which privilege is the norm and shapes what is normal PLUK.

All in all, it seems like the social patterns of society and the neighbourhood shape the motivation and social composition of the community members of both initiatives. This also tickles down in the ways of working, culture and food practices of the initiatives. This again, reinforces patterns of who would feel included or welcome, and who not. In other words, there are self-reinforcing interactions between the social patterns of the wider society, the motivation of the people, the purpose of the project, the culture of the project, and for whom this project is inclusive.

6.5 Addressing whiteness in Urban Agriculture

6.5.1 Diverging ideologies for PLUK

Within PLUK, there were various opinions about the issue of racial inclusion and justice. At times, these were also in contradiction with each other, which made it hard for me to undertake action. For instance some people said that PLUK should prioritise fair wages for the farmers, and not social justice for other groups, while others mentioned anti-oppression was fundamental to their motivation to become a farmer. At some point, I realised that these different opinions could be ascribed to differences in ideology. In this section, I will discuss how the critiques of the AF movement and its whiteness, as described in the literature review and conceptual framework, relate to these ideologies.

Firstly, some farmers and harvesters consider growing food in an environmentally friendly way, reducing the negative impact on the climate and local ecology, as the main purpose of PLUK. For them, social justice is of secondary importance. Also, the ability to grow food, or to do this in an environmentally friendly way, should not be sacrificed for social justice.

Secondly, there are people who see PLUK as a place that can restore connection between the consumers and the farmers, and through that, people and nature. This was not explicitly mentioned, but I assume people had the idea that issues like climate change and environmental destruction are caused by a lost connection between humans and nature. The way PLUK contributes to a more just and sustainable world, is that it channels away some wealthy people from consuming industrially produced food and reconnects them with nature. In this way reduce the power and impact from the industrial agricultural system.

Participants adhering to these narratives, would often conclude that social justice is not PLUK's fight to fight, and that inclusion of BIPOC communities should not become a priority among PLUK.

As mentioned in the literature review, initiatives that prioritise environmental and ecological impact, but not social justice, are prone to replicate certain oppressions and sustain hegemonic worldviews and practices (e.g. Agyeman & McEntee, 2014; Slocum, 2012).

A third narrative that became apparent was PLUK as place to educate people of privilege. Often, this came from the recognition that PLUK's production capacity is tiny compared to industrial agriculture farms. The biggest merit of PLUK is bringing together a community of people around food, not the absolute quantities of reduced carbon of soil that is built. The following notes of a conversation summarise PLUK's main value: "What PLUK also is [besides a place of food production] is a place for people to learn. It's not really a solution to agriculture, it's not large enough scale, but people do get exposed to ideas. E.g. some people never thought about racism. Maybe for me, sparking these discussions is something very valuable I can do. And they can also learn about other political things." (Field notes P18-11). In other words, people might enter PLUK for agrileisure, but get sensitized to issues of climate justice, food justice, anti-oppression, and racism and may start using their privilege to work towards social justice. The most effective and right thing to do, would then be to educate people about oppression, especially considering the group of harvesters is generally white and privileged. If PLUK were to actualise this narrative, it could draw from the example of the People's Grocery mentioned in Background, a BIPOC-led food justice organisation that also involves white people in engaging in anti-oppression learning and activism (Sbicca, 2012).

Sbicca describes how the People's Grocery aims to take privileged people along in learning about oppression.

A fourth group of people believes that PLUK should strive to be an real-life example of socially just, inclusive projects. In other words, PLUK should prefigure an anti-oppressive alternative to the existing food system.

For instance, despite being underpaid, one farmer repeatedly mentioned how they didn't want to grow food for rich people, because then it would not be a good alternative to the current food system. Another farmer believes it simply cannot be that PLUK is situated in such a diverse neighbourhood, but that all these people do not come (Field notes P2-11). Another intern expressed frustration with the normality of exclusiveness of the AF movement and argues that this should change: "For example, there's no, not really work together with migrants or refugees or... Projects that do work with like undocumented people or refugees, are always projects that are explicitly for that, you know. Why can't it be part of PLUK? […] I understand the need for a space that is exclusively for these people. But why can't PLUK make an effort to also do that?" (Interview P11-2)." This group recognised that PLUK has limitations and constrictions, nevertheless, PLUK should deconstruct all forms of oppression that are internalised in their ways of working and the relationships with the communities around them. This work should be done regardless of the effort it takes, simply because otherwise they are acting in conflict with their ideology.

Strikingly, this opinion was commonly held among those who are also involved in food and social justice groups with intersectional feminist and anti-colonial ideologies. In the literature, it was mentioned how shifting white ideologies and practices require explicit commitment and ongoing learning about anti-oppression (Sbicca, 2012; Klutz, 2021; Chennault, 2021). The people adhering to the fourth narrative seem to strive for politics and practices that align with anti-oppression and food justice activism, which could be ascribed to their involvement in various social movements addressing gender, colonial, racist oppression and environmental destruction. This may have sensitised them to intersecting systems of oppression and given them opportunities to reflect on their privilege and how this should be addressed.

While the enumeration might suggest that there were four distinct categories, in reality, these were more interwoven. People kept deconstructing what PLUK is about and changed their opinion, or occasionally contradicted each other. For instance, while people from the fourth group believed PLUK

should always strive to dismantle more oppression, they would also mention how producing food, ensuring fair wages, and social justice were in tension with each other.

6.5.2 Different views of people of colour

The diverging opinions in PLUK made it challenging to agree upon certain steps PLUK could take. However, women from B&G and PLUK also challenged my presuppositions about racism and whiteness being a problem in the AF movement. At times, I started to doubt if my research agenda was based on black-death thinking and whether I was imposing my understanding of how BIPOC communities were oppressed and excluded onto them.

One of the PLUK farmers expressed how they felt uneasy talking about inclusiveness, as she had often experienced these conversations as tokenistic, as these notes illustrate: "In the morning, we had this conversation about inclusiveness. [a BIPOC farmer] said: something about this word makes me feel very strongly. Or it does something to me. But I don't know myself what it is. Maybe it is that I very often have been part of this 5% BIPOC of a company, so they would get extra subsidies and stuff. They also said they're very aware of when something is genuine, and when it is not. What they found disturbing is that this diversity/inclusion is often done for the reputation or money, and they don't like this." These remarks do not imply that this farmer is against making PLUK more inclusive and just. However, it did raise caution and slowed down the process by invoking reflection instead of taking action.

At B&G, most of the women did not view racism as a big issue in urban agriculture. To illustrate, one interviewee mentioned "I have not experienced this myself, but it is possible" […] I am only part of B&G, so then I don't see discrimination. Yes it is possible [in other AF initiatives], but I did not experience it. But it could be possible." (Interview B&G16-11a). However, the founder of B&G explained to me how she experienced the wider food movement as a group of white privileged people who do not care about marginalised communities. When she wanted to start B&G, people were reluctant to believe in its value. Moreover, she felt many urban farmers, especially white men, who presented themselves as an expert, did not take her work as seriously. This resonates with literature that describes the common experience of black people that they need to prove themselves and their legitimacy to enter white spaces. Also, when I explained to people what my thesis was about, some BIPOC participants from B&G and PLUK, were glad to hear "finally" someone was investigating this, this reassured me again. In section 4.4, I will further discuss their suggestions on making AF more inclusive.

In this research, I initially hoped to understand whiteness of the AF, as well as what racial inclusiveness and justice means, from the perspective of Dutch(-residing) people of colour. However, I feel like my research only scratched on the surface of this question. However, my findings suggest that among people of colour, there are different views and experiences of racism. First of all, these differences could be explained by the fact that racism is sometimes invisible to people of colour, because they internalised certain oppressive patterns (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017)**.** Additionally, from the field of political ecology, it has been critiqued to understand the voices of a certain social group, as every individual has a unique set of experiences (Mohanty, 2003). More sensitivity to intersectionality could shed light on how these individuals have different bundles of privilege and oppressions, and help explain these different experiences (Crenshaw, 1989). Again, it is vital to remember that one must not assume all people of colour have the same views, and that they are a monolithic group (Boom, 2018) – something these findings reiterate.

6.6 Revealing whiteness in PLUK

At PLUK, discussions about racial inclusion and justice, surfaced certain aspects of whiteness mentioned in the conceptual framework: colourblindness, white resistance, white gaze and the black-death-white survival narrative. In this section I will discuss how people in PLUK denied racism or were resistant to giving up privileges, considered people not part of their group as homogeneous "other", and how they held certain assumptions that reinforced a black death and white survival narrative. This section will mostly focus on PLUK, however, I will discuss how these assumptions were shared or countered by the interviews with B&G women and participatory observation. Additionally, I will discuss the way people at PLUK challenged each other's whiteness and engaged the community in critical reflection.

6.6.1 Colourblindness & white resistance

Based on my field research, it is hard to say how pervasive colourblindness is among white B&G and PLUK participants. I identified two instances of colourblindness. Both explained that they believed they unlearned racism because they were raised in a multicultural environment and had people of colour as friends. Of them explained that they did some self-education, and unlearned most of the racism that was internalised in them. Denying that one is racist because they have black friends, is a common pattern among whites (Colsch, 2019). Strikingly, both of these people mentioned how it was hard for them to come to terms with the fact that they were white and privileged. Both of them felt underprivileged in some ways. For instance, one person grew up in a family that was poor and suffering from physical disability. The other person felt marginalised as a women. However, not having certain privileges, does not mean, one did not internalise oppression at all. According to critical race theory, it is common white people do not see their own race or privileges, as it is invisible to them, because whiteness is taken as a default in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). I did not discuss these people's opinion the inclusiveness of PLUK. However, one of them did dismiss anti-racist efforts of "young people" in these topics as a trendy, rather than a political effort, generating the impression they did not see an urgent need for PLUK to work on racial inclusiveness and justice.

With regards to resistance against efforts to make PLUK more inclusive and just, common arguments were that social justice efforts and PLUK's capacity to produce in a sustainable way would suffer from this. For instance, one interviewed harvester says: "If PLUK says: we want to farm organically with respect for nature and as many varieties as possible to keep the balance, that we do not exhaust the soil and do a monoculture of potato […]. If that's their credo, they should not divert from this to involve other groups. They should consider, if those groups just want Spanish pepper, tomato and cucumbers, they have to … their own garden… make their own group." (InterviewP24-10). This comment shows that the harvester associates PLUK with sustainable practices, and "other groups" with less variety and environmentally friendly practices. Also, an underlying assumption is that BIPOC people do not want to produce in an environmentally friendly way.

Another intern mentioned PLUK's purpose, on the other hand, is to produce food. It needs to prioritise efficiency and productivity. Hence, will never be as inclusive as B&G, which she considered a social project. The valorization of productivity and efficiency has been associated with the White, European tradition of quantification, commodification and prioritising economic profit over social and ecological wellbeing (Eisenstein, 1994; Aruzza, Bhattacharya, and Fraser, 2019). By making this comparison, the intern imposes a certain framework onto B&G, that measures its value in the standards of White, European, capitalist thinking. In other words, a white framework is imposed on a black organisation, which food justice scholars and black geographers criticised (McKittrick, 2011; Jones, 2019).

Furthermore, some people were hesitant to commit to anti-oppression, because they feared it would make PLUK less economically viable. People believed the farmers were already underpaid and their workload very high, and that they might suffer from anti-oppression efforts. While I personally agree, farmers should not be asked unreasonably much, I could be an example of white resistance: in essence, it shows that a group of privileged people, the PLUK community, does not want to sacrifice certain privileges to make their project more just. Also, in this argumentation, inclusion and justice is viewed as an altruistic act of doing good, for which certain people have to sacrifice their own privilege. However, this mindset has been criticised by Klutz et al (2021) for replicating a dualism between whites who can do good, and BIPOC people who need to be saved, rather than understanding how the liberation of one group is tied into collective liberation that benefits all.

The literature consulted for this thesis did not highlight the perceived tension between environmental or economic productivity and inclusiveness and social justice work as a source of white resistance. However, Zandvoort (2021), describes how Dutch climate activists commonly prioritised urgent action to prevent ecological collapse over doing the slower work of dismantling racism, sexism and ableism in the movement, as well as alliance building with social justice movements. Perhaps, literature on alliance-building, dismantling oppression and solidarity from the Dutch or European climate justice domain could help understand and address these perceived trade-offs.

6.6.2 White gaze

Othering and externalising people of colour

As explained in the conceptual framework, white people have a white gaze when looking at the world. They tend to see white culture and epistemology as superior, and those of “the other” as inferior, and hold prejudices of people of colour that sustain stereotypes (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Billings, 2019). Moreover, they tend to impose white frameworks onto BIPOC communities, that may highlight black death, and obscure black life (Jones, 2019; McKittrick, 2011). In this section, I unpack in what way white gaze, superiority and saviourism manifested in PLUK.

A first observation was that people who are not part of PLUK, were seen as a homogeneous group that was different, and sometimes marginal to the PLUK community. Torefer to the identity of many of the PLUK community, farmers, interns and harvesters who did not grow up in the Netherlands, a significant part of the PLUK population, people used the word expat. The people in the neighbourhood of Nieuw-West, were often referred to as people with a migration background, migrant communities, or Turkish or Moroccan people. The choice of the word expat has been associated with distinctions between white, highly-educated migrants and BIPOC migrants that are racialized, and associated with classicism and xenophobia (Kunz, 2021). Subconsciously, members of PLUK create a divide between themselves and the BIPOC communities in Nieuw-West based along axes of race and class. The people in PLUK are highly educated, often coming from the Global North, and often white, while the communities in Nieuw West, are more often lower-educated and are socio-economically marginalised. In this distinction between expats and migrants, it does not seem to matter that the members of the PLUK community migrated a few years ago, and that BIPOC communities in Nieuw-West are often already secondary generation citizens and speak the Dutch language. In other words, the identification of PLUK as expats, and the others who are not part of PLUK as migrants, reveals a kind of divisional thinking between white and BIPOC, higher and lower educated, that can be associated with white supremacy and classism (Kunz, 2021).

Moreover, I noticed that the people who PLUK wants to include, or not oppress, are considered to be external to the organisation. One intern at PLUK remarked that she felt uncomfortable with the

statement “PLUK is such a white privileged space”. Namely, there are people of colour part of PLUK. This intern was worried statements like this, and only speaking of BIPOC people as excluded to the project, would render the presence of at that moment three BIPOC interns/farmers invisible (Field notes P16-10). Moreover, not recognising BIPOC presence within PLUK, sustains an image of BIPOC people as oppressed and excluded, instead of as active agents in the group - sustaining a black-death white survival binary (McKittrick, 2011).

Furthermore, in discussion about the topic of inclusion and social justice people who were not part of PLUK were referred to as if they are a homogeneous group who all had similar reasons to not be part of PLUK. To illustrate, I was often asked: “can you figure out why *they* don’t join? Can you not just go out in the neighbourhood and ask what the barriers of people are?” These questions both suggest that there is some “other” who is not included, because they experience barriers. However, the lack of specificity about “the other” suggests that the people at PLUK see “the others” as a homogeneous group.

Lastly, it struck me that one interviewee from B&G spoke about the Surinamese, the Hindustan people and “the Dutch” people, as if they were different groups. I wondered if I jumped into judging this “othering” as a white oppression onto BIPOC communities too quickly. The fact that this woman would introduce herself as Hindustan, and not as Dutch could be interpreted in various ways. For instance, perhaps people weigh the difference in cultural backgrounds more than the shared Dutch nationality in their passport. Or, specifying her Hindustan heritage, rather than calling herself Dutch, could suggest how strongly her Hindustan culture proliferates in a white country, or that she is proud of her Hindustan identity. However, could also be understood as an internalised sense of separation of us and them. This reveals how the artificial divide between White Dutch people and BIPOC people through the concept of Allochtoon and Autochtoon, imposed by the Dutch media and government, has been internalised among white and BIPOC (Weinder, 2014). It was beyond the scope of my thesis to delve deeper into this. However, this suggests that issues of race, culture and identity should be understood as being in complex interaction with racism, othering, but also black life and cultural expression, rather than simply one of those.

Assumptions about “the other”

Secondly, While PLUK farmers were curious why “the other” was not part of PLUK, there were also certain assumptions why “they” were not part of PLUK. Firstly, I personally noticed that when racial inclusiveness was discussed, always someone brought up how PLUK was too expensive for people. In other words, people assumed BIPOC communities to be poor. This was also found by Bradley (2022). Secondly, people also ascribed the absence of lower-income and BIPOC communities to a lack of awareness of the health impacts of industrially produced food and knowledge of the existence of alternatives.

However, this line of thinking could be problematized. While it might be true that some BIPOC people cannot financially afford CSA-membership, this generalisation cannot be made for everyone. For instance, one woman from B&G responded like this when I mentioned the price of PLUK: [ooph!] Do you know why I was shocked? Because I am alone. Because for a family it is doable. I forgot about that” (Interview B&G16-11a). Also another interviewee of B&G, who explained to me she had a well-paying job, expressed interest in joining a CSA if there would be one close to her.

The tendency to assume people of colour are poor might be a sign of people replicating the black death – white survival binary (McKittrick, 2011). This refers to the perception of black people as oppressed, and white people as powerful – keeping white supremacy in place. Also, it could be linked to Anderson (2016) point that white people seem to assume black people come from “the ghetto”, a poor, criminal

place with few opportunities. Nieuw-West and Bijlmer both have the image of poor and black neighbourhoods, and these findings seem to suggest that this stigma proliferates in PLUK.

6.6.3 Superiority, neoliberal approaches & saviourism

During the field work, discussions surfaced that a sense of superiority is present among consumers of healthy, organic and sustainable food compared to those who do not.

In PLUK as well as B&G, people described themselves as more “bewust” (conscious/aware) compared to those who eat the “trash” from the supermarket.It occurred various times that people from both B&G as well as PLUK, explain that “in survival mode” you cannot make good, long-term decisions. It occurred that one time, someone said “stupid decisions”. Although this is not necessarily racialised, there is a certain superiority present in the labelling of decisions that are deemed best by people in those situations, as “stupid”. Additionally, one harvester describes the growing practices of Turkish and Moroccan communities in the allotment gardens as follows: “those people”, just want “Spanish chilli, tomatoes, cucumber”. In her community garden, she says she has to watch out if it does not become a “monoculture of spring onions and tomato plants”. The word monoculture is a laden term that before was used to refer to ecologically harmful. These findings reflect the literature on the AF movement that describes AF activists who have been critiqued for presenting certain food practices as good, and others as bad (Guthman, 2004; Pakh, 2021).

Additionally, In discussions about good food, neoliberal narratives of blaming the consumer surfaced. For instance, in discussions about the costliness of PLUK, harvesters mention that people should understand that being part of PLUK is about so much more than food. It is about doing something good for the environment, supporting a small-scale farm and joining a community (Field notes P18-10). People should stop buying cheap food and be more willing to spend money on initiatives like PLUK. However, in these discussions, people seem to be ignorant of the privileges they have, and that not everyone can afford to pay higher prices for food, especially not the people who are struggling to make ends meet on a daily basis. However, Slocum (2007) has described this phenomenon as affluent whiteness. Moreover, this narrative validates neoliberal approaches to AF that put the responsibility to eat healthy and sustainably on the consumer (Tornaghi, 2007 (European context); Agyeman & McEntee, 2014).

6.6.4 Shifting a black-death to black life narrative

The process of determining oppression within PLUK and if and how this should be addressed, revealed various patterns that can be associated with whiteness or hegemonic thinking. First of all, PLUK farmers and interns conceptualised the communities that were currently not part of PLUK, homogeneous “other” by using the distinction between expat and migrants and falling into generalising assumptions. Secondly, this othering and homogenising people of colour is a mechanism that divides people into categories of us and them, black and white, superior and inferior (Quijano, 2007; McKittrick, 2011). This is not helpful in anti-oppression work, as that requires people to build relationships across these divisions on a foundation (McKittrick, 2011).

Moreover, the assumption that BIPOC communities are poor, do not have time, or knowledge, might have roots in racists prejudices that all BIPOC come from the ghetto where everyone is poor (Andersson, 2016). Also, it hints that the negative image of both Nieuw-West as struggling neighbourhoods, with low socio-economic status and many migrants, proliferates among PLUK harvesters. Focusing on the marginalisation, instead of thriving food cultures, despite facing socio-

economic marginalisation, PLUK's white gaze replicates a black death- white survival narrative. In this narrative, those who eat healthy, organic food are the superior, enlightened consumers who made smart choices. According to the literature, this black-death white survival binary identified through a white gaze, is prone to be followed by missionary style actions that want to bring better food practices to the poor or the black (Guthman, 2008; Chennault, 2021).

However, observations at B&G and the neighbourhoods highlight that BIPOC communities are not poor, and in desperate need of a saviour. According to employees of Cascoland, a local food waste initiative in Nieuw-West that focuses especially on giving the neighbourhood power to make food waste into ferments, people have access to very fresh, affordable food through the corner stores and the Market at Plein '40-'45. People eat well, and are very resourceful in making delicious dishes with little ingredients. Moreover, there are vibrant informal home enterprises such as garage bakeries. While this food might not be organic, people certainly do not eat bad food, Cascoland explained. Likewise, from spending time at B&G, I learned that people find ways to cook good food, despite their high prices, by tipping each other on the best deals and the informal economic exchanges and mutual aid of cooking for each other.

6.7 Addressing whiteness: internal learning & local relationships and collaboration

6.7.1 Internal learning and reflection in the PLUK community

The next section outlined internalised whiteness and racism in PLUK. However, throughout my field work, collective learning and critical, constructive dialogue occurred about issues of oppressions. Moreover, people posed each other critical questions and encouraged internal reflection: what drives the desire to be inclusive? Because a racially mixed group looks good in the photo? To get a more diverse customer base? A sense of superiority or saviourism? Is including people in PLUK the goal? Or are there other ways to address internalised oppression and be in solidarity with BIPOC communities? (Field notes P18-10).

For instance, some farmers and interns wanted to solve the issue of inclusiveness by going to markets and neighbourhoods and inviting people to join PLUK. However, other people expressed their discomfort with this idea: "don't go to the market promoting your own vegetables, while other vendors are already selling their things". Moreover, someone asked: what is the goal of doing this? To make them customers? Maybe we will go there to learn. They probably have a lot of knowledge too (Field notes P18-10).

Another farmer brought up how she felt uncomfortable with the urge to become inclusive, because she believed it was based on the assumption that BIPOC communities feel excluded and oppressed, instead of recognising people also have agency. She mentions that her Moroccan friends once explained they don't feel excluded, but simply not interested: "if you have something I want, or if my auntie would really recommend me to go, then maybe I would go. But now I'm not super interested/attracted to this" (Field notes P25-11). This suggests that the farmer focused more on the agency of the Moroccan community in choosing and having their own food culture, than on the way they were excluded by PLUK.

Moreover, people emphasised the importance of doing internal work, jumping into solutions. For instance, one farmer explained the group had to do some “homework” before inviting people into the project: “Take it slow, don’t use people. White people should do the work. This sense of urgency is a very white thing as well.” (Field notes P18-10). Another intern argued how the whole community should be engaged in the process of learning and deep questioning: "[It’s really a matter of] […]. deep, deep questioning the structures of PLUK and … […] everything that lies behind it. It's not about having a quota of how many people of colour you have. But it's really about asking yourself the questions […] who's working here? Who's buying our food and why. And working on that instead of just working on like the surface level problems, I think." (Interview P11-2). These suggestions align with the literature on what privileged AF initiatives can do to address internalised oppressions and to be better allies in the self-determination of BIPOC communities. For instance, Klutz et al. (2020)

Though embarking on a long collective learning process is the right thing to do for privileged people, people brought up some considerations as well: It is important to keep learning, “continue doing what you’re doing and not lose yourself in asking yourself the whole time” (Interview P11-2). Moreover, a BIPOC farmer and volunteer emphasised they really would not want other PLUK members to feel like they had to walk on eggshells and could not make mistakes, something that is common among white people (Goodman, 2011). Rather, the farmer and intern people would like the topic to be discussed openly and directly, so that people would not feel scared to make mistakes (Field notes P2-11; P25-11).

Around the end of my fieldwork period, some concrete ideas of moving forward emerged: First of all, a safer space agreement in which a collective commitment to anti-oppression is formalised could be the reference for engaging the wider community of harvesters in this learning process. Also, this could enable people to speak up when they notice oppression. This could be understood as an important step in making an explicit commitment to anti-racism, as proposed by Chennault (2021). Secondly, people brought up several times how they appreciated that my thesis and presence at the farm raised awareness and sparked discussion, and with that learning. These discussions can be continued to be held by the members of the PLUK community. Moreover, it is important “to be brave enough to bring up a topic”, when someone is saying something that is problematic. Thirdly, another suggestion is to “have more like trainings or courses or discussion rooms with the whole the whole group or like the whole so-called community about these things and more possibilities to talk about that and also that relates to like the gender stuff like more.” (Interview P11-2). This year, PLUK has applied for subsidies and put the budget aside to realise this. People proposed training from certain experts on anti-racism in the food movement, such as Mamma D and the cultural sensitivity trainer of B&G. Hopefully, these steps will help PLUK “racially shift perspectives and practices” towards more liberatory ones (Chennault, 2022).

6.7.3 Relationships with the neighbourhood

To engage in collective action against oppression and work towards food justice authentic interpersonal relationships and alliances between different social groups was emphasised (McKittrick, 2011). Moreover, it is important that AF initiatives respond to the needs of the local people. If not, initiatives might either impose certain solutions onto communities or simply become isolated from the neighbourhood around them (Meenar & Hoover, 2012). During my fieldwork, it became clear that B&G could serve as a source of inspiration in the way they build an inclusive community and form relationships with the neighbourhood. To start a garden project, B&G puts a lot of effort into mobilising everyone: “old B&G women, ambassadors, key figures [individuals who are very embedded in the

network of the neighbourhood] are involved. Also, neighbourhood centres and offices etc etc."(Interview B&G 3-11). These parties can distribute flyers and contact details, or recommend specific women to B&G. To reach the women, B&G developed a targeted process of understanding what communication channels people use and through what pathways and networks people would become aware and join your organisation. "The people who run the [B&G] organisation are mainly people who stand strong in their network. They know they come from a diverse background, where they are more aware of differences and maybe have experiences working with different target groups" (Interview B&G 20-11).

While PLUK might not have this "insider knowledge" naturally, the women of B&G recommended to me (to tell PLUK) to start building relationships and learn about the groups they want to reach. It is important to be able to meet people where they are at. This might entail running an extra mile both to make this group aware of their existence, or to be willing to give up certain ways of working that are less accessible to certain people. Also, sometimes, this means collaborating with partner organisations, who might not have something to do with gardening. While they might help you to reach people you would otherwise not reach, you also might have something to offer to the constituency of the others. This resonates with the idea that privileged people should utilise their privilege to support BIPOC communities (Sbicca, 2012). Moreover, it suggests that people should be willing to change their ways of working, and alter the "white normativity", in order to make their projects inclusive to people who have traditionally been excluded from them (also suggested by Chennault, 2021).

Two interviewees shared how adopting an attitude of mutual respect and intention to share power is central in this process, as was also pointed out by Chennault (2021) and Ramirez (2007) For instance, one interviewee warns you should "not start with your idea like I know it all. Then your idea will go wrong. […] People who experience the problem already have their own knowledge". They view it as impolite to come in and start a project and do not involve the partners from the neighbourhood. Rather, you "approach the most important people and start a conversation with them. […] if the idea already exists, try to see: what's missing? […] can I collaborate with this person to fill the gaps? Another interview mentions how it is essential to have a flexible attitude and share power with the individuals or organisations you collaborate with. If you invite someone to provide input, will you actually listen or are you saying "no, I have a title and I am sitting on this chair, […] this is my institution or foundation"? "Who can also sit on that chair" and are they also able to propose another view?

Moreover, interviewees explain the importance of going beyond the rational dimension of agreeing on mutual benefits, and engaging the affective dimension.. The various BIPOC people I spoke did not have much affinity with the concepts of racism, anti-oppression and justice, however, people of colour brought up repeatedly how for them, feeling warmly welcomed, without being judged was a determining factor in how included they felt in a project (Field notes 11-09). It should feel like family. Additionally, one BIPOC farmer emphasised the importance of authenticity and providing a genuine, warm welcome, and shared the following story about what inclusiveness means to her: on a walk with my niece, I walked past the shop front of a Kebab store I had never been to. When my niece looked through the window at the television, the lady from the shop invited us in. She gave us tea and biscuits. We couldn't exchange many words, but she was really welcoming, despite not knowing us and us not buying anything. To me this is inclusiveness.

This resonates with the call to build authentic relationships and be co-human together (McKittrick, 2011; Klutz et al, 2021). Additionally, on a fundamental level, starting fruitful alliances would require people to transform narratives that replicate black death and white survival of superiority into recognition of the agency of BIPOC communities (McKittrick, 2011). People have culturally rich food practices and resilient exchange and mutual aid networks. Two interns at PLUK who want to start a

farm based on solidarity and food justice for underprivileged groups, explained: “In Bos en Lommer there are super close Moroccan families that support each other. [for instance] I have an Algerian neighbour, she gives all kinds of things that were on sale on the market. Solidarity exists. People know how to find each other. You do not need to ask, people give each other things so that you do not have to feel uncomfortable**.** Informally” (Interview P27-2). White or economically privileged people could learn from the way people develop resilient survival-structures. Rather than wanting to help poor communities, these farmers want to see how they can support the survival structures of communities on the ground (Interview P27-2).

6.7.8 Food can connect across languages

As explained before, PLUK and B&G both have very different food cultures. The previous section outlined how the difference in socio-economic and cultural background influenced these food cultures. The different food cultures, that might be the product of whiteness, might be the reason for disinterest of BIPOC communities to join PLUK. The municipality employee that works with people from a very low income says that “[Turkish people] don’t eat certain products. Kale, for example, is not something they are interested in. We also noticed this with Boeren voor Buren[18] (Farmers for Neighbours): people just don’t want to eat certain vegetables” (Field notes P2-12). Moreover, people do not want to go all the way to PLUK, when they could purchase the same vegetables for a good price in the local shop around the corner. Personally, I also started to wonder if the self-harvest CSA model is something that appeals to white people, who want to be reconnected back to nature through agrileisure.

However, throughout my thesis, participants emphasise how one should not forget how food can connect across languages, cultures and backgrounds, rather it is a common language everyone speaks. This resonates with Jones' call to use food as a connecting life-force that can highlight black life and provide an avenue for collective food justice activism (Jones, 2019). At B&G, various women mentioned how their curiosity to Dutch growing methods and ecology ignited their motivation to join B&G. At Cascoland, a local food initiative that will be further explained below, people explained how some people want to follow exactly the traditional recipe, but others are very excited to experiment with whatever vegetables occur. What people value most about the project were opportunities to cook food and exchange techniques and recipes with each other, even though they would not speak the same language. This suggests that perhaps, PLUK could use the practice of growing food, as a way to engage in mutual learning and build relationships to communities that seem distant from them.

6.7.9 Collaboration opportunities

According to the literature, white people can use their privileges to support the self-determination of BIPOC communities. In doing so, it is not white people who “show the way”, but BIPOC people who are in leadership roles, supported by white people (Scibba, 2012; Klutz et al, 2020). A challenge in the Dutch context, is that farms led by BIPOC communities or specifically focusing on racial justice, seem

[18] Boeren voor Buren (Farmers for Neighbours) was a programme set up by Stadspas that aimed to connect farmers willing to sell (leftover) produce for a lower price, with lower-income communities. According to the Stadspas representative, this programme received a lot of attention, but was a failure, because the Stads-pas holders were not interested in or unable to visit the farms and get the products (Field notes P2-12).

to be rare[19], which might understripe the recognition that the Dutch food and agroecology movement is rather white. Participants suggest that BIPOC communities are mostly active in allotment and community gardens. If PLUK wants to establish relationships with urban growers, they could consider starting with these community gardens. Additionally, during my field work, I learned about two local initiatives, started by white people, that PLUK could collaborate with, both to learn from and to support their work.

Cascoland

Various people suggested that I visit Cascoland, the local food and community initiative founded by two artists. Cascoland is a place of food production and exchange of recipes and techniques that spans across culture and languages. At the same time, it is a meeting place where people just walk past, see the cosy and vibrant atmosphere, and join to chop onions for one afternoon.

The founders of Cascoland are known among the neighbourhood as well as the municipality for their unique approach to engaging the neighbourhood. Firstly, that they are part of the neighbourhood: they live there, greet people in the evening and are spontaneously available for a chat. During the week, they welcome people in their house and greenhouse kitchen to make kimchi, jams, and other preserves. Living in the neighbourhood, seems to allow them to build personal relationships and trust with the communities living there, which literature describes as central processes to alliance-building and collaboration between privileged and underprivileged groups (McKittrick, 2011; Klutz et al, 2021). Secondly, instead of viewing Nieuw-West as a problem neighbourhood like the municipality does, they focus on the neighbourhood's strengths and potential. In Nieuw-West, this was food. For instance, they explain, people can make more than fifteen kinds of flatbreads, or turn whatever leftover vegetable into delicious chutneys. This suggests that Cascoland shifts views on Nieuw-West from a place of black death into highlighting black life.

According to one staff member, it helps that the founders are artists. They can create a beautiful space that is inviting. Moreover, they can find creative ways to spark people's attention. Also, unlike the municipality who tells people "come to us", they live in the neighbourhood and are interwoven in its social fabric. Additionally, they explain that to be a good facilitator "you need to listen well, and give a lot of time and space to different people of different backgrounds. You should be able to make everyone feel comfortable and balance this with your own ideas. You shouldn't put yourself in front, but you can provide a nice framework: like coffee and tea and a nice atmosphere". (Field notes P11-2). Adopting a supportive role, and accepting someone else in a leadership position, resonates with suggestions about allyship and collaboration with people of colour discussed in the literature (Scibba, 2012; Chennault, 2021).

I once visited Cascoland to get to know the place and explore how they could collaborate with PLUK and experienced it as a valuable entry to getting to know some of the Nieuw-West community members and an inspirational approach to collaborating with them. As literature suggests, alliance-building requires the development of authentic, personal relationships (McKittrick, 2011; Klutz et al, 2020), hence I would encourage PLUK farmers to visit Cascoland and build more sustainable relationships than I could provide in my fieldwork period.

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[19]I have personally been involved in various Dutch agroecology and food sovereignty movements, and to our understanding, white farmers dominate CSAs and agroecolical initiatives. During my fieldwork, it seemed like BIPOC communities are mostly active in the community and allotment gardens.

PLUK Spin-off

A second initiative PLUK could collaborate with, is a PLUK Spin-off project initiated by two PLUK interns. They feel frustrated that at their Warmonderhof, there is so little attention for social justice and that so many CSA farms serve a very privileged group. One of them is a woman of colour, and earlier recognised the whiteness of Warmonderhof education (Field notes 16-10). They are planning to start an urban farm that centres meeting the basic food needs for and economically underprivileged communities and facilitating these groups to take ownership in that if they desire. Both of them are critical of the current approaches to welfare support that assume that people cannot make long-term decisions and have agency. This is based on having done research with people who were in debt, and years of personal experience with living below the poverty line (Field notes P27-2). They want to collaborate with projects that support underprivileged groups in meeting basic needs from a perspective that values the autonomy and agency of these communities. Currently, they are discussing with all kinds of local organisations what would best compliment what is already there and be needed. Instead of having a predetermined, solidified vision of what this project looks like, they want to develop their farm in dialogue with already existing, local community organisations that have an emancipatory approach to social welfare and mutual aid. One of these organisations is the Fris supermarket, a food initiative that has a n emancipatory approach to supporting low-income families with meeting basic needs, started by a Moroccan community organiser (Vrije Tijd Amsterdam, 2023).

They imagine themselves as a spin-off of PLUK. “PLUK has a fine business model, there is enough money in the pockets of PLUK, we could be the side branch for solidarity production”. In other words, they would like to redistribute parts of the wealth of PLUK’s harvesters to be able to offer their produce for much cheaper to people who cannot afford to pay the full price. Moreover, they are writing a proposal to get a piece of land in the Voedselpark and exploring financing options with private funders.

Considering the literature, projects like these could still replicate white saviourist patterns in which white people want to “save” poor people of colour (Chennault, 2021; Ramirez, 2017; Agyeman & McEntee, 2014). Yet, in my eyes, it seemed like these interns have a constructive, self-critical mindset: “we don’t want to be like we’re giving all the sad poor people food”, and “we don’t act out of pity” since I live below the poverty line and need to fight every day for food (Interview P27-2). Awareness of their positionality, and determination to support people’s autonomy and agency, rather than save them, suggests they come from a good point of departure for building authentic relationships and alliances.

6.7.10 Synthesis of findings 4.5, 4.5, 4.6 & 4.7

In moving forward in addressing whiteness and racism, there’s various dimensions for learning and action: unlearning internalised racism and creating shared intention to address this; embedding themselves in the neighbourhood; and forming partnerships with local, BIPOC-led and social justice focused organisations. Being humble, respectful, ready to question and disrupt the way power is distributed are key in these processes. Moreover, engaging uncomfortable emotions, and bringing in relational, affective dimensions are essential in building authentic relationships, as brought up by the interviewees, as well as Klutz et al. (2020).

Though this might sound simple, it might be easier said than done. Where some people believe PLUK could be run more efficiently, to free up space for this work, others feel like this could be a lot to ask from the farmers who already do not even make a minimum wage. Moreover, I experienced during my fieldwork, that being very reflective and critical of yourself, might discourage one from going out

and building relationships. Hence, one should not see the three dimensions as solutions from which actions can be cherry-picked. Rather, PLUK engages the entire community to set a shared intention to work on anti-oppression, and engage in learning, action and relationship-building all together. This resonates with the notion of anti-racist solidarity that emphasises the importance of combining relational, inter-personal work, with internal work as well as action collective liberation (McKittrick, 2011; Klutz et al., 2021).

7. Discussion

In this discussion I will discuss how the concept of intersectionality is relevant to my findings. Also, I will reflect on the way dominant discourses in the Dutch agricultural and social landscape influence PLUK and B&G.

7.1 Intersectionality

Throughout my study, it was hard to distinguish where the patterns of who is included, who is excluded, and what is normal, were shaped by whiteness, and where by classism.

Literature has warned how systems of class-based and racial oppression interact with each other (E.g. Alkon & McCullen, 2011; Hope & Agyeman, 2011). Nieuw-West and Zuid-Oost, the neighbourhoods around B&G and PLUK, are both known as lower-income neighbourhoods. The Bijlmer has been racially stigmatised for decades, and Nieuw-West, is perceived as a place with many “allochtonen”. Due to the prevalence of both class and racial differences between the generally white and privileged urban agriculture community and these neighbourhoods, it was challenging to study the way whiteness and racism alone played a role in these communities’ participation in urban agriculture.

PLUK and B&G people tended to ascribe the absence of BIPOC people in urban agriculture projects to a lack of privileges that higher-income, higher-educated people might have, rather than whiteness or racism. For instance, you need the time to go to the farm and you need a certain income level to pay for the garden or to an annual share. Moreover, it was associated with needing the knowledge or headspace about what foods are healthy. This could come with an educational level, as well as having the headspace to educate yourself on this.

At various moments, I wondered whether I imposed a racial analysis from the US onto my participants. Is race simply not a relevant or useful lense to understand oppression in the Netherlands and this food movement? However, my research nevertheless shows how white assumptions and normativity were present. An explanation could be in the fact that in the Netherlands, dominant narratives of colour-blindness and blaming cultural difference and the lack of willingness to integrate obscure racial analysis of inequality and segregation between white and BIPOC communities (Weiner, 2014; Esjah, 2014). Perhaps, people might find it easier to refer to time, money and education as barriers for people to engage in urban agriculture, because this still fits within a framework of colourblindness prevailing in NL.

Furthermore, throughout my study it became clear that ableism and heteronormative gender-oppression are also present and might interact with racial and class-based oppressions. For instance, doing the physical work at a CSA that mainly focuses on food production, and whose ways of working have been shaped by a generally privileged group, is not accessible to people of various abilities. However, at the same time, participants including me, experienced PLUK as a caring place where people checked in with each other, were concerned with each other’s physical wellbeing and tried to have a healthy relationship to work.

In B&G, health was a central topic of discussion. Some of the women experienced being sick, depressed or are less able. The community functioned, and managed to be inclusive, because of an ethic of “alles mag, niks moet”, care and support for each other. This way, B&G could be seen as inspiration on how to be inclusive to people of various skin colours and culture, but also ability. It was beyond the scope of my research to understand the interactions between ableism and racism in urban agriculture. However, it becomes clear it is an essential perspective to consider when trying to understand who is

included and what norms shape the space. To add to this, ability has been associated with class and racial oppression. For instance, lower-income groups have less access to healthcare and are more prone to get diseases due to environmental pollution (Jones, 2011). Also, microaggressions women of colour face on a daily basis take their toll on the bodies (Rose, 2021).

It was mentioned how at times, when there were mainly men around at PLUK, there were more macho and toxic masculinity tendencies present in the way of working. This shows the relevance of dismantling gender norms and toxic masculinity for inclusiveness towards people of various abilities. Also, in the way efficiency and productivity were valued as "the purpose of PLUK", one could identify links with hegemonic thinking, rooted in the modernity-rationality paradigm and capitalism is at play again. Additionally, it became clear that simply being feminist is not enough, one must also raise extra awareness around topics of queer-identities and deconstruct heteronormative assumptions.

All in all, in trying to focus on racialised oppression, it became clear that intersectional point of view is essential. If an initiative is founded by privileged people who do not explicitly focus on addressing oppressions based on gender, class-, ability and race a certain exclusive culture and norm might emerge. For people who lack these privileges, these spaces might become something "that's not for them". Without putting extra effort into building relationships and addressing oppressions, the accidental inaccessibility of the project might reinforce certain exclusions. However, in doing intersectional anti-oppression work, privileged people should be cautious of merely viewing people who do not share certain privileges, as being victims of interlocking systems of oppression, without agency. Only focusing on the marginalizations, might obscure how BIPOC, gender-queer and differently-abled people find ways to create their resilient survival structures that privileged people could support and be in solidarity with.

7.2 The wider system

My thesis focused on the way racialised oppression is present and can be addressed on the level of individual projects. However, in doing so, it became clear how both B&G and PLUK are also situated in a wider society that is both racist, classist and ableist and marginalises small-scale, agroecological agriculture. This sustains whiteness on the level of a project, but also creates unfavourable conditions for BIPOC led projects to emerge.

7.2.1 Challenges in access to land and income

In the Netherlands, the policy and financing landscape strongly favours industrial agriculture. For instance, small-scale, organic or agro-ecological farmers are unlikely to receive a loan from the Rabobank. This is the main agricultural bank, and has pushed farmers to upscale and industrialise their crop production and dairy production (Zembla, 2021). Also, conventional farmers and agro-businesses have much more lobby power, resulting in policies that marginalise small-scale farmers. Small-scale farmers hugely struggle to get access to land and secure land arrangement (Oppendijk et al., 2019). Oftentimes, they cannot afford to buy the land, especially not when it is close to cities, and the only option is to lease the land from a land-owner.

This means that a large portion of the project's revenue needs to go to paying the lease, rather than the farmers' income. Additionally, there is the risk the lease will not be prolonged (Toekomstboeren, n.d.). In the case of PLUK, the municipality Amsterdam has sold most of the Lutkemeerpolder to developers, because this is more profitable than keeping it as an agricultural and nature area. Also, the municipality threatens to increase the lease for the Boterbloem significantly, which would make PLUK financially infeasible.

As a result, farming jobs are accessible to those who can afford a low wage and have the insatiable freelance contract. If you do not have a financial or family buffer that could provide for you in case you do not make enough money, working for below minimum wage would not be possible. Additionally, freelancer contracts do not include workers rights, holidays and maternity leave. Also, to get a visa, having a freelancer contract is not sufficient. Throughout my time at PLUK, farmers and interns discussed how ensuring a fair wage for the farmers and better compensation for the interns are important steps to take on the front of inclusiveness.

Moreover, accessing land requires certain social privileges that allow people to access spaces and networks that hold power and can inhibit or enable urban agriculture. Due to institutional racism and stereotypes, white people are more likely to hold these privileges (Reynolds, 2016). In the case of PLUK, personal connections with Fruittuin as well as a network of sufficiently wealthy and interested harvesters, were key to the founding of PLUK.

Also at B&G, accessing land requires a lot of networking, fundraising and negotiating with housing corporations and institutions, which the staff describes as energy-consuming, hard work. Moreover, people within the agriculture movement cared more about their projects than about including those who do not have the privileges to participate. She did not feel supported by the movement (Field notes B&G30-11). Also currently, the project receives many requests for visits and talks, the B&G organisation has financial and organisational challenges. They are financially dependent on raising funds on a yearly basis. This funding is not sufficient to pay for all hours worked by B&G staff, meaning that the organisation requires a lot of volunteer hours as well. Also, there is a high turnover of staff, because there is not sufficient money to pay the employees throughout the winter months, and people need to find other jobs during this time.

7.2.2 Institutionalised whiteness

Given the challenges in accessing land, generating an income, and ensuring a future in small-scale farming, it is not surprising that the group of farmers who engage in this, is privileged. They have other forms of security that enable them to do underpaid farm-work and knowledge, skills and social and cultural competences or likability that enable them to face these other challenges. However, while it might result in blind spots towards certain oppression, privilege alone does not justify a lack of anti-oppression commitments.

Some interviewees criticised the Warmonderhof, main educational institution for young agro-ecological farmers for its limited focus on the ecological aspect of farming. In their education, students do not engage with social and racial justice at all and farming is not politicised as an anti-capitalist and anti-oppression struggle. As a result, many farmers stay within the ecological realm, which unintendedly might protect the dominance of a wealthy, white status quo in agroecology and the capitalist system. For instance, gender and class inequality and exploitations prevail on organic farms in Catalonia (Marco, Padró, & Tello, 2020). Allan & Kovach (2000) describe how switching to organic agriculture alone is insufficient in achieving fundamental change in the food system. As long as organic agriculture is situated in a market economy, the key drivers for the environmental crises will be sustained because farmers need to remain competitive and profitable. To fundamentally change the agri-food system to be sustainable, “changes in political, social and economic structures and relationships” are needed. Furthermore, it is important to note that Steiner, the philosopher who developed the concept of biodynamic agriculture, held racist beliefs that Asian and Black people would be less developed than white people (discussed in blogpost of Johnson-Wunscher, 2021). It was

beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate to what extent the white and racist legacy of Steiner proliferated in Warmonderhof.

Moreover, it is hard for individual initiatives to tackle racism alone, as it is so deeply entrenched in Dutch society, institutions and education. For instance, the municipality ascribes issues of overweight and diabetes among low-income groups to short-sighted and convenience-driven choices (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2007). In doing so, they replicate neoliberal consumer-responsibility narrative that lacks a recognition for the systemic injustices that need to be addressed, to create a healthy and just society and food system (Guthman & DuPuis, 2006; Billings & Cabbil, 2011; Jones, 2019).

One could argue that solidarity practices should be built on grassroots activism that exists outside of institutions in which oppression and racism are institutionalised. However, still, local governments could take a facilitating role in connecting local initiatives with each other and certain communities. For instance, B&G established a fruitful collaboration with the Stadspas program of the municipality, which allowed many women to become members with a reduced price. This shows that there are opportunities for the municipality to make urban agriculture more accessible, or to facilitate bottom-up driven projects like B&G. However, institutionalised racism and a perspective of black death, sits in the way of current institutions actually facilitating grassroot alliance building between people of mixed backgrounds.

All in all, these conditions favour privileged people in succeeding to become a farmer. Moreover, the whiteness in farmer's education as well as local institutions sustain the ignorance or resistance of white farmers to politicise their practices and work towards racial justice. Additionally, BIPOC-led projects could be counterspaces to the white AF food spaces (Billings, 2016), as well as examples for white projects to shift their ideology and practices (Chennault, 2021). However, because of these unfavourable conditions for BIPOC projects to emerge, the whiteness in the AF movement is sustained.

7.3 Limitations and recommendations for future research

A first limitation is that the topic of my thesis was broad and intersectional, due to several reasons. The specific focus of my research was defined in collaboration with the initiatives, meaning I started the research process with a more broad and open scope. While some farmers were more interested in social justice and inclusion in general terms, others wanted to zoom in on specific oppressions such as racism. My thesis reflects this, in the sense it was iterative, and shedding light upon various oppressions and privileges that pervade urban agriculture projects. Also, bringing together critical whiteness and anti-racist theory with food justice, has not been done in the Dutch context. For me too, it was a rather new topic to study academically, meaning I needed time to get familiar with the concepts and literature that was then less available for the fieldwork. I adopted a more explorative, iterative attitude. While this provided valuable insights into the intersectional complexity of anti-oppression, this breadth was in trade-off with specificity on the topic of race. Another reason my thesis reached breadth rather than depth on the topic of whiteness, is that I had to navigate the differences and gaps in knowledge and vocabulary around the issues addressed in this thesis. While some participants have been concerned with racism and whiteness academically, others speak from lived experience, and others never thought about it much at all. Finding ways to unravel the topic, required time. Especially when this was a new topic for people, it was challenging to find a shared vocabulary to discuss complex topics.

Future research could further untangle specific issues raised in this thesis, for instance how farming students could be encouraged to do the internal work in their farming education or how mutually beneficial relationships and exchanges between urban farms or gardens and the neighbourhood could be nurtured, if the farmers do not come from the neighbourhood themselves. Also, future research could more specifically zoom in on, and untangle the complex interactions between class, gender, ability and race-based oppression.

A second limitation is that my study focus and design, albeit designed in collaboration with the PLUK and B&G, was largely based on literature from the US. The Netherlands has a different colonial and racist history, which I learned more about while doing field work and analysing the data. Had there been more literature about this, that I acquainted myself with beforehand, my inquiries in the field and data analysis could have been sharper and more adapted to the dutch context. For instance, racism in the NL is very interlinked with xenophobia, cultural stereotypes and islamophobia – which is less discussed in the US literature about racism of white people towards black, Afro-American people discusses less. My research makes a first attempt to contextualise research on whiteness and racism in the food movement to the Netherlands. Both PLUK and B&G are unique projects and the findings cannot be generalised to the entire AF movement. For instance, some explained that compared to other farms, the PLUK community has been politicised and sensitised to intersections of food justice quite well. Additionally, both PLUK and B&G are in the metropolitan, generally racially and culturally diverse region of Amsterdam. On the countryside, racism and discrimination could manifest in different forms and intensities since the (Huijsmans, 2021).

Furthermore, I noticed that my theoretical framework centred academic concepts and perspectives. Even though it was acknowledged experiential and affective perspectives are essential to include, I felt that I often lacked the conceptual framework that could correspond with the way BIPOC shared lived experience knowledge about how they felt included in a space, and what they believed justice is. Future research could be grounded in a more experiential and emotional framework of thinking, to do more justice to the interpersonal and affective dimensions that are involved with anti-oppression work.

Thirdly, in this study, white voices and perspectives are more represented than BIPOC. In absolute numbers, I talked to more white people, spent more time with white people, and had longer conversations with white people. One reason was the winterstop of B&G, which reduced the amount of time I could spend with them and build the trust that is needed to discuss sensitive and uncomfortable topics. However, it was also an active decision to prioritise limiting the emotional labour BIPOC people needed to do for my thesis over extracting data for my thesis by rushing into the topic of racism. Also, I soon discovered the discussions with white people were very rich and full of material to reflect upon. Consequently, this thesis centers white, instead of BIPOC voices. Because I spent more time at PLUK, I got to know the project and its community better, and established a different relationship with the people than with B&G. Consequently, the way I obtained and analysed data was different for both projects. For instance, because I had more time to understand the context of PLUK and the farmer's lives better, I could put conversations in perspective and think more critically.

Fourthly, as already mentioned in the methods, the whiteness of my skin, upbringing and educational background influences how I am in the world and do research. Theoretically, my research focus was defined on literature from the US, in which I tried to centre BIPOC voices. However, my research agenda was based on an analysis of the Dutch food movement by myself, white food activists and the farmer and thesis researcher I spoke to in the initial face. On a practical level, my positionality influenced the way I did research. For instance, especially in the beginning I felt scared to accidentally be racist, and walked on egg-shells, a common thing white people do when interacting with people of

colour (Goodman, 2011). Also, being the only white person and wearing different clothing than the people in the neighbourhood, made me self-conscious about the fact that I stood out as a visitor and worried people would engage with me differently. Also, people of colour discuss racial oppression differently with white people than other people of colour, because among BIPOC people, there is a shared lived experience that I as a white person can never grasp. Moreover, white people might respond differently to questions about racism if asked by a BIPOC person. While it is unclear how exactly, a BIPOC researcher could have followed a different research process, have different interactions, and different research outcomes.

Considering the third and fourth limitation, future research could focus more on highlighting the voices of BIPOC people. This would require a researcher who is further in deconstructing their whiteness than I am, and/or relates to people of colour and their knowledge differently. Alternatively, research conducted by people of different positionalities could shed light on different nuances and perspectives, and bring different forms of oppression to light.

In the end, my thesis stayed more within the reflective realm than that it led to much external actions to address racism. On the one hand, it feels disappointing I personally did not take many concrete steps or provide answers. On the other hand, my thesis sparked important internal discussions about the purpose of PLUK, who the CSA format serves, and what PLUK's responsibility is in achieving food justice, as well as how the community can be held accountable to these ideals. Still, I consider the short duration of the timeframe September (2022) to April 2023 an important limitation, as it felt too short to complete a PAR cycle. Future research is recommended to take more time to get to know the initiatives and build more trust with the participants. THis way it could give back more to B&G and PLUK in exchange for the research process and yield more in depth insights and built upon anti-oppression practices more.

8. Conclusion

This research aimed to shed light on the way oppression related to whiteness and racism is present in urban food initiatives and how this could be addressed, to promote racial inclusion and justice in the food movement. This thesis draws lessons from participatory action research with two urban agriculture initiatives in Amsterdam, B&G and PLUK, that differ in their purpose, social composition, and practices.

I found that both initiatives shared a common goal of wanting to provide healthy, local, organically produced vegetables to their communities. However, there were differences in who the initiatives targeted. At PLUK, the purpose articulated at the start was to grow local, seasonal, organic vegetables for a community of people. Who should be in this community, and who can be left out was not considered. The community that was built from the social network of two expat, white, higher educated farmers. This apolitical approach to building community led to the formation of a certain, privileged, environmentally oriented bubble. B&G has a very targeted process to reach women with a migration back-ground, who cannot access organic food and are economically or socially struggling. This appeared to be a good way to prevent a white group from dominating, as the social composition of B&G consists of women from the neighbourhood who are retired or on social welfare**,** for whom organic food is otherwise too expensive. The largest part of the group consists of BIPOC women, of whom Surinamese women are in the majority. There are also some white volunteers or garden coaches involved. B&G intends to create a supportive, healing community that is accessible to people with varying abilities and knowledge levels of agriculture, where the women can find a place for themselves, an intention they succeed to realise according to the women's stories. This way, it becomes clear that the intentions and way the community is politicised or not, influence who is part of the group. At the same time, the set of privileges and internalised oppressions from the dominant group, creates a certain "normal", that is inclusive for some, and exclusive to others. Based on this, I conclude that sharpening the intentionality of the initiative in who it serves, is an important way to address whiteness.

At PLUK, there was a norm to live in and travel to various places, while at B&G, most people identified as loyal inhabitants of Zuid-Oost, although they or their parents moved from tropical countries to Zuid-Oost. In the PLUK community, one blends in easily if they can participate in discussions about farming, politics or work for environmental or social organisations, in B&G when one enjoys to discuss health, medicinal properties of plants, food, family and latest neighbourhood updates. Regarding food culture, the imaginaries of what is good food, and food practices of PLUK and B&G share the appreciation for local, organic, self-grown vegetables. However, where in PLUK, good food is ideally vegan, self-made and otherwise from the bio-dynamic shop, at B&G this is food from people's (family's) home countries. Social patterns of middle-class environmentalism can be associated with the plant-based emphasis of PLUK, and those of migration and colonialism to the foods valued most at B&G. Also, for B&G women, informal and gift economies around food were a way to express and provide care as well as deal with economic hardship.

From my research it became clear that opinions on whether whiteness and racism is an issue in the food movement should be addressed. Among BIPOC participants, some were happy this topic was finally addressed, as they believed the food movement was currently leaving people behind. However, they ascribed exclusion mainly to class-based reasons such as education, income and time available. Among white participants, who were mainly connected to PLUK, some people worried that anti-oppression work is in trade-off with the ecological values or productivity of the garden or would put more burden on the farmers. Those who were deeply concerned about the issue, developed their

opinions in dialogue with activism in intersectional feminist, environmental and agroecology movements.

Whiteness manifested in PLUK in the following ways. First, a reason to resist anti-oppression work, was the fear it would be in trade-off with PLUK's productivity or environmental and economic viability. Secondly, people viewed the communities that were not part of PLUK as a homogeneous "other" to the highly-educated, often white expats of PLUK. The "others" are poor, disinterested or not knowledgeable about good food. However, what became clear from learning about Zuid-Oost and Nieuw-West, is that people are not necessarily in need of a saviour who welcomes them into their gardening initiative. People have their own food cultures and are not being excluded, but choose to use their own channels of getting food, despite systemic injustices that cause them to live in poverty.

It became clear that to move forward and address whiteness, PLUK needs to negotiate an explicit commitment to anti-oppression with the entire community and engage the resistant or ignorant members of the community in a process of learning about interlocking systems of oppression. Moreover, the question is how PLUK can transform an "expat" community that briefly visits PLUK for agrileisure, currently disconnected from local reality, into a community of people that builds alliances with the communities in Nieuw-West. B&G's thorough approach to building relationships with local residents, community figures and organisations can serve as inspiration for PLUK. Moreover, the way care is embedded in B&G, could help PLUK create a welcoming, inviting community for new people to enter.

It feels like my thesis provided more questions than answers and solutions, Recognizing how PLUK is not connected to the local neighbourhood, but instead a bubble or more privileged "expats", I realised I cannot solve "the issue" for them, as it requires the longer-term relationship building I cannot do as temporary student. Also, the expectations set in the beginning were too high, and rooted in a quick, "let's fix racism" mindset. Yet, I hope my thesis sparked determination to continue reflecting and acting upon new insights, and take the community of privileged harvesters in this process.

All in all, what can be learned is that the purpose and ideology that underpins AF initiatives must be a shared responsibility to create a caring, inclusive community that wants to engage in solidarity practices. Moreover, it becomes clear that efforts of privileged people to address oppression, should go hand in hand with a collective commitment deconstructing one's power and privilege in society and the way this translates to their assumptions about *the other.* Lastly, it becomes clear that inclusion, social justice and solidarity work cannot be done in isolation, but in dialogue with BIPOC communities. Privileged people need to go out of their bubble, build personal, authentic relationships and collaborative alliances with local organisers and communities.

While going out of the bubble, privileged members of AF initiatives should always critically reflect on the question: are we imposing their food and values onto these communities? Do we recognise the resilience and thriving of these communities, as well as the systemic economic and racial injustices these communities face? Do we redistribute power, resources and privilege in such a way it supports the self-determination of these communities? Unless the AF movement can address these questions, it will replicate patterns of power, privilege and oppression. However, if it does so, it may be able to actualise its potential to contribute to building a food system that nurtures collective liberation and just distribution to land, education and fair wages for all farmers.

9. Acknowledgements

First of all, I am very grateful for my supervisors Lucie Sovova and Anke Brons. Lucie's readiness to provide sharp, constructive feedback, reassure me when I felt lost, and critical comments to prevent me from being carried away in a messy, endless process were exceptionally helpful and beyond the expectations of a supervisor. I appreciate Anke's ability to provide suggestions that hit the nail on the head, even though she had to jump in at sudden moments in the process.

Furthermore, I feel grateful for my friends and peers who were vital to my thesis process. My super "gezellige" (good vibes) thesis ring group could reassure me at any time that feelings of stress, chaos and being lost are part of the process and give helpful suggestions to move forward. Thank you, Brydon, for correcting grammar and giving feedback from the other side of the world. Lilly and Anna, thank you for the countless hours that we worked silently alongside, gave each other peer feedback, or supported each other with the challenges of life outside of the thesis. Especially, I appreciate how we collectively try to translate our academic learning into commitment to social justice in the world outside of academia. And lastly, I am eternally grateful for activist friends – I feel extremely lucky to have such inspiring people to occupy trees with, collectively deconstruct internalised oppression and find ways to weaponize our privileges.

I want to recognise how indigenous and black social movements fighting oppression on the frontline were vital to any literature, education and practices that my thesis is inspired by. I am grateful for BIPOC communities leading the struggles for racial justice and collective liberation and dedicate their time to educating white people on oppression and solidarity.

Lastly, I want to give special recognition to the people of PLUK and Bloei & Groei who did not only allow me to collaborate with them, but warmly welcomed me into their communities. At various moments I told myself and others: "I feel so lucky to do my thesis about something I am so passionate about, with such inspiring and kind people". Women from Bloei & Groei, I am greatly inspired by the way you form supportive, caring and joyful communities and grateful for all the lessons on medicinal plants, food and the neighbourhood I learned from you. PLUK farmers and interns, thank you for sharing your doubts, questions and ideas, always greeting me enthusiastically from the fields and involving me in your farm and social activities.

All in all, I had an amazing field work period (and of course also the other steps of the process), that re-ignited my passion for farming and food, and sustainably fuels my dedication to anti-racist and anti-oppression activism.

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11. Appendices

Appendix A - Interview questions

Interview script B&G

Introduction

What's your story withing B&G? how did you get involved?

What are your experiences?

- What are positive experiences?
- Are there also less good experiences?

What makes that you feel comfortable at B&G?

What's your relation to food and agriculture? Why is it important to you?

How are you connected to agriculture through your personal background or culture?

Community

How do you describe the B&G community and how did it develop?

- Why do people come to B&G? What does the garden mean to them?
- How does B&G reach people
- Do you see B&G as an inclusive community? Why? Is it a community where everyone can feel at home? Who fits in? Who doesn't?
- Is inclusiveness important?
- How could B&G be so diverse?
- How do you make sure it's a nice, safe place for people? And accessible?

Neighbourhood

What are issues aroudn food in the neighbourhood?

- How are people connected to the topic of food and gardening?
- Are initiatives like B&G important for the neighbourhood? Why?

Recommendation for other urban agriculture projects

There's various organisations working on food, organic actricuture. Activist, farmers, etc. this I call the food movement. Do you feel connected to this? Is that important for you?

Do you think racism and discrimination should be a topic/should be discussed within the food movement? In what ways?

- General critique of food movement: white, middle class, YUP, are dominant in numbers or leadership. It's exclusive, because you need privileges to participate. Or people hold prejudices about other communities. Like this, it's discriminating. How do you look at this? Why s this the case? Is this something you'd like to see different?
- White spaces: white norms, values, stories and people are domoinant. A lot of places are seen as white. If you compare B&G with such spaces, what are differences?

Many groups are inspired by B&G and want to collaborate. Is this desirable? What is important for you in collaborating?

I also do research for another project. [explanation PLUK]. They're in Nieuw West and want to connect more with the neighbourhood: people from Turkey and Marokko. The people who are involved now in the project are often white middle class people or expats from more the centre.

- How do you look at this?
- Do you have advice for them? How can they gauge if people are interested? How they can get more accessible?

Future

What's your dream regarding food and agriculture?

In the winter you have a winter stop, but with some B&G staff we're thinking if we can organise an activity? What would be nice for the women throughout the winter?

Interview script PLUK

Intro (only about personal experience)

1. Can you tell me a few things you were looking for in Pluk when you first joined?

2. What do you appreciate in PLUK?

3. Are there things that disappoint you in PLUK?

Power, privileges

Goal: HOW PEOPLE VIEW THE ISSUE

4. How do you describe the community at PLUK? (question 3 from above)

5. If you had to describe the kind of people who are part of Pluk as a stereotype, how do you describe this stereotype? There is no right or wrong to this question, feel free to say things that may sound silly or exaggerated.

    how could this be nuanced?

    what does this mean for the dominant culture of PLUK?

6. Who is this community for? (question 4 from above)

7. Given how we described the dominant culture at PLUK a minute ago, what could be privileges those people have in common? / what priviliges are needed to be part of PLUK

Addressing inclusiveness

Goal: MOTIVATIONS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

8. Question 3: Shoud Pluk become accessible to people with different needs/less privilige?... Should PLUK become accessible to people with different needs/less privilege?

9. Follow up: What would you hope to achieve by making pluk more accessible to [the groups you just mentioned]?

Whiteness

Goal: UNDERSTAND HOW PEOPLE VIEW THE ISSUE; MOTIVATIONS TO ADDRESS IT

10. A critique of Urban Agriculture projects is that they are white. White spaces are [include definition]. How do you think this relates to PLUK? / do you recognise this phenomenon?

11. Is it important for you something is done about this? Why?

GOAL: HOW TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE?

12. How could this be addressed?

. Or is there already something done about this?

Complexities/caution in addressing this topic

13. Inclusiveness and diversity have also been critised. What do you think PLUK needs to "watch out for" if they want to become more inclusive"? /what are pitfalls?

14. The difference between racial inclusiveness and racial justice, is that regarding racial inclusivness, you include BIPOC people into *your* project, perhaps also on your terms. Do you see a difference between PLUK efforts for racial justice and racial inclusiveness? What?

Relationship neighbourhood

15. How do you look at PLUK's connection with people from the neighbourhood?

16. Is that something you would like to change? Why?

Taking steps

17. What are important steps PLUK should take regarding racial justice/inclusiveness?

18. How do you look at the role of the community/harvestors in addressing these issues?

Appendix B - Theoretical framework simplified

Relationality

- The history of the project and cultural, economic and social characteristics of the area in which the project is situated, both in the present and past.
- The links people make between these characteristics and the project.

Intersectionality

- The social identity of members within the project (gender, age, class, education level, ability, sexuality, …)
- Oppressions people experience and notice within the project
- Privileges needed to participate in the initiative
- the social identity of people who are perceived to be outside of the project, and perhaps oppressed and excluded.
- The interaction between different forms of oppression.

Overcoming the black death-white survival binary

- Examples of BIPOC resistance against racism
- Examples of thriving BIPOC communities
- Examples of BIPOC food initiatives

- People's view of BIPOC, e.g. E.g. seen as poor, sad, hopeless, desperate, oppressed? Or resistant, successful and/or thriving too?
- Credit given to and awareness of BIPOC leadership

Relationality beyond the cognitive dimension --> This is also related to the solidarity aspect

- Interactions between people of different social categories
- Authentic relationships between people of diverse social categories.
- Role and space emotions take in engaging with topics of whiteness and racial justice.
- Ways that thought and intentions are translated into action/practice, e.g. specific policies created, or actions taken to foster racial justice.

Solidarity

- The way people explain the link between local and sustainable food and social justice/racial justice issues
- People's motivations for striving for racial justice. E.g. white guilt, white saviourism, allyship, solidarity
- Practices and actions done to supporting other initiatives involved in social justice/racial justice struggles.
- Relationships between urban agriculture community members and people involved in social justice/racial justice struggles.
- The way people utulise the privileges they have.
- The directions, requests social/racial justice activists give to people with privilege or the needs they express privileged people could support in.

Critical whiteness

- White normativity:
    - The group that created the space, and the cultural norms based on which the space is designed. How whiteness is het default
    - The behaviours, knowledge and practices that are accepted/valued and not accepted/valued. in the space. E.g. What is considered healthy, local and sustainable fits with the cultural norms of white people, but excludes eating practices of BIPOC communities.
    - white people do not have to proof themselves and can behave freely, but BIPOC people are aware of their race, they can sense the others are white and they are black.
- Upon entering a white space,
    - BIPOC are asked questions or face surprise
    - have to proof they belong there, e.g. by speaking very eloquently, showing their ID card, being introduced by someone.
    - have to give up aspects of their culture to fit in
- BIPOC people are present, but in inferior positions. They are not participants, leaders, managers, but cleaners/servers.
- Colourblindness: white people think racism is over.
    - White people see their own race as transparent.
    - White people feel treated racist if their skin colour is mentioned, or if they are excluded from a BIPOC space
- White gaze
    - The images, prejudices people hold over BPOC people:

        - Prejudices about their background: BIPOC people are poor, lower-educated, criminal, more aggressive.
        - Prejudices about people's relation to healthy food or nature: people do not care about healthy food.
    - White people refer the BIPOC people as the black guy
    - White people confuse the different BIPOC people
- The relationship between humans and food, what food means to people
    - People's motivation to be part of the initiative.
    - The imaginaries and narratives of what is healthy, sustainable and local are white: People associate healthy, local, sustainable food with white European or settler family farms. Or: white people view the problem is that people are not connected to nature, and because of that, do not eat healthy.
    - The way colonialism, racism, capitalism can be recognised in these relationships. E.g. white environmentalism: nature should be wild, untouched, which excludes indigenous communities from the nature that is their territory.
- What "community" means to people in the food context
- Who people view as the "community" around food
    - What binds this community together, e.g family, political views, "likemindedness", being conscious?
    - How aware they are of its inclusiveness/exclusiveness
- White saviourism: white solutions are imposed on BIPOC communities. White people believe they know better what BIPOC people need than BIPOC people themselves.
- White privilege
    - Privileges needed to be part of the space
    - The awareness people have of privilege.
    - The way people utulise their privilege.

Appendix C - Email to PLUK farmers

Dear PLUK Farmers,

In this email, I wrote down some different things I have been thinking about, and noticed the past weeks, and I hope you can think about, or even spend some time discussing. Due to the COSIYA training I'm following, I didn't have the time to write the most concise, easily readable text ever, so if you're short on time, hopefully you can get the key message by looking at the **bold** words.

Things I noticed about PLUK

Before wanting to try and become inclusive, it needs to be clear *why.* There's a lot of different reasons why you would want to do this, and I've heard multiple come up in conversations with people.

- Because you think you **have something to offer** that could be of interest/support other communities. This could be coming from white saviourist intentions: I know what you need, or from knowing what the needs of communities are, and then responding to them.
- Because you feel **guilty/uneasy** about not being diverse, because it shows something, e.g. that your project is exclusive
- Because you see the **dominance of whiteness**, which is linked to **white supremacy** and oppresses people. This is something to be critical about and reflect upon
- Because you think you could **learn/benefit** from people from different backgrounds

About the privileged needed to be part of PLUK:

- Financial: Having spoken to different people, for people who really don't have a big wallet, **putting down a few hundred euros at the start of the year is simply not an option**. So this model does require some financial buffer. Are there ways to deal with this?
- Financial: People keep coming back to the cost (money, but also time) barrier. However, Oscars thesis found, that even if the products were much cheaper, people maybe would not come. There is something else that keeps people from coming. What could this be? Are there **non-fininacial pattern**s that keep the space white?
- **Time**: many people say that you need to be sure of your basic needs, to be able to be, or participate in political/idealistic activities. If PLUK harvestors see harvesting as PLUK as a political thing also, it means they have the headspace to think about this?
- I think it's important to not equate being BIPOC to poor, less privileged, helpless. Maybe people are discriminated by the system, but that does not mean they don't have **agency**. And it doesn't mean that when the barriers would be lowered, they would immediately want to come. People know what is best for them and **also find creative ways of dealing with their oppression**.

Things I noticed comparing Bloei & Groei and PLUK about whiteness and other cultures, that make me think of potential directions to go into:

- In Bloei & Groei, I noticed **people exchange** a lot: one person makes alkaline water and gives it away, someone else makes Bara, someone else makes cream of the calendula, someone else has cuttings of a Surinamese plant. They exchange and gift it to each other, and people think a lot about what other people might like. People talk a lot about food, and how **different vegetables** could be used in different ways. And how to eat as many different parts of the food, to not have to throw it away. And **where to get certain foods for cheap**. I see this exchange about cooking as something that **connects people from different cultures**. This was also mentioned at cascoland as a connecting thing: sharing recipes.
- At Bloei & Groei, people mainly emphasise how eating this self-grown food is more healthy for you. They are very aware supermarket food is full of poison, and not good to eat. Growing this food, is a way to **access healthy food because it's affordable**. The reason why some women garden, is because they need the **medicinal** plants because the doctor is not there to help them.
- At Bloei&Groei, the community and support aspect of the garden is very strongly valued. For some of the women, B&G is also a place they found in times of hardship, and it means a lot for them as a person. **Some women come more for the community, than for the garden (but then still like the gardening)**.
- At Bloei & Groei, the women and some garden coaches are very **embedded in the neighbourhood**. They seem to walk around with little carts, going to the different shops and markets. They know different people and places, and talk about it with each other. Also the B&G gardens are visible when going to the Venserpolder buurthuis, or being in Nelson Mandela park. There's more "aanloop" (people walking past).
- Bloei & Groei has a lot of **local collaboration and partnerships** with central neighbourhood centers, organisation and people to reach out to new members.
- PLUK: is the **paying in advance** a Dutch thing? To calculate that on the long term it will be cheaper? I know that time and planning are different for different cultures, e.g. also bc in NL people traditionally needed to plan in the winter, because no food would be grown?

- At PLUK, harvesters go for the "**being outside**", having a moment to themselves in the garden, and being in **nature** aspect. This is a different motivation than the B&G women, but in the end, at B&G the women mention the healthy aspect of being outside. And they are not looking forward to a winter of being inside.
- People say that some BIPOC communities just want **different foods**, although this will really depend on the community. E.g. the Surinamese people at B&G mention De Kas in Almere as amazing place, and try and grow Surinamese crops like Sopropo. Riekje said Maroccan people often mainly grew spring onion and tomatoes. Sometimes, people might not know what the foods at PLUK are. How can knowledge of food in different cultures be shared, and implemented in the dutch climate?

Steps forward and directions to take:

A Based on Oscars talk & my ideas: **Internal work:**

- How is racism replicated within PLUK? What could be done internally about it? E.g. the storytelling of BIPOC farmers (instead of the German CSA inventor), becoming aware of privileges inside, reflect on saviourism in PLUK
- Understanding what intersecting identities are present within PLUK already, to not render other marginalized identities invisible. E.g. there are neurodivergent people, people that did not grew up in NL/Europe, BIPOC people.

B Based on Oscars talk: Make PLUK a **more stable and accessible place** to work: e.g. that you earn a proper salary, that interns could be compensated? (I don't think I can do this)

C Based on literature, and conversations: Starting **collaborations** with other projects that are **led by BIPOC** people, or in which BIPOC people are very present. To learn from their approach (so that PLUK can be a more welcoming space), but if there are things they need support with, do that. These collaborations should not only be professional, but also foster **authentic, personal relationships** that reach across boundaries. These organisations could be BLoei & Groei, Cascoland, Wereldhuis, … ideally with a focus on organisations embedded in the neighbourhoods. What I could do, is map out these organisations, what collaboration could look like.

D According to Ann, BIPOC communities around PLUK do not necessarily want to be a member, they want to have their own garden. How could PLUK **support BIPOC communities in starting their own project?**

E Understand better what the food issues and needs of the local communities are, and see if PLUK can respond to them, or lower the barriers to join or if something else is needed that PLUK cannot provide (but maybe be an ally in?)

F Different people mentioned that mouth to mouth is the main form of promotion for current PLUK members, but also in BIPOC communities to promote something. PLUK should reach beyond their bubble to do this, but maybe slowly from a few connections, the message might spread by itself.

My personal opinion (based on my ideology as well as reading of literature, and lots of conversations) is that whatever you do, the end goals should be that all communities have autonomy and self-determination over their food.

The intention should not be: ah we want to include people in our project, because we want to be diverse. I think then it could very easily become tokenistic, or even replicate saviourst patterns.

However, addressing internalized racism and solidarity can also occur in the same practices. So for me it would be very helpful to discuss with you what exactly your vision is around this topic, so I can help think about how to work towards this.

I think it's a very complex problem, so I think I could chose between focusing on 1 or 2 elements, or coming up with longer-term strategies, that will focus more superficially on different topics, but could next year be implemented.

Considerations:

- I think some of these things might feel like they reach beyond the "farming" aspect. And they are, these things are about not growing food, but also embedding more social change into the project. For sure, this will costs a lot of time, beyond my thesis. So if this is something PLUK wants to focus on, I think it is realistic to **dedicate hours and time** to it.
- Because it takes time, and **personal relationships** are really central, I do not feel it's ethical towards the communities I am the only one getting to know them and visiting them, since for me it's unsure how involved I can be in PLUK in the future after my thesis. I think it's more authentic and sustainable to build relationships with people that carry the project of PLUK and will stay for long for sure.
- In a way it's about tackling racism and big societal issues, but some BIPOC people I've listened to the past weeks, mainly mention **family, community, and being welcome** and being outside as the main drivers for their involvement. So it's not only about big words and theories, but also forming human connections, and nature connection!

Questions for you:

- What is your *why?* Why do you think the topic of my thesis is important for PLUK?
- What steps/directions do you think are useful to explore for me?
- To what extent do you want me to do my thing and let you know, and where do you want to join and collaborate?

Of course I'm more than happy to discuss these things with you also in person. Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Kind regards,

Channah

Appendix D Overview of data collected

PLUK	Date	Title/topic	Bloei & Groei	Date	Title/topic
Participatory observation	20221018	PLUK Boterbloem & FT	Participantory observation	20221007	Moestuinmarkt
	20221028	PLUK Fruittuin		20221012	Ynes

	20221101	FT ily & recording		20221019	Astrid
	20221102	PLUK boterbloem		20221021	B&G Oogstfeest Venserpolder
	221104	Pluk FT		20221023	B&G gift of colour oogstfeest
	20221106	PLUK FT dinsdag		20221026	B&G GoC & Venserpolder
	20221118	PLUK FT		20221130	Field notes wandeling
	20221124	PLUK boterbloem		20221229	Telefoongesprek Garden participant 3
	20221125	PLUK Fruittuin Friday & Harvest party		20230106	gezellig lunchen
	20221201	PLUK Fruittuin			
	20221202	Stadspas meeting	Interviews	20221116a	Interview Garden participant 1
	20221207	Farmers meeting		20221116b	Interview Garden participant 2
	20221208	PLUK boterbloem		20221122	Interview Garden participant 3
	20221209	FT		20221103	Staff member
	20221215	PLUK boterbloem			
	20221216	PLUK FT			
	20221102	Cascoland visit			
	20230227	PLUK Spin-off meeting			
Interview	20221024	Harvester interview			
	20230210	Intern interview			
Other	20221011	Minutes call PLUK farmers 1			
	20221109	Update email			
	20221206	Proposal PLUK 2			

Appendix E – Agrocology & social justice training

In my field work period, I participated in a social justice training of the agroecology movement in Europe, organized by ASEED. In this training, various young activist who worked on food justice topics in different ways came together to learn about social justice and anti-oppression. Participants came from various organisations in different European countries and a mix or rural and urban settings. The goal of the training was to co-create practices that could be implemented in different projects in Amsterdam, to make them more inclusive and socially just.

In this training, I could learn about the topics of oppression and justice in an experiential way, together with people from a variety of European countries. Visiting many Amsterdam-based food justice projects was an integral part of the training. This was useful for my thesis, as I could bring back inspiration and examples to PLUK. Also, among the participants there were people from Wereldhuis, a shelter for undocumented people. Their countries of origin were in East-Africa and their life stories were very different than ours. It was a valuable experience to be exposed to their perspectives on justice and inclusion, because their backgrounds and lived experience knowledge of oppression and being included and excluded in Amsterdam were very different than any of the other participants. Moreover, I learned a lot about my own positionality and my way of relating to BIPOC people from building up relationships with them.

Appendix F – Logbook

Note: this logbook might be incomplete, as I sometimes forgot to keep up with it.

Date	Time	Activity
30/8/2022	7:12:00 AM	Call Oscar
31/8/2022	10-13.00	Literature research
		Write emails Pluk and B&G
1/9/2022	12.30-13.00	Call Edu Pluk
2/0/2022	10-13.00	Literature research
3/9/2022	10-13.00	Literature research
5/9/2022	9.30-10.30	Supervisor meeting
	10.30-12.00	Literature research
8/9/2022	12:00 - 12.30	Call Bloei & Groei
	11.30-14.00	Literature research
12/9/2022	11.30-18.00	Literature research
13/9/2022	11.00-17.00	Work on proposal

14-17 september	whole week	work on proposal
23/9/2022	09.00 h	Supervisor meeting
26/9/2022	10:30-13.00	Research FPAR
	14.00-17.00	preparing meeting Ama B&G
29/9/2022	10.00 - 11.00	Call with Ama about my thesis with B&G

7/10/2022	10-16.00	Help at market Venserpoldertuin
11/10/2022	11.30-12.30	Call with PLUK farmers about my thesis
12/10/2022	10-14.00	Work at Venserpolder tuin
14/10/2022	10-15.00	Work at Venserpolder tuin
17/20/2022	10-19.00 h	Work at pluk, presentation Oscar's thesis
19/10/2022	10-14.00	Work at Venserpolder tuin
	15.30-17.00	interview with PLUK harvester, Amsterdam West buurthuis
21/10/2022	14.30-18.00	Oogstfeest Venserpoldertuin
22/10/2022	13.00-17.30	Oogstfeest Gift of Colour tuin
24/10/2022	10.00-14.30	Work at Venserpolder tuin
26/10/2022	10.00-15.00	Work at Gift of Colour tuin, visit Venserpoldertuin
28/10/2022	10-17.30	Work at Pluk Fruittuin
1/11/2022	10.30-17.00	Work at FT?
2/11/2022		Work at Boterbloem
		Visit Cascoland

4/11/2022	10.00-17.30	Work at Fruittuin
7/11/2022	all day	Cosiya training
8/11/2022		Visit wereldhuis, learn about including undocumented people in farming projects
9/11/2022		visit cascoland, visit the market
10/11/2022		visit Dappermarkt
11/11/2022		visit PLUK. Talk with some people about the topic of my thesis, but mainly join the working sessions. Cycle back with Tobia, Krijn, Antonia
12/11/2022		
13/11/2022		prepare co-creation, work on the farm de Meent. Have discussions
15/11/2022		thesis go no go meeting
16/11/2022		Interview A.
		Interview T.
		Call PLUK farmer
18/11/2022		work at PLUK Fruittuin
21/11/2022		prepare interview S.
22/11/2022		Meeting with Oscar about what he thinks is useful
		Interview with S.
23/11/2		work at PLUK Boterbloem
25/11/12		work at PLUK fruittuin
26/11/12		work in the morning, harvest party from 16.00h
30/11/2022		Diemerbos wandeling
1/12/2022		PLUK FT

2/12/2022		PLUK FT
6/12/2022		Pluk FT
7/12/2022		Attend farmer's meeting, observe discussion around the contract
8/12/2022		Farming day at Boterbloem. I think we stopped quite early. I stayed over at De Appel . It was raining and cold
9/12/2022		Farming at PLUK. Friday. Frosty and cold
15/12/2022		Short day of farming at boterbloem
16/12/2022		Farming at Fruittuin, it was the last day.
19-23/12/2022		getting an overview of the data, finishing TF bullet point list
29/12/2022		Call with S. about planning the new years brunch; sending the interview questions for feedback.
6/1/2023		New years brunch
7/1/2023		Improve interview questions, integrate feedback.
9/1/2023		scheduling interview fifame, creating overview of the data, improving the planning
10/1/2023		transcribing
11/1/2023		transcribing
13-18/1/2023		Lutzerath
19/1/2023		creating overview of to do's, transcribing
20/1/2023		coding
23-26/1/2023		coding & transcribing
		Remainder of the time was mainly data analysis & report writing