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FIGURES OF LIVEABLE CULINARY SYMPOIESIS
Reflections of response-able multispecies livelihoods in tourism

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Abstract

This study explores the role of alternative economic practices and sustainable tourism within food systems, focusing on the WWOOF (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms). As a significant element of tourism, food is not only an unavoidable aspect of travel, but also an essential part of the overall travel experience and destination differentiation. However, conventional food production and consumption has major negative impacts on climate change, biodiversity, healthy diets and the livelihoods of farmers and the urban poor. Thus, there is an urgent need for developing sustainable food systems. Sustainability has recently come to the fore in food tourism research, but it is still scarce.

This study aims to explore the livelihoods of human and nonhuman participants in the context of WWOOF community, an alternative food network linking travellers and farmers. I examine the empirical context as an economic activity with the focus on how these economies are shaped through multispecies interactions. Drawing on Gibson-Graham's theoretical framework of diverse economies, I interpret the economy as open and unscripted. I thus focus on situated ways of doing economy in everyday practices, where tourism overlaps and merges with food production and consumption, which inevitably involves not only humans but also more-than-human beings with their own capacities and causal powers. Therefore, my theoretical framework is also grounded in Haraway's theorisation of companion species, which highlights the presence of nonhumans and their participation in world-shaping. The concept of multispecies livelihoods then refers to the situated practices of securing the necessities of life by sharing lived experiences with human and nonhuman others.

The epistemological basis for this research is narrative, which also serves as the methodological foundation. I analyse the data using theory-guided content analysis, focusing on the diverse economic practices and multispecies interactions within the WWOOF community. This approach highlights the potential for alternative economic systems to contribute to more sustainable and equitable food practices. The findings suggest that WWOOF exchanges value social, experiential and empowering qualities over monetary gain. Moreover, multispecies encounters in this context seem to deepen participants' understanding the interdependency of all life forms and enhancing emotional attachment with nonhumans, therefore encouraging practices that prioritise ecosystem health. Finally, the study highlights that while slow mobility, characterised by long stays, is highly valued, there is also a strong appreciation of travelling long distances, even though nearby WWOOF sites could offer rich travel experiences. These insights encourage tourism developers to see tourists as active participants in co-creating community wellbeing, and to promote tourism, where alongside pleasing atmospheres, one encounters discomfort with other people and nonhumans, opening a space for intricate changes.

Key words: food systems, environmental responsibility, food economy, sustainable tourism

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1 Setting the stage.....	5
1.2 Food urgencies and their link to tourism	5
1.3 Research approach and questions	7
2. WWOOF AS A CULINARY SYMPOIESIS	11
2.1 The concept of food systems	11
2.2 Sustainable culinary systems	13
2.3 WWOOF as a culinary sympoiesis	16
3. STRING FIGURES OF LIVELIHOODS	20
3.1 On situated knowledge.....	20
3.2 Diverse economies and livelihoods	22
3.3 Multispecies livelihoods	25
4. STORIES FROM THE MARGINS	28
4.1 Narrative approach.....	28
4.2 Collection of descriptions	29
4.3 Analysing the narratives	31
4.4 Listening and telling stories with care	33
5. HOSPITABLE EXCHANGES	36
5.1 Two-sided sharing.....	36
5.2 Experiential labour.....	39
5.3 Amorphous leisure.....	42
5.4 Taking care	45
6. EMBODIED MULTISPECIES ENCOUNTERS	50
6.1 Affective experiences proximate to companion species.....	50
6.2 Enhancing multispecies knowledge and skills.....	55
6.3 Encouraging emotional ties	59
7. MOBILITY UNDERPINNING DIVERSITY	63
7.1 Multiplicity of physical and virtual mobilities	63
7.2 Mobile practices and knowledge	66
8. DISCUSSION	71

8.1	Economic viewpoints of WWOOF sympoiesis	71
8.2	Multispecies encounters shaping the economy	79
8.3	Mobilities in the sympoiesis	87
9.	CONCLUSION	96
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	103
	REFERENCES.....	104

List of Figures

Figure 1.	Food system figure	12
Figure 2.	The economy as an iceberg	24

List of Tables

Table 1.	A diverse economy	22
Table 2.	String figures of livelihoods in WWOOF community.....	33

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Setting the stage

Food is a matter of every aspect of human existence. One cannot live, travel, or provide experiences without dealing with food. It is not only a matter of survival but also a matter of complex food relationships and contemporary individual identities. What is possible and more the norm than the exception is that one does not have to be in touch with the processes of food production and all the diverse multispecies relations concerning it. Multispecies relations here refer to the varied interactions and connections between different species and materialities. In the context of food production, I am not just talking about all the well-known farm animals such as cows and pigs, but also the tiny earthlings that trudge around in the soil, such as bacteria, fungi, earthworms, and insects, doing work that goes unnoticed by humans by breaking down organic matter, improving soil structure and promoting plant growth through nutrient cycling. Not forgetting those entities that are somehow related to the above, and beings that we do not even consider to be alive, such as weather or machines.

I am intrigued by the question of whether there are ways to engage tourism stakeholders in food production that values and enhances biodiversity and empowers local agriculture as a livelihood. Can destinations support local farmers, and if so, how? Could hosts somehow encourage their guests to engage more deeply with the food that the land, *'the terroir'*, provides? What kind of tourism would most effectively support regenerative agriculture, which is an approach, that focuses on restoring and improving soil health, biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience? How can we stay with all the troubles (Haraway, 2016) regarding to food production, distribution, and consumption in the context of an industry that has traditionally been seen as emerging from mobility? These questions in my mind I started working on my master's thesis.

1.2 Food urgencies and their link to tourism

Food production is linked to major global challenges such as equitable access to food, the increase in unhealthy dietary patterns, the decreasing share of food-related consumption in household budgets. These challenges extend to supporting the livelihoods of food producers in an environmentally sustainable manner, and ensuring food security (OECD; Sage, 2012, p. 2–3). According to Dengerink et al. (2022, p. 1), there is wide academic consensus that most food

systems largely contribute to climate change, biodiversity loss, unhealthy diets, and the economic struggles of both farmers and the urban poor.

Even though enough food is produced globally to feed everyone, its distribution remains unequal (Sage, 2012, p. 3), leading to a paradox where some populations suffer from famine while others face obesity and diet-related diseases. The reduction in household spending on food may seem beneficial from a consumer perspective, but this can mask the broader cost: degradation or loss of ecosystems, adverse impacts on environmental processes, and increasing healthcare costs associated with unhealthy diets (Sage, 2012, p. 3; Stock & Carolan, 2012, p. 123–124).

The complexity of the problems surrounding food systems is further compounded by factors such as falling food prices, food waste, urbanisation, global population growth and increasing demand for protein-rich foods, oil prices, the availability of arable land and clean water, the issues related to animal welfare in industrial farming, and rising production prices (Gössling & Hall, 2013; Jia et al., 2019; Mbow et al., 2019; Pretty, 2012; Sage, 2012). In addition, these concerns hold “processes with uncertain consequences” (Ericksen, 2008, p. 235). Much remains to be invested in the development of food systems to meet these challenges (OECD), which I want to call urgencies in the spirit of Haraway’s thinking, as these are all issues that we need to actively process, not only address. “These are the times we must think; these are the times of urgencies that need stories” (Haraway, 2016, p. 37). These urgencies demand collective attention and action.

The relationship between food and tourism is deeply intertwined. Tourists’ food and beverage expenditures at destinations are substantial, often making up around 25 % of their total spending (WFTA, 2023, p. 10). The purchasing decisions made by tourism-related businesses have significant impact on global food production (Gössling & Hall, 2013, p. 7). The problem is that purchasing decisions are usually based on what is cheapest to buy, which tends to drive food production in an increasingly industrial direction (Gössling & Hall, 2013, p. 7). Industrialisation, despite increasing productivity (Gollin et al., 2021), has brought about significant urgencies discussed above (Dengerink et al., 20–22; Sage, 2012).

There is a recognition within tourism research of the need to explore the connections between tourism, food production, and sustainability (Gössling & Hall, 2013; Sujood et al., 2023). While studies have begun to focus on the role of local food in promoting cultural and regional development, there remains a gap in understanding how tourism can support more sustainable food

systems (Sujood et al., 2023). Furthermore, with few exceptions (e.g. Kline, 2018; Kinnunen et al., 2023; Yudina & Fennel, 2013), research in this area has largely been conducted from a human-centred perspective, ignoring the agency and perspectives of other species and materialities. The potential for tourism to contribute to positive changes in food production practices is an area that demands further exploration, particularly from the posthumanist approach.

Therefore, food production and consumption practices are significant issues in the development of sustainable tourism. Addressing these interconnected urgencies requires an effort to develop sustainable food systems that prioritise environmental responsibility, equity, and the wellbeing of both human and nonhuman communities. In this thesis, I focus on the urgency of transforming food systems towards more sustainable and ecologically integrated practices. Specifically, as described above, the primary concerns include the need for a shift from industrialised, monocultural agriculture to diversified farming methods that prioritise biodiversity, soil health, and resilience. I also emphasise the importance of fostering community-based food networks that support ethical and equitable food production.

1.3 Research approach and questions

This study specifically responds to the call to examine the sustainability of food production in its production and consumption processes, and its contribution to the economy, in a broader understanding of diverse economies, which includes a wide range of economic activities beyond conventional market transactions, such as volunteering. The aim is to contribute to the discourse on how tourism can play a role in enhancing multispecies livelihoods in food systems, which can be more accurately described as culinary sympoiesis. In this pair of words, the term “culinary” implies that food systems are inherently dependent on social activities and shared perceptions (Gössling & Hall, 2013, p. 12). The term “sympoiesis” denotes a complex, dynamic, responsive, and historically evolving system with fluid boundaries and collective production (Haraway, 2016, p. 58).

The research is based on a qualitative approach, with narrative methodology at its core. This approach is well suited to exploring the complex and interwoven stories of human and nonhuman actors within the empirical context, Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farming (WWOOF). WWOOF is an acronym for Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farming, which is an organisation that brings together farmers and travellers. The primary aim of WWOOF is to promote cultural and educational exchange through practical agricultural work. Travellers, often called

WWOOFers, typically work on WWOOF farms in exchange for food and accommodation, gaining practical experience in organic farming practices while immersing themselves in the local culture and community. Farmers benefit from WWOOFers by receiving additional labour to help with various farm tasks, which can range from planting and harvesting to animal care and general maintenance. The organisation operates as a decentralised network, with each participating country or region having its own WWOOF organisation managing local connections between travellers and farm hosts (WWOOF). This structure allows for a wide variety of farming practices and cultural experiences to be shared across the network. WWOOF provides a platform for fostering a deeper understanding of sustainable agricultural practices and building global networks among those passionate about organic farming and environmental stewardship. Deville et al. (2016b, p. 92) have suggested that non-commercial mechanisms, such as the WWOOF exchange, should be considered significant for sustainable tourism, as they offer opportunities to reduce costs related to tourism infrastructure and “decentralise and democratise” tourism by increasing the opportunity to create alternative types of valuable outcomes for a wider range of stakeholders.

The theoretical background to this study is based on two frameworks, diverse economies, and companion species. Diverse economies is a concept elaborated by two feminist economic geographers, Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson. The main purpose of this approach is to make visible the diversity of economic practices, including non-capitalist and alternative forms. By highlighting the coexistence of various economic arrangements, Gibson-Graham (2008; Gibson-Graham et al., 2013) aim to encourage a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of economic systems, emphasising the possibility of alternative, non-exploitative economies within the broader framework. Companion species, in turn, is a concept from ecofeminist scholar Donna Haraway, and it is a part of her broader exploration of human-animal relationships and the intersections of technology, nature, and culture. The companion species as a concept emphasises the mutual dependence and influence between humans and other species, rejecting hierarchical and anthropocentric views that position humans as superior (Haraway, 2008). The combination of these two theoretical frameworks, diverse economies and companion species, together forms the concept of multispecies livelihoods. Multispecies livelihoods refer to diverse practices that secure living conditions through lived experiences with other humans and nonhumans (Hyvärinen, 2019, p. 367).

By using narrative methods, I seek to capture the lived experiences of participants and how these experiences shape and are shaped by wider economic and ecological systems. Moreover, I employ theory-guided content analysis to review these narratives. This allows for an in-depth exploration of

how diverse economic practices and multispecies interactions are embodied in the everyday activities of WWOOF members. The focus of the study is therefore to make visible the perceptions of the WWOOF members on the different economic practices that human and more-than-human actors engage in to create a more liveable future. The aim is not to make generalisable findings, but to construct an interpretative description of the empirical context, WWOOF as a culinary sympoiesis, from the perspective of the research subjects, WWOOF members, in the specific context (Slevitch, 2011, p. 77–78).

This thesis contributes to discussions on how tourism can contribute to local sustainable food production and how farmers can participate in agritourism. The study opens opportunities to evaluate the importance of diverse culinary systems in tourism in a wider context and to ask what kind of new beginnings could be made in other contexts. It provides a perspective for future planning of sustainable tourism and contributes to a wider discussion about the tourism economy as a political, social, and socio-ecological activity.

In my research, the primary question is, *how can tourism enhance multispecies livelihoods in culinary sympoiesis?*

The following sub-questions, which help to elaborate the main research question, are: 1) how WWOOF members relate their practices to conventional categories of the economy, 2) how are WWOOFing experiences and practices shaped through multispecies encounters, and 3) how does the WWOOF culinary sympoiesis manifest itself from a tourism and mobility perspective?

I describe the structure of this thesis in the following paragraphs. After this introductory chapter, in chapter two I present in more detail the empirical context, WWOOF as a culinary sympoiesis. Here, I introduce the concept of food systems and link it to the broader context of sustainable culinary systems. In particular, I focus on the WWOOF community, which I analyse as a form of culinary sympoiesis: a collaborative, dynamic, responsive, situated and historical process in which WWOOF hosts, WWOOFers, animals, plants, and microorganisms co-create food systems.

Chapter three explores the theoretical framework. I begin by discussing the concept of situated knowledge and then move on to the theories of diverse economies and multispecies livelihoods. These discussions set the stage for understanding how livelihoods can be viewed through a

multispecies lens, emphasising the entanglement of human and more-than-human actors in agroeconomic practices.

In chapter four I introduce a narrative approach that I use to explore the empirical data. This chapter discusses the basis of the narrative methodology, the process of collecting descriptions, and the approach to analysing these narratives. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the ethical issues, highlighting the importance of situational ethics.

Chapters five, six and seven form the analytical part of this thesis. Chapter five focuses on hospitable exchanges, exploring the dynamics of sharing, experiential work, unstructured leisure, and the concept of caring in the WWOOF context. This chapter highlights the complex and reciprocal nature of the interactions between hosts and guests in the WWOOF setting. Chapter six is centred on embodied multispecies encounters. Here, I explore how sensory experiences and atmospheres around companion species contribute to the participants' knowledge, skills, and emotional attachments. This chapter discusses how these multispecies encounters enrich the lived experience of those involved in WWOOF. Chapter seven discusses mobility in the context of the WWOOF sympoiesis. The chapter considers the variety of physical mobilities and how mobile practices and knowledge are integral to the formation and sustainability of the sympoiesis. The movement of people, animals, and ideas is considered within the broader framework of the study.

Chapter eight builds on the findings of the previous chapters, focusing on the idealistic values and practices within the WWOOF community and contrasting them with undesired qualities. This chapter explores the economic dimensions of the WWOOF exchange, highlighting how multispecies encounters influence economic practices, and examines the role of mobility within this system. These reflections link the empirical data to the broader ideals that underpin the contemporary WWOOF community and offer insights into the potential for fostering sustainable livelihoods through these diverse practices.

Finally, chapter nine provides a reflection on the thesis, summarising the key findings and contributions of the research. The chapter reflects on the implications of the study for future research and practice in sustainable tourism and food systems.

2. WWOOF AS A CULINARY SYMPOIESIS

2.1 The concept of food systems

“Food system” is a commonly used concept in the social sciences to describe the set of activities and elements related to the production and consumption of food, along with their broader impacts. The interaction of food systems parts determines what, how much, by what methods and to whom food is produced and distributed (OECD) and how it affects the environment. In addition to primary production and environmental assets, food systems include science, agricultural technology, processing, distribution, trade, food consumption, agricultural institutions, and the interaction between them (Mononen, 2006, p. 12). Subsequently, specific contexts influence the outcomes and dynamics of these systems (Dengerink et al., 2022, p. 6). Food system in the singular form is therefore used when referring to a specific or local context, for example, when discussing about food production and consumption activities and elements of a particular community.

Cultural economy approaches to food systems employ the concept of “culinary systems,” which highlights the nature of the practices of producing and consuming food as a social construction, something that is not independent of social activities and shared perceptions (Gössling & Hall, 2013, pp. 9–12). Furthermore, the concept underscores the major role that food services related to tourism and hospitality play in the food systems (Gössling & Hall, p. 12). Since the empirical context of this thesis is closely related to mobility and tourism, and the epistemological approach is intertwined with social constructionism, I use the term “culinary systems” rather than “food systems”. This choice reflects the intertwined nature of food production and consumption with tourism-related mobility and social interactions.

Ericksen (2008) has conceptualised a structure (Figure 1) for studying culinary systems and their interconnections with global socio-ecological urgencies. The model describes the ensemble of the processes and determinants that affect food security, ecosystems and social well-being. It can also be used to examine trade-offs between the impacts of a specific culinary system. One example of a trade-off is that supporting local production can increase the income of producers, but it can also increase prices for consumers. According to Ericksen (2008, p. 234), the broad concept of a culinary system (Figure 1) includes the activities related to food from production to consumption (I consider disposal of food and its packaging material as an activity as well) and their outcomes as contributions to food security, environmental security, and social welfare.

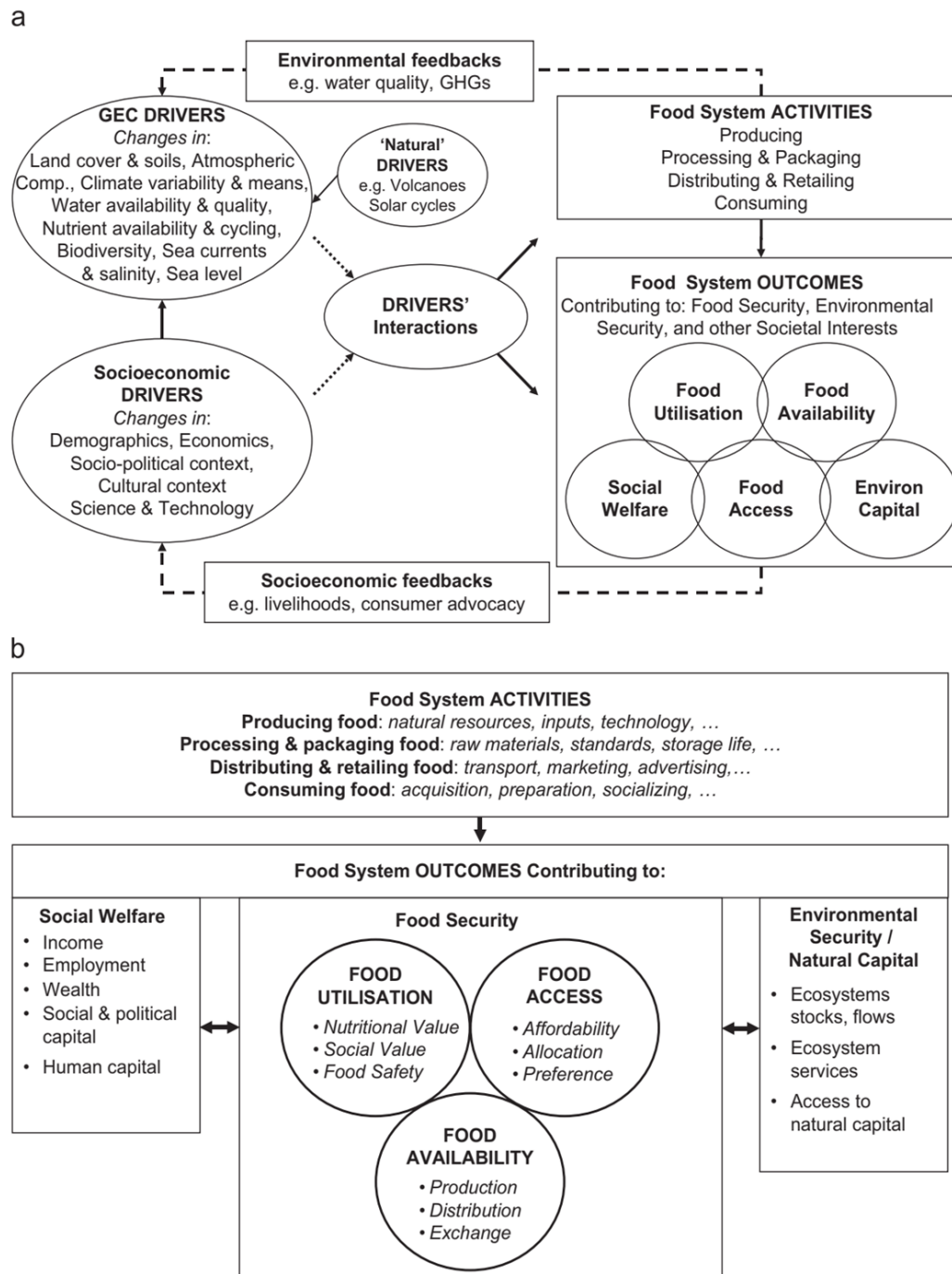


Fig. 1. (a) Food systems and their drivers. (b) Components of food systems.

Figure 1. Food system figure. Source: Ericksen, 2008.

The framework proposed by Ericksen (2008) considers feedbacks and interactions between different drivers, which guide the activities and outcomes. Drivers are the underlying forces that shape and change culinary systems, such as policies and regulations or changes in dietary habits. Outcomes, on the other hand, are results and consequences of activities and interactions within the specific culinary system. Comparing to outputs, with more quantitative approach to what is generated in culinary system processes, outcomes is a term that refers to more qualitative aspects of

what emerges from events and processes. Industrial culinary systems focus on outputs, things like the amount of food or calories produced, rather than results or impacts that they have (Stock & Carolan, 2012). Focusing on outputs dismiss that industrial culinary systems create biased outcomes, such as significant prevalence of food insecurity (Rosin et al., 2012, p. 9).

Feedback, in the food system figure (Figure 1), refers to the effects of an event or an action that affect into the original situation, changing it. For example, the overuse of chemical fertilisers can lead to soil degradation and diminishing crop yields, creating a cycle where increased inputs are needed to maintain productivity (see Jia et al., 2019). A systems approach can help to link the messiness and its figures (Ericksen, 2008, p. 237). It is possible to analyse specific units of culinary systems, but it is also vital to acknowledge that “this level of analysis has links to higher and lower levels through drivers and feedbacks” (Ericksen, 2008, p. 243).

In this thesis, the model can help to recognise the units of the empirical context at hand, and the interactions between them. In Ericksen’s model (Figure 1), livelihoods are located in socio-economic feedbacks. On the other hand, from a multispecies point of view, livelihoods can also be seen as a feedback related to the environment as livelihoods of nonhuman actors. In the light of the fact that culinary systems are the predominant user of ecosystems (Sage, 2012, p. 71), it is evident that the way of cultivating, processing, and consuming food has consequences for the livelihoods of our companion species.

2.2 Sustainable culinary systems

Although the definition of sustainable development has been established since 1987, there is not much about today’s loose global industrial culinary coalition, that can be considered sustainable. Because of several intolerable issues, there is an urgent need to rebuild more sustainable ways of producing and consuming food. Sustainable culinary system is described by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO] as a “system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised” (FAO, 2018). The sustainability in FAO’s food system model relies on the triangle of sustainability: economic, social, and environmental. A sustainable food system is one that produces well-being for all, including future generations. However, it is worth taking a closer look at the different perceptions of sustainability.

In clarifying the broad definition of sustainable culinary systems, Sage (2012, pp. 5–6) emphasises that it must seek to minimise the use of non-renewable resources at all stages, minimise waste streams and pollution, and be committed to social justice in such a way that each party has a voice in the design of culinary systems. The voice of marginalised groups such as farmers and nonhumans is still far from being heard, although there has been some discussion in recent years (e.g. Kline, 2018; Savinotko, 2022; Yudina & Fennel, 2013).

Sage (2012, p. 253) also notes that traditional methods in sustainable development approaches tend to assume that a method developed in one context will work in other contexts. The challenge may lie in the way sustainability is understood, as simplified definition. According to Gössling and Hall (2013, pp. 29–35), several frameworks can be identified within which different stakeholders approach sustainability in culinary systems. Business-as-usual approach defines the sustainability issue in economic terms and seeks to reduce regulatory barriers to the development of international trade, reasoning that market solutions will solve the problem. The green growth perspective strives to achieve an equilibrium between the trinity of economic, environmental, and social pillars of sustainability, where sustainability is predominantly characterised by technical-rational economic vocabulary aimed at promoting greater efficiency and relying on markets solutions. Both approaches focus on economic growth. The growth approach has been criticised, for example, for turning food into a commodity whose primary value is defined by its potential return on investment rather than its inherent quality as a fundamental aspect of life (Rosin et al., 2012, p. 5). According to Sage et al. (2021, p. 3), alternative culinary networks can provide systems that are "not one in which business as usual prevails, but rather a more democratic, participatory and engaged system where human and non-human life is respected".

These alternative culinary systems adopt a different approach in sustainability. In addition to the growth-oriented sustainability approaches in food system studies, Gössling and Hall (2013, pp. 29–35) identify two main frameworks that are less growth-oriented: steady-state or sustainable consumption and traditional sustainable consumption. Traditional sustainable perspective focuses on advancing 'traditional' approaches to food production in less developed nations for rural food security. The approach underscores both efficiency and sufficiency, prioritising small-scale agriculture and culturally and ecologically sensitive innovations meeting local needs and practices. The steady-state approach to sustainability prioritises sufficiency over efficiency for sustainable consumption because it recognises a dependence on ecosystems. It therefore includes efforts to reduce overall economic growth as the system that relies on market solutions continues to fail (see

e.g. Rosin et al., 2012). However, it is timely to move beyond the binary thinking of categorising culinary systems as either capitalist/global or alternative/local, and to recognise the complexity, diversity, and nuances within them (Olsen & Whittle, 2019).

In Haraway's thinking (2016, p. 33), what is important when considering rehabilitation and sustainability is to recognise systems as sympoietic rather than autopoietic. Autopoietic systems are operationally closed, meaning that the processes involved in their self-production and self-maintenance occur within the system itself, rather than being controlled by external factors. Culinary systems cannot be autopoietic. Firstly, food production is often intertwined with agricultural practices that are not directly related to food production (Green et al., 2003, as cited in Gössling & Hall, 2013, p. 12). Secondly, these systems are also influenced by cultural, historical, political, and economic factors, which impact the development of culinary systems both directly and indirectly (Gössling & Hall, 2013, p. 12). Culinary systems themselves cannot control or fully manage these issues, such as political decisions. Rather, they operate and respond within their constraints and conditions, while also influencing them. In another words, outcomes of systems are not purely the result of either individual actors or structural features but are a product of the interaction between the two (Ericksen, 2008, p. 237–238).

By sympoiesis, Haraway means complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems (Haraway, 2016, p. 58) that, drawing on Dempster's (1998, pp. 27-32, as cited in Haraway, 2016, p. 33) thesis, are produced collectively, have no self-defined spatial or temporal boundaries, and that may sometimes change in surprising ways. Culinary systems, therefore, are better understood through the lens of sympoiesis. This perspective recognises that culinary systems are not static or self-contained but are shaped by ongoing, collaborative interactions and adaptations within and beyond their immediate context. They are constantly influenced by and respond to a range of external factors, including cultural practices, historical developments, political decisions, and economic realities. Therefore, in this thesis, the empirical context is approached as a "culinary sympoiesis," where food systems are viewed as situated and interactive processes shaped by the collective cooperation of human and more-than-human actors.

In line with Haraway, Leach et al. (2010, p. 3) suggest that a more effective way to understand sustainable development and its link to social justice is through a dynamic perspective. This approach requires a more nuanced understanding of interactions, focusing on different trajectories of knowledge and recognising the diversity of perspectives, values and goals people hold (Leach et

al., 2010, pp. 3–5). Such a dynamic approach is particularly valuable in the context of tourism and agriculture, where diverse and contextual culinary assemblages abound.

2.3 WWOOF as a culinary sympoiesis

Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farming [WWOOF] is a program that links farmers and working tourists. In the WWOOF model, tourists work on a farm for four to six hours a day in exchange for accommodation and food, while the farmers get extra hands to help with the farm work.

The organisation was founded in the 1970s in the UK to enable city dwellers to experience rural life while supporting organic farming (WWOOF UK). These original objectives continue today, but the organisation has undertaken changes over time. The original name “Working Weekends on Organic Farms” initially had a limited scope but has since evolved to include longer stays. The name was changed to “Willing Workers on Organic Farms” as the length of stays increased, and later to its current form to reflect its globalised nature (Terry, 2014, p. 95).

Initially, as explained by Deville (2011, p. 22), WWOOF operated with a straightforward approach. Members received a newsletter every two months that listed farms seeking assistance, along with details about the types of work required. Participation was arranged through the regional coordinator for the area. This system provided a decentralised and efficient way to manage the operation (Green 1980, as cited in Deville, 2011, p. 22), ensuring that there were no issues with too many volunteers arriving at one location at once. After completing at least two weekends through the WWOOF coordinators and proving their reliability to hosts, members gained access to a more detailed directory for the UK and Ireland. This allowed them to independently arrange their stays with hosts (Green 1980, as cited in Deville, 2011, p. 22).

Today WWOOF has evolved to take a more global and digital approach. The Federation of WWOOF organisations [FoWo] now operates an online platform where members can access comprehensive listings of host farms and projects worldwide. This modern system allows volunteers to browse available opportunities, view detailed profiles of hosts and communicate directly with them through the website. The decentralised model remains but is now supported by a digital infrastructure that simplifies the booking process and provides real-time updates. Members can search for hosts based on location, type of work and other preferences, making it easier to find a

suitable match. The online system also includes features for rating and reviewing experiences, helping to maintain transparency within the WWOOF network. Today, some academics consider WWOOF as one of the world's largest volunteer tourism programmes (Wengel et al., 2018, p. 46). According to the WWOOF website it currently involves around 12,000 farms from 130 different countries and about 100,000 tourists. Much has been written and shared about WWOOFing in popular media, especially online. However, there has been much less academic interest in WWOOFing compared to other similar types of tourism (Deville et al., 2016a, p. 425).

Some studies categorise WWOOFing within alternative tourism (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006; Mosedale, 2011), while others link it to volunteer tourism (Deville et al., 2016a), or agritourism (Lans, 2016, p. 18). However, the organisation and the activities of its participants can be seen as a food system model that aims to promote more sustainable food production and consumption methods, solidarity between people and an ethical economy through the mobility of people (WWOOF). WWOOF is based on the idea that sustainability in food systems can be achieved “through the significant inputs of human labour, good design and practical knowledge” (Deville et al., 2016a, p. 422).

WWOOFing attracts participants and hosts with diverse motivations. WWOOFers are driven by a desire to participate in sustainable food systems and develop practical skills while working outdoors (Terry, 2014; Wengel et al., 2018). They seek authentic travelling experiences, escape from conventional lifestyles, and are interested in environmental consciousness and having encounters with wildlife (Deville, 2011). In contrast, hosts view WWOOF volunteers as an additional source of labour and an educational opportunity for the participants (Mostafanezhad, 2016; Terry, 2014; Wengel et al. 2018). They value the social interactions and support that WWOOFers provide (Deville, 2011). They are also eager to share their knowledge, ideas, values, and places with visitors, as well as to raise awareness about sustainable living (Deville, 2015).

The overall success of a WWOOF exchange is based on the communication of the expectations of both parties and engaging in reciprocal relations based on mutual respect and trust (Deville et al. 2016a; 2016b; Mosedale, 2011, p. 203; Wengel et al., 2018). Successful exchanges are thus produced through engagement, but engagement with participants and places as they are, is also an outcome of these processes (Deville, 2011, p. 371). Another significant outcome of successful WWOOF exchanges is transformational experiences, that lead to a permanent change towards more sustainable attitudes of tourists and hosts as well (Deville, 2011; Deville, 2015; Deville & Wearing,

2013). WWOOFers who have transformational experiences in the WWOOF farms, can contribute to broader social changes by speaking for local sustainable agriculture (Terry, 2014, p. 105). Other positive outcomes of successful WWOOF exchanges include the building of personal networks, friendships, relationships, increased cultural understanding and self-understanding, personal development (Dewille, 2011; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006); moral support for alternative ways of living and farm improvement (Terry, 2014); and access to social interaction in distant locations (Dewille, 2011; Wengel et al., 2018, p. 53). There is also a relatively even distribution of power between hosts and WWOOFers (Dewille, 2011, p. 391), though power dynamics can change with the demand for WWOOFers (Lai et al., 2020, p. 1981), and their visa status (Lans, 2016, p. 18). In addition, Kosnik (2014), confirming her assertion with previous research, notes that the host is in control of most settings such as food, diet, working hours, break times and task allocation. However, as Kosnik (2014, p. 287) adds, both parties have their strategies for controlling power.

Some WWOOF farms are non-profit, growing food for their own use, while others are commercial businesses, selling their produce at local markets. Additionally, there are farms that serve as educational centres focused on sustainability and organic farming practices, as well as eco-communities that integrate holistic living with environmental stewardship. The farm types are vastly diverse. On the other hand, Lans (2016) categorised hosts into two main types: those with a passion for organic farming practices and knowledge transfer, and those with a need for labour.

Mostafanezhad (2016) has addressed this issue from a broader political and economic perspective: some WWOOF hosts perceive the community as a means of economic and political resistance, positioning it as a forum for contesting the global neoliberal agricultural model, which is predicated on free-market principles, privatisation, and reduced government intervention in the agricultural sector. On the contrary, some of the farmers use WWOOFers as a neoliberal coping strategy, to compensate for the high costs (Mostafanezhad, 2016; see also Lai et al., 2020; Terry, 2014). This way, as Mostafanezhad (2016, p. 129) argues, WWOOFing can also contribute to enhance neoliberal food production. It is therefore useful to reflect on whether this type of tourism development increases the dependency of those who have more financial capital, thereby reinforcing power differentials (e.g. Guttentag, 2009; Simpson, 2005; Wearing, 2004).

There is also exploitation of the WWOOF system by both tourists and farmers, such as hosts insisting that WWOOFers work overtime or WWOOFers disregarding host rules and practices (Wengel et al., 2018). In addition, there is an increasing number of tourists that use the program as

means to get more unique and authentic experiences than the mass tourism can provide in an affordable way, while ignoring the community's original ideals and ethics and with limited interest in organic farming (Dewille et al., 2016a). In other words, there is a growing trend towards commodification. Dewille et al. (2016a) argue that there are two separate spaces colliding within the WWOOF context: an idealistic and ethical space and a commodified, capitalist space. To maintain the integrity and diversity integral to the ideal space of WWOOFing, researchers must acknowledge the ongoing tension between these spaces and critically examine how the increasing influence of mass tourism might dilute or transform the core values of the WWOOF movement (Dewille et al., 2016a, p. 425). It is therefore valuable to explore the role that mobility plays in contemporary WWOOF symposiums. It is also essential to recognise the ideals that are constantly being negotiated in the community because of the collision of these two spaces.

3. STRING FIGURES OF LIVELIHOODS

3.1 On situated knowledge

The theoretical framework for this thesis, *multispecies livelihoods*, emerges from the integration of *diverse economies* (Gibson-Graham, 2008) and the concept of *companion species* (Haraway, 2008). In this chapter, I will outline this framework in detail. I begin by exploring the ontological background that underpins this work and provides a basis for understanding the theoretical orientations of this study. Following this, I will explore the concept of diverse economies, which challenges conventional economic categories and opens space for alternative, non-capitalist forms of economic organisation. Finally, I will introduce the multispecies framework, which builds on Haraway's theorising of companion species and draws attention to the entangled livelihoods of both human and more-than-human actors in the context of food sympoiesis. Together, these frameworks set the stage for examining the complex, dynamic relationships that shape multispecies livelihoods in food systems.

Theoretical background in this thesis is partly based on posthumanist thinking, which in turn developed from postmodern philosophy. Cohen (2019, pp. 416–418) explains the basics of posthumanism: it is primarily concerned with undermining the human-centred perspective and the privileged position of human beings in relation to other forms of life. The posthumanist worldview is conceived as a flat ontology in which hierarchies are abandoned and no form of life has primacy over others (Cohen, 2019, pp. 416–418). Guia and Jamal (2020, p. 3) add that reality in radical posthumanism is thought to be formed in a complex way, through the interaction of dynamic and complex relations and configurations. Therefore, posthumanism rejects dichotomous ontological divisions between, among others, body and mind or nature and culture. In other words, radical posthumanism is based on a relational ontology that emphasises the importance of relations and interaction for existence and reality. It is a way of focusing on the interconnectedness and the interdependence of a multitude of others in the wider scope of being in the world (Pernecky, 2023, p. 561). This worldview is in opposition to the traditional humanist and anthropocentric frameworks, which situate humans at the centre of existence and knowledge. The exploration of such alternative ontologies enriches the onto-ethical-epistemic foundations of tourism knowledge and enhances its viability (Guia & Trisia, 2023, pp. 618–621).

Guia and Jamal (2020, p. 3) construe the epistemological basis of posthumanism: it is possible for humans to have only partial knowledge of the world, since the universe also contains nonhuman knowledge. Posthumanism sees no need for generalising principles, but rather, for example, ethical value is always based on criteria present in each case. Rather, the aim is to seek an understanding of the different circumstances in which something new is produced. Knowledge can therefore only be conveyed through approximate values (Guia & Jamal, 2020, p. 3). I interpret that objectivity in relational exploration is achieved by interactive processes that require conversation between participants and reasoning about the grounds for disagreements (Douglas, 2004, p. 463), where other species are considered as participants, even without a shared language, by listening with care and patience (Spivak, 2000, p. 22). This requires speculative research: imagining, inventing, and acknowledging other ways of knowing and being (Grimwood & Höckert, 2023, p. 2; Rantala, Kinnunen, & Höckert, 2024).

In part, the theorisation of multispecies livelihoods builds on feminist perspectives, as both post-anthropocentric and diverse economies thinking have links to it (Savinotko, 2022, p. 21). Jennings (2010, pp. 50–57) has explored the feminist perspectives together with postmodernism. According to her, it is not clear-cut, whether these should be considered as paradigms or approaches within interpretive social sciences and critical theory, since there are similarities between their epistemological basis, but also in their ontological and methodological thinking. The idea that the world is mediated through gendered structures that place women in a subordinate and somewhat invisible position is common to feminist perspectives. In addition, there is an idea of multiple realities within social settings, which is why knowledge is always situated. Knowledge linked to social change and emancipation is valued in feminist perspectives (Jennings, 2010, pp. 50–57).

Like women, nonhuman species have a subordinate and somewhat invisible position in the world-making. Mobility, the core framework of tourism, is in some way detached from the natural environment, even though mobility is mediated, experienced, and conceptualised through its context (Baldwin et al., 2023, p. 290). A case in point is that mobility is usually considered only in terms of human mobility, without acknowledging that animals also have a need to move in our shared spaces (Fishel, 2019). Another example in tourism research is that plants are ignored or seen as part of the background or the landscape, and their active contribution to the tourist experience and overall world-making is forgotten (Cohen & Fennel, 2019, p. 587). Similarly, what happens in the economy beyond capitalist growth-oriented practices is usually neglected in tourism research (Mosedale, 2011, p. 194). By taking these marginalised others in the focus of research, it is possible to

understand their significance in tourism and expand our moral consideration (e.g. Grimwood & Höckert, 2023, p. 11) and create new realities “that are less oppressive, less violent, and less exploitative” (Pernecky, 2023, p. 561).

3.2 Diverse economies and livelihoods

Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson (2006, 2008) have challenged conventional economic thinking, offering post-structuralist and feminist critiques of capitalism that challenge the fixed categories and binaries of economic discourse. They argue against the prevailing assumption that there is a singular, unified capitalist system and instead propose the existence of diverse economies that include various economic practices beyond capitalism. The diverse economies perspective brings to light the marginalised forms of economic arrangements and practices (Table 1) that are constantly and situationally taking shape. By highlighting the coexistence of multiple economic arrangement, Gibson-Graham (2006, 2008) aim to encourage a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of economic systems, emphasising the possibility of alternative, non-exploitative economies within the broader framework. The perspective challenges the dominant narrative that portrays capitalism as the only viable economic system. The use of diverse economies framework is opening the “space for alternative perspectives on tourism development” (Brouder, 2018, p. 917).

Table 1. A diverse economy.

Transactions	Labor	Enterprise
MARKET	WAGE	CAPITALIST
<i>ALTERNATIVE MARKET</i> <i>Sale of public goods</i> <i>Ethical ‘fair-trade’ markets</i> <i>Local trading systems</i> <i>Alternative currencies</i> <i>Underground market</i> <i>Co-op exchange</i> <i>Barter</i> <i>Informal market</i>	<i>ALTERNATIVE PAID</i> <i>Self-employed</i> <i>Cooperative</i> <i>Indentured</i> <i>Reciprocal labor</i> <i>In kind</i> <i>Work for welfare</i>	<i>ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST</i> <i>State enterprise</i> <i>Green capitalist</i> <i>Socially responsible firm</i> <i>Non-profit</i>
<i>NON-MARKET</i> <i>Household flows</i> <i>Gift giving</i> <i>Indigenous exchange</i> <i>State allocations</i> <i>State appropriations</i> <i>Gleaning</i> <i>Hunting, fishing, gathering</i> <i>Theft, poaching</i>	<i>UNPAID</i> <i>Housework</i> <i>Family care</i> <i>Neighborhood work</i> <i>Volunteer</i> <i>Self-provisioning labor</i> <i>Slave labor</i>	<i>NON-CAPITALIST</i> <i>Communal</i> <i>Independent</i> <i>Feudal</i> <i>Slave</i>

Source: Gibson-Graham, 2008, p. 616.

Gibson-Graham (2008) present the idea that economic practices are not only descriptive but also constitutive of the economic landscape. They highlight the agency of individuals and communities in shaping economic activities and systems. Economic practices are seen as active enactments that contribute to the incessant construction and reiteration of economic systems. The role of language and representation in shaping economic realities becomes meaningful in this approach. Economic categories and identities are not neutral descriptors, but actively constructed through discourse and representation. This performative approach challenges the idea that economic structures are fixed, objective, and separate from human action. By understanding economic activities as performative, individuals and communities can actively engage in creating and promoting diverse economies that go beyond the constraints of dominant capitalist structures (Gibson-Graham, 2008).

The framework of diverse economies is often presented with the metaphor of a floating iceberg (Figure 2), with economically marginalised performative practices and relations shown below the waterline, hidden from the hegemonic narrative of the economy. The framework encourages a departure from pure capitalist perspective (Miller & Gibson-Graham, 2019, p. 319). In the context of WWOOF, it means acknowledging and valuing non-monetised aspects of the experience, such as cultural interactions, knowledge exchange, and sustainable living practices. The framework emphasises the agency of WWOOF participants in shaping economic realities. WWOOF participants are not merely consumers and producers but actively contribute to and co-create the economic and social environment of the farms and the experiences they engage with.

Gibson-Graham's focus on community economies is relevant to WWOOF as well, as it involves networks of hosts and volunteers collaborating in shared practices. Beyond individual farms, the movement forms a larger community of practitioners engaging in alternative economic activities. It encourages a nuanced understanding of tourism that goes beyond the traditional tourist-host dynamic, highlighting the reciprocal relationships and economic interdependencies between hosts, volunteers, farms, landscapes, and the organisation itself. Applying the diverse economies framework to WWOOF opens the potential for alternative narratives in tourism. Rather than viewing tourism solely as a commodified industry, it allows for the exploration of narratives centred around sustainability, education, and community building.

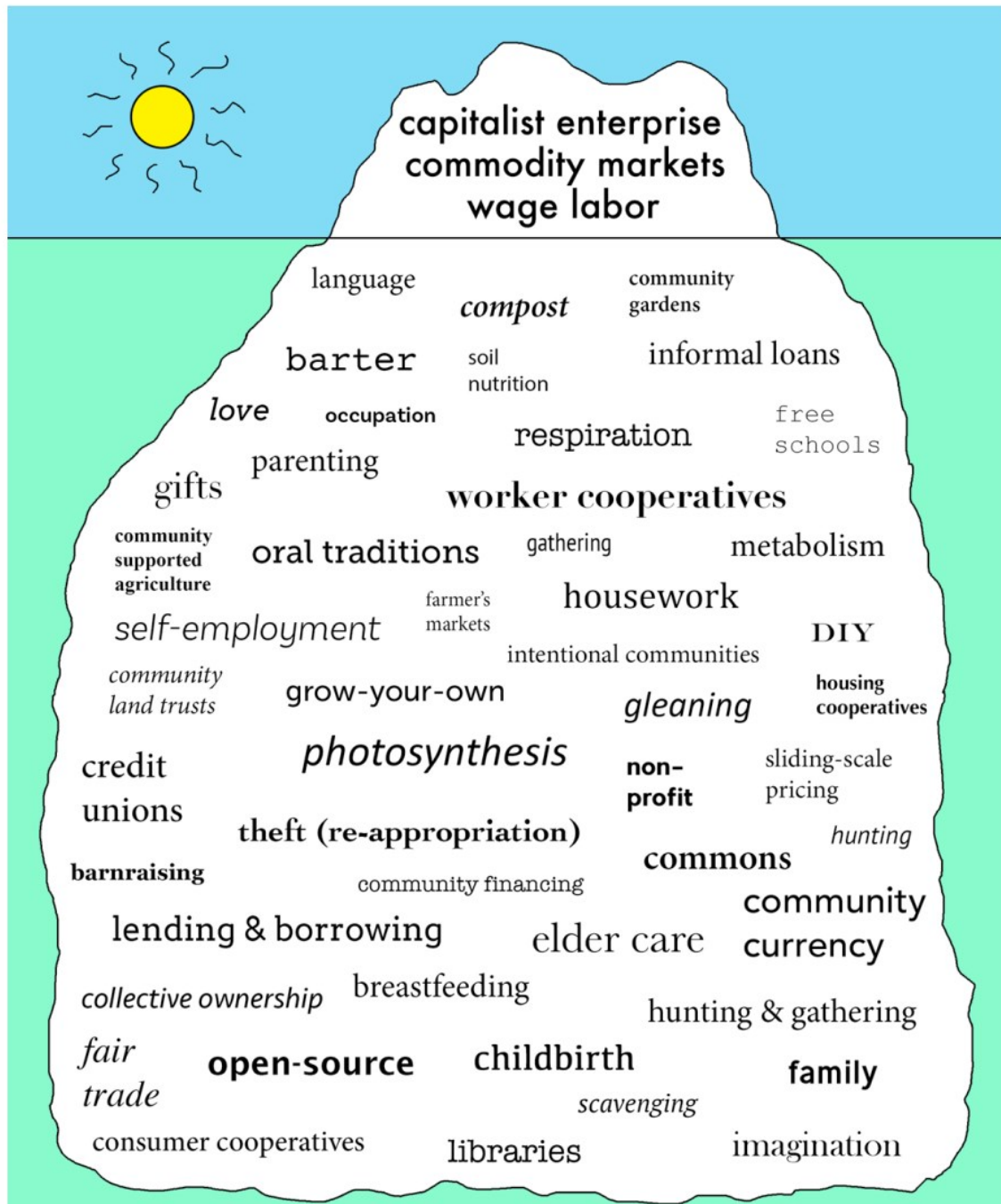


Figure 2. The economy as an iceberg. Original image by Byrne, modified text by Miller. Source: Miller & Gibson-Graham, 2019, p. 319

A central concept in the diverse economies is *livelihoods*, which refers to practical economic activity in local and small-scale contexts (Miller & Gibson-Graham, 2019). The concept guides the research to consider economies as mundane and situationally formative practices and processes (Miller, 2019, p. 153). Hence livelihoods can form of paid work, but also from different benefits,

gifts, services, and primary production. A more comprehensive examination of community economies reveals the necessity to move beyond the human-centric perspective and noticing the interdependencies with human and *nonhuman* others (Gibson-Graham, 2014), and to consider more-than-humans as moral subjects with unique ways of being (Roelvink, 2015). The practices depicted in the iceberg (Figure 2) also include nonhuman activities, such as photosynthesis, the process by which plants, algae, and some bacteria convert light energy into chemical energy, using carbon dioxide and water while releasing oxygen. Photosynthesis is vital because it forms the foundation of the food chain, supporting both plant life and the broader ecosystems that depend on it for energy. Multispecies practices and processes are therefore another area of focus in this study.

3.3 Multispecies livelihoods

Companion species is a concept from Haraway (2008), which highlights the presence of nonhuman in everyday life and their participation in world-shaping. The idea of companion species is about recognising the interdependence of all life forms. Derived from the Latin *cum panis*, meaning "with bread," companionship involves sharing, mutuality, and co-creation (Haraway, 2008, p. 17). The companion species approach is grounded in relational ontology (Haraway, 2008, pp. 16–18), the worldview that individuals do not exist before their interrelationships in networks (see section 3.1). In this conceptualisation, companion species are central to these networks: our existence is coexistence with other species. "To be one is always to *become with* many" (Haraway, 2008, p. 4). Haraway's concept of *becoming with* emphasises that our identities and subjectivities are not formed in isolation but are constantly shaped through relationships with companion species. This challenges traditional individualism by proposing that humans and nonhumans co-create each other's realities through ongoing interactions. These processes of becoming involve a mutual influence, with both humans and other species evolving together, shaping each other's existence and futures, and extending into cultural, political, and ecological realms (Haraway, 2008). Food production, tourism practices and the economy are constantly shaped by multiple relations between different actors, many of which are more-than-human, such as soil biota.

Haraway (2016, pp. 99–103) further extends this relational thinking with her concept of *kin-making*, which involves creating multispecies relationships that transcend traditional family bonds to include companion species. This idea extends kinship to encompass all forms of life, promoting a sense of interconnectedness and mutual responsibility. Kin-making emphasises the ethical and political

dimensions of these relationships, encouraging humans to see themselves as part of a larger multispecies community.

The letter combination *SF*, in Haraway's (2016) work, describes ways of thinking about practices of cooperation, ways of working and relating across species. The combination *SF* has several meanings, including speculative feminism, science fiction, and string figures. Figures represent "material-semiotic nodes or knots" in which different bodies and meanings co-shape each other (Haraway, 2008, p. 4). Haraway (2016, p. 10) explains that *string figures*, as a conceptual tool, can suggest and perform patterns that enable conditions for partial restoration, and getting along together with our companion species. I interpret Ericksen's (2008) food system figure as an example of such a string figure, where its structural features (Ericksen, 2008 p. 238) guide patterns aimed at fostering greater *response-ability*.

Response-ability is Haraway's (2016, p. 17) expression to emphasise a sense of ethical and environmental responsibility as a thoughtful and responsible engagement with the world. It conveys the idea that individuals and communities have the ability to respond to the challenges and ethical considerations posed by their relationships with other beings, both human and nonhuman. *Response-ability* is the basis of staying with the trouble. Rather than seeking to escape or resolve complex global problems through simplistic solutions, *staying with the trouble* calls for an engagement with the complexities, challenges, and uncertainties of living in a damaged world. It encourages a commitment to cultivating ongoing care and attention to our shared existence on this planet (Haraway, 2016, pp. 10–12).

Linking companion species to livelihoods, Hyvärinen (2019, p. 367) conceptualises *multispecies livelihoods* as diverse practices that secure living conditions "through sharing lifeworlds with human and non-human others". The concept refers not only to survival, but also to the complex interdependencies between species. In practice, there are methods and philosophies that farmers use to reconcile food production with the wellbeing of more-than-human-world: at least regenerative agriculture, permaculture and biodynamic agriculture implement more holistic farming. There are many WWOOF farms practicing some of these ideas, so the data collected for this thesis is fruitful from the multispecies livelihoods perspective.

As I know, this combination of diverse economies and companion species framework has not been used in tourism research before. The multispecies approach has been increasingly applied in the last

decade, bringing to light the agency of animals, plants, and other nonhumans entangled in tourism experiences and practices. For example, animals and their role as food in tourism experience is explored in articles within the book edited by Kline (2018). Ren (2011), instead, has explored how Polish oscypek cheese plays active role in destination management and local food production. In the context of volunteer tourism, Benali and Ren (2019) examined how nonhuman actors, specifically head lice, affect volunteers' experiences, impacting on their routines, relationships, and subjectivities. Tallberg et al. (2022) expand on this multispecies approach by arguing that animals should be considered legitimate stakeholders in organisational settings, emphasising the affective and ethical dimensions of human-animal relationships that shape practices and decisions. A notable contribution to the methodological engagement with multispecies relations is found in a book edited by Rantala, Kinnunen, and Höckert (2024) that approaches proximity as an ongoing and uncertain process of becoming. The authors cultivate attentiveness to proximate bodies, texts, technologies, landscapes, and weeds and lichens, among others, exploring the "messiness" of more-than-human relations, emphasising curiosity and wonder in attuning to these entanglements (Rantala, Kinnunen, Höckert, Grimwood et al., 2024).

I have not found any studies of WWOOF that take a multispecies approach, although Kosnik (2014) deals extensively with the role of food, drink, and other substances in her study, suggesting that they play an essential role in negotiating the relationship between the host and the WWOOFer, and the boundaries and power relations involved. Relating to alternative and diverse economies, Kosnik (2014) suggests that exchange in WWOOF creates a dynamic where roles are negotiated and mutual obligations are formed, echoing the structures of gift economies where reciprocity and social bonds are central. Lai et al. (2020) have explored the dynamics of non-profit sharing economies in the context of WWOOF Taiwan, using social exchange theory as a framework. The study finds that "exchange rules" – such as reciprocity, rationality, and altruism – are used by the hosts to manage uncertainties and mitigate issues such as emotional labour and social dilemmas, ultimately creating positive outcomes when these rules contribute to fairness, equity, and shared responsibility (Lai et al., 2020). In contrast, Lans (2016) situates WWOOF within the framework of "care economy," a concept in feminist economics emphasising the value of non-waged labour dedicated to human and environmental care. The study highlights how WWOOF participants contribute to the care and maintenance of organic farms and, by extension, to the well-being of farm families and communities.

4. STORIES FROM THE MARGINS

4.1 Narrative approach

People's stories construct interpersonal social reality (Berger et al., 1994). In other words, through storytelling, individuals not only communicate their experiences but also construct meaning, negotiate identities, and interpret the world around them (Mönkkönen, 2020, p. 105). As such, narratives play a central role in shaping our perceptions and interpretations of reality. They serve as a key mechanism through which representational reality is produced and negotiated. Stories are used to structure the world, including the future and the possible (Berger et al., 1994). Hyvärinen (2021) explains, that narratives are not only manifestations of an individual's deepest experience, but they are also always created in their social environment and take a stand on other narratives. People are also consumers of stories. A powerful narrative invites you to tell in a similar way (Hyvärinen, 2021). The WWOOF ideology as such, engages WWOOF members to the storytelling it involves. As mentioned previously, the role of language and representation in shaping economic realities is meaningful in the diverse economies approach, as economic categories and identities are constructed through narratives and representation (Gibson-Graham, 2008). Thus, the epistemological foundation of this thesis is narrative, which posits that knowledge is constructed through language.

As the epistemological foundation of this study is narrative, so is the methodological approach. Narrative research is not a single method, but a broad multidisciplinary approach that encompasses many different methodological perspectives. What unites these approaches is their focus: narratives, stories, and storytelling in society (Hyvärinen, 2021). Narrative methodology involves studying and interpreting individual's stories and experiences to understand broader social phenomena. Similarly, Gibson-Graham's (2006; 2008) work challenges mainstream economic narratives by highlighting diverse economic practices. By incorporating narratives into their analysis, Gibson-Graham enrich their theoretical framework with lived experiences, enhancing their understanding of the diverse economic landscape and offering insights into alternative economic arrangements that may be overlooked by traditional economic theory. By incorporating narrative methodology, it is feasible to ground the theoretical analysis in the lived experiences and stories of participants engaged in WWOOF activities.

Based on Rimmon-Kenan's (2002, p. 142) text, Aaltonen and Leimumäki (2010, p. 123) note that because experiences are processes that evolve in the situation and are intertwined to the narratives when they are told, the narrative is thus understood as a continuous process. Thus, the object of research is also the context of the narrative. Although texts are written by individual people, the author's worldview and other people are present in them because individual interpretations are structured via the people in the stories (Bakhtin, 1991, as cited in Mönkkönen, 2020, p. 113). In this thesis there are also other entities involved in the plot of the narratives, which, through the interpretations of the individual authors, are also structured within the framework of the complex ethical relations. That is, even though the nonhumans do not themselves participate in the production of the material in any way, their agency are still present in the interpretations of the human participants.

Narrative methodology is well suited to a multispecies framework, as Haraway (2016) has emphasised the importance of storytelling as a way of understanding and transforming relationships with the world. Narrative methodology allows for the exploration of multiple voices, experiences, and perspectives that exist within the context of the study.

4.2 Collection of descriptions

For a material for this thesis, I collected various texts from the websites of national WWOOF organisations and WWOOF independents from January to May 2024. These texts include narratives from the farmers and their guests, or WWOOFers as they call them. Some of the narratives are curated by the organisations' team members, such as those included in the WWOOF 2024 calendar. Most of the data is depictions of the farms and reviews from farm visitors. One narrative is from a WWOOF podcast, and it is an interview with a former WWOOFer. The overall quantity of the material is 59 pages from 310 text pieces, of which 68 are written by hosts, 8 on behalf of the organization, and the rest by the WWOOFers.

More specifically, the narratives of the hosts are mostly related to the description of their families, their personalities and preferences, the characteristics of their farms, their current projects and future visions, the quality and quantity of the work that is in prospect for their possible working guests, the conditions of the accommodation, the recreational opportunities nearby, and sometimes their wider philosophies and how they act as a part of the local community. In essence, these texts are like marketing texts, with the purpose of attracting new WWOOFers to their sites. WWOOFer

reviews can be compared to customer reviews. They include portrayals of experiences, overall satisfaction and recommendations or complaints, details of accommodation, hospitality and the general conditions and practices, how communication worked, what they did and learnt on the farm, how long they stayed there, what they did in their free time, distances to nearby places and how to get there, and any challenges they encountered. Occasionally hosts respond to these reviews. I have some material, that is such a response to a review. These responds add nuance to the material. The websites of hosts who have had a lot of feedback from WWOOFers were usually the most detailed. Some of the comments represent more general views, while others represent nuances that do not come up so often in the comments. The material is written in English and Spanish. In many cases it is not the native language of the writer. Using a foreign language can have limited writers' expression and erase nuance from the comments (see section 4.4).

I had few principles for collecting the material: the hosts had to have some feedback from their visitors to enable reflecting their narratives, and the texts had to be written in English, Spanish or Swedish so I had a chance to translate them. I collected pieces of texts that referred to practices and experiences of livelihoods, well-being, and negotiations relating to them, and multispecies relationships. To contextualise the material, I coded the comments according to the country of origin and the role of the author, the type of the host with a classification of self-sufficient hosts, production farms, and non-profit or community hosts. I gathered material from various countries, including Ecuador, Chile, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Japan, Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, Columbia, USA, Canada, Malesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, United Kingdom, and Marocco. Due to time constraints, many continents were underrepresented. In addition, in some countries, such as Australia, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan, there is no way for guests to leave reviews on the host's websites or signing up is mandatory to see the host profile. For this reason, I have left most of these countries out of the data collection. With Japan, I made an exception, because I found interesting diverse economic practices from their sites. In my analysis of these practices, I was aware that the perspective of the other party, the WWOOFers, was absent.

My choice of WWOOF as a community for data collection is primarily because it is an activity with strong links to food production and tourism. Secondly, food production is seen as a social activity with multiple meanings on behalf of the organisation (WWOOF), the farmers (Mostafanezhad, 2016; Terry, 2014) and the tourists (Miller & Mair, 2015). The questions that are of interest from a research point of view are already present and are being worked on this community. WWOOF community can thus provide meaningful perspectives on the interests of this study. As the

participants are a diverse and changing group of different actors, material can bring out the views of different sides on the topic.

4.3 Analysing the narratives

This study applies theory-guided content analysis to uncover the meanings behind the narratives, integrating a theoretical orientation into the process to explore how various multi-species economic arrangements manifest within the mundane practices of the WWOOF community. The aim of qualitative content analysis is to provide a verbal and explicit description of the phenomenon under study (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 90). Theory-guided content analysis is a qualitative research method commonly used to analyse recorded communication. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 80) have described theory-guided content analysis as an approach in which the analysis is guided by a theoretical orientation that informs the case itself and provides insights into what to look for in the data. The process involves the researcher identifying and naming relevant elements through coding, and categorising data into themes. This method lies between data-driven and theory-driven content analysis, as it involves selecting units for analysis from the data, while being guided by pre-existing theories or knowledge. The process of thinking is directed by orientation towards the data and existing models, with the aim of uncovering new patterns of thinking, rather than testing theories that have been used previously (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 80).

Through theory-guided content analysis, this study aims to uncover new patterns and meanings within the WWOOF narratives. One way to achieve this is by employing a *reading for difference* approach, which is closely aligned with the study's theoretical framework. Reading for difference rather than dominance is a key methodological approach in the study of diverse economies. Gibson-Graham (2006, p. xxxii) describe it as a deconstructive technique that brings to light economic practices that are obscured or hidden by capitalocentrism. Interpreting Gibson-Graham, Savinotko (2022, p. 50, authors translation) articulates: "reading for difference rather of dominance is a strategy that aims to break away from hegemonic narratives and turn the gaze towards the multiplicity of economic practices, spaces, actors and orders and thus open up a new kind of space for political agency". The approach produces recognition of the diverse economic landscape, clarifying people's choices in the practical and political realm. At the same time, it exposes the performance of dominance to observation and criticism (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p. 623–624). This methodology can also be used to bring out the agency of more-than-humans (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p. 626; Savinotko, 2022).

The approach of reading for difference in this analysis directed me to pay attention to the choices people make in their lives within work and surviving, distributing surplus, encountering others, communing, investing (see Gibson-Graham et al., 2013), as well as the agency and roles of more-than-humans. Furthermore, as mobility is a core component of the economic practices in the WWOOF context, I wanted to observe its forms of manifestation. With these categories in my attention, I collected the data from the webpages. I focused on what kinds of livelihood, welfare practices, and negotiations emerge in the narratives and what kind of agencies, practices and relationships between multispecies participants in food production and tourism practices emerge in the context of WWOOF.

In chapter 5, *hospitable exchanges*, I explore how these economic practices are manifested through various forms of exchange that reflect hospitality, focusing on the ways humans and nonhumans contribute to and benefit from these interactions. The analysis emphasises how these exchanges transcend purely economic transactions, incorporating elements of care, mutual aid, and ethical considerations involving both human and nonhuman actors.

Chapter 6, *embodied multispecies encounters*, focuses on how encounters between humans and more-than-humans are experienced and negotiated within the WWOOF context. I analyse how these interactions are not just incidental but actively shape economic practices and relationships. By reading for difference, I bring out the subtle ways in which the agency of more-than-human species contributes to the dynamics of communal living and shared work.

Finally, in chapter 7, *mobility underpinning diversity*, I examine the role of mobility as a central component of the WWOOF experience. Mobility, in this context, manifests not only in the physical movement of people between farms but also in the movement of ideas, practices, and multispecies interactions. Through the reading for difference approach, I analyse how mobility shapes and is shaped by the diverse economic and ecological practices within the WWOOF community, attending to both human and more-than-human forms of mobility.

While collecting the data, I labelled comments according to whether they were written by a host (H), a WWOOFer (G) or an organisation representative (O). I made notes in a Word document about the content of the comments. I looked for frequently repeated points and different contexts. Based on the principles of theory-guided analysis, I reduced and clustered the data in a material-oriented way, while the theoretical framework guided me to look for units relevant to the research

question, such as leisure and encounters and experiences with more-than-humans. After grouping, I divided the generated subcategories into increasingly reduced top categories. I then analysed the data within these categories. The following table illustrates the set of the final top categories, which also represent the following chapters and sub-chapters of the analysis (Table 2).

Table 2. String figures of livelihoods in WWOOF community

5.1 Two-sided sharing	5. Hospitable exchanges	Figures of livelihoods in WWOOF
5.2 Experiential labour		
5.3 Amorphous leisure		
5.4 Taking care		
6.1 Affective experiences proximate to companion species	6. Embodied multispecies encounters	
6.2 Enhancing multispecies knowledge and skills		
6.3 Encouraging emotional attachments with companion species		
7.1 Multiplicity of physical and virtual mobilities	7. Mobility underpinning diversity	
7.2 Mobile practices, values and knowledge		

4.4 Listening and telling stories with care

In their article, Syrjälä and her co-authors (2006) talk about ethical issues that can occur in narrative research. According to them, a range of ethical issues in narrative research are similar to those that emerge in qualitative research in general. One of the particularities of narrative research is that it involves personal matters of other people's lives. The authors themselves have deliberately chosen the *ethics of caring* as a central principle to guide their research. While the traditional academic discussion of research ethics is based on conducting according to rules, the ethics of caring leads to situation-specific and individual solutions in circumstances for which there are no ready-made instructions. The ethics of caring also provides a good starting point for a multispecies approach as

well. Puig de la Bellacasa (2017), for example, has brought up the ethics of caring in this context. It can be used as a working tool when evaluating the different stages of research, and the key to this is a sensitive response and recognition of the uniqueness of the situation (Syrjälä et al., 2006, p. 184).

The ethics of care directs us to evaluate the underlying motives for the aspects of the research (Syrjälä et al., 2006, p. 185). Questions such as: what motivates me to choose this theoretical framework, how does the empirical context and the subjects of the research relate to my own life, am I really aiming for a way of researching and reporting that can help food producers and their networks to better understand their relations? Or is the premise somehow self-serving? Positioning and narrating oneself in a story is part of narrative research (Syrjälä et al., 2006, p. 186). Building on Coffey's (2001) account of the ethics of writing and representation, Syrjälä et al. (2006, p. 183) raise questions about who and how research is written, what the researcher puts in and leaves out, and how research changes as it evolves with developing theoretical knowledge. Problems can also arise in relation to what the researcher wants to emphasise in the study and in the data - the researcher is always present in the text. In the context of WWOOF, researchers are advised not to "be blinded by the romantic appeal of WWOOFing and to be aware of 'the balance of challenges and benefits'" (Maycock, 2008, as cited by Deville, 2011 p. 285).

My own positioning in relation to the research context is somewhat on the outside. I am not part of the WWOOF community and have never been connected to the network. However, I have been following the community for some time. Form surveys and, as I interpret it, other text-based materials as well, enable a distance between the researcher and the researched (Ronkainen et al., 2013, p. 71), but on the other hand, as the aim of qualitative research is to get an in-depth view (Slevitch, 2011, p. 78), it can also lead to the omission of nuances in the data and its interpretation.

I am aware of my privileged position within the food systems. All I need do is go to the store and put whatever I want in the shopping cart, without having to think about where it's coming from, or in which conditions it was produced. Thankfully, however, I've had the chance to see some successful food growing myself as I grew into adulthood and have gained some insight into the work and values involved. I've tried to learn growing food in the garden, bit by bit, year by year. My motivation to critically engage with food production stems largely from concern about the negative impacts of global food production on people, communities and habitats, and a desire to find more sustainable solutions that would enable a more harmonious coexistence on this planet in the long term. Gibson-Graham's ideas I discovered in 2019, when an updated and adapted Finnish

version, *Take Back the Economy*, was published. In their thoughts, I found a lot of commonalities with the moral questions about livelihoods that bothered me, such as seeing the value of different practices for sustaining a healthy life and planet. So, I have been attached to their ideas as well for a while. It is important to acknowledge how these motivations and values may influence the research process and interpretation of findings. Therefore, I seek to be transparent about my choices and interpretations and not to deliberately exclude opposing views.

The language used in the narratives is either English or Spanish. This is probably not the first language of most human actors of WWOOF. This leads to the ethical questions of translation. Savinotko has described:

When language is approached performatively as producing reality, differences between languages mean differences in how and what kind of realities are produced in and through language. The reality produced performatively in research and studied as such is different depending on the languages used, in which case studying the diversity of the economy only or mainly in one language harmonises the object of research and its results. (Savinotko, 2022, p. 70, authors own translation)

Language is not value-free, and the use of language has its limitations, especially when studying multispecies relations (Höckert et al., 2022, p. 183), where the communication of the radically other impossible to be entirely interpreted. However, as Spivak (2000, p. 21) points out, translation in its impossibility is necessary and unavoidable. English is usually the spoken language used by the WWOOF community to interact with each other. For this reason, I am writing this thesis in English; it is ethically fair to publish the results in a language understood by the people participating in the research. It is still necessary to acknowledge and accept the fact that nuances will be lost in translation, and that interpretation will only be a conscientious approximation (see Spivak, 2000, p. 15).

Focusing on openness and situatedness, however, does not mean that there are no underlying guiding principles. All disciplines in Finland follow general principles, which the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) conducts. The ethical principles that guide research include, for example, that the privacy must be maintained. Research must not harm the subject, the community, or other research entities (TENK, 2019). Although the material in question has been publicly available, I have taken the decision to replace the names of the participants to ensure their anonymity. Some farms, for example, may prefer to remain somewhat anonymous due to the high demand. In the case of the poem in the data, I publish the name of the artist. To publish the poem anonymously would take away its ownership.

5. HOSPITABLE EXCHANGES

5.1 Two-sided sharing

The exchange of work for food and lodging is the starting point, the details of which the parties will negotiate on a situational basis. In addition, the exchange may include other elements as well. Educational exchanges are particularly important in WWOOF activities: “WWOOF is a worldwide movement linking visitors with organic farmers and growers, promoting an educational exchange...” (WWOOF Charter). On the WWOOF website it is possible to filter farms according to the learning opportunities they offer. Most WWOOFers share what they have learnt in their comments to inform potential future WWOOFers of the kind of exchange they have gained from their experience.

In numerous comments by WWOOFers, WWOOF hosts are depicted as possessing a wealth of practical and implicit knowledge: “[the host] has a wealth of knowledge which you cannot learn just from textbooks” (G185). Hosts are described to have knowledge particularly in specific areas, such as local biosystems or production of specific foodstuffs: “[The host] is a local who grew up in nature and has a great knowledge about (medicinal) plants” (G4). In this manner, WWOOFers are de facto acting as apprentices, while hosts are essentially fulfilling the role of mentors. In the data, some WWOOF hosts also indicate a desire to share their expertise with WWOOFers and the local community, for example:

We are an urban paradise... Primarily a teaching place... (H31)

I want to work on different projects... even the idea of creating a school farm so that they [local community] can learn my... agroecology system. (H4, authors translation)

Previous research has recognised that WWOOF hosts usually share a willingness to educate people (Deville, 2015; Mostafanezhad, 2016; Terry, 2014; Wengel et al., 2018). Terry (2014, p. 105) observed that this was particularly evident in US farms where the objective was not to enhance market competitiveness but rather to cultivate a model of sustainable living.

However, both parties involved in the exchange are acquiring knowledge from each other. WWOOFers have a wealth of cultural knowledge to share: “We love learning about cultures, languages, sharing traditions, learning new recipes...” (H3, authors translation). The tasks may also include teaching English to farm workers. In accordance with these findings, previous research has indicated that hosts learn cultural aspects from WWOOFers (Deville, 2015, p. 150). In addition to cultural knowledge, WWOOFers may also contribute to the generation of new practical knowledge:

The garden is an inspiring place to work, and the tasks were various that there was a lot to learn. It felt that we are learning together, there is not only one way to do it. (G249)

Indeed, the WWOOF hosts also gain insights from their guests. In previous research, hosts have expressed that WWOOFers can have unexpected skills and knowledge, for example in construction, mechanics, or even different farming techniques (Terry, 2014, p. 103).

Nevertheless, the linguistic capital of both the WWOOF host and the WWOOFer may limit the learning opportunities: "As the staff speaks only basic English, we didn't get to learn about the culture nor the way they farm..." (G176). A certain level of linguistic competency may be a prerequisite for admittance to the farm: "As the team only speaks Spanish, the WWOOFers should have at least minimal knowledge of the language" (H12). Furthermore, the objectives of the WWOOFer may also conflict with each other. One WWOOFer stated that she was focused on her language learning goal, which had limited communication regarding, for example, learning from work:

They do speak other languages, but I focused on practicing Spanish which is why we did not switch languages. This may have limited my interaction with people in the community and learning about my interests. (G48)

Moreover, the diverse geographical locations and varying seasons provide a range of learning opportunities for WWOOFers. Thus, a WWOOFer must engage in an internal debate regarding the relative value of different learning opportunities and different destinations, while acknowledging the possibility of language barriers and diverse natural conditions.

An ideal WWOOFer is characterised by an openness to diverse viewpoints and willingness to adapt their approach to suit the circumstances. This is reiterated in several different forms, but the following quotation exemplifies the matter in question:

Since few tourists or outsiders come to this community it is important to be both flexible and respectful of the family and local culture. Volunteers should also be flexible in terms of amenities, considering local conditions. (H25)

A less desirable type of WWOOFer is defined as a tourist seeking inexpensive experiences: "This project is not made to support subsidized/cheap tourism for people who want to learn from zero & reduce travel costs..." (H20). In addition, the use of substances and the generation of loud noise can also be regarded as negative factors: "If you are looking for a place with a social experience with drinking, parties, music and loud fun... PLEASE do not apply here" (H21). In the exchange, therefore, hospitable behaviour is expected not only from the hosts but also on behalf of the guests.

In turn, the ideal WWOOF host in the comments is someone who engages in social interaction with the WWOOFers, facilitating their understanding of the hosts and their lifestyle: "WWOOFers express a sincere wish to discover the hosts' lifestyle, to join them in their daily activities and respect the location and the people there" (WWOOF Charter). The hosts are positioned as locals, through whom it is possible to experience the most authentic local lifestyle:

...we learned to prepare native plants that even some Colombians don't know how to eat. You couldn't be more local than that... (G96)

Some of the hosts are engaged in the practice of guiding, which involves providing tours of the area and introducing visitors to the local culture: "[The hosts] also often took me and the other WWOOFers on excursions showing off their beautiful town and areas near by" (G111).

Nevertheless, the time spent together is perceived as valuable in itself: "...we spent quality time together: building bonds and strengthening relationships together; as a family" (G43). The following quote underlines the role that engagement can play in the WWOOF exchange:

Often, they'd [hosts] rather enjoy their privacy. I stayed with them for 1 month... and the only moments they seemed happy to share were dinners at the table in the evening... I'm leaving without having found the social experience of two-way sharing I came here for. (G206)

The process of interaction and the opportunity to gain an understanding of one another can be perceived as an act of reciprocal exchange.

Many WWOOFers describe how on the farm they have felt like "at home" or "as part of the family," thus positioning themselves as part of the farm's social unit that shares an emotional bond with each other. For example: "A family that welcomed us as if we were part of the family, sharing stories and good laughs" (G8, authors translation). In the narratives of some WWOOF hosts, the family rhetoric is repeated: "It is like meeting my own children who are wise, generous and cheerful..." (H52). Another host explains that it is those who are open to learn and help, that become family members:

When we talk about family, it is not just those that run the same blood as we do. It is those who come into our lives with a willingness and want to learn and ultimately become a part of us. It is those who come to volunteer because they want to, not because they feel forced. It is those that become a part of a family that they never knew they needed, and it is them we never knew we needed either. WWOOF Canada builds families so unseen, and for that we are thankful. (H72)

The unpredictability of emotional bonding within the WWOOF community is also highlighted by this last quote.

Furthermore, family rhetoric is also present in the narratives of the organisation: "Your willingness to open either your homes or hearts as host or WWOOFers, seeking a unique agricultural experience has created a global family bound by shared love for the earth and its bounties" (O8). However, it might be difficult to provide frequent interaction with the WWOOFer if the host resides at a distance from the farm: "Volunteers don't live with the family but in a separate house 1 km away, which allows independence and freedom but minimizes sharing moments with the family" (G166). In these circumstances, the WWOOFer must engage in an internal negotiation regarding the components of the exchange.

5.2 Experiential labour

The category of "working" is not depicted in the data in a straightforward manner. In the comments, work was not exactly perceived as work, as it was for example written about in quotes or described as an activity. One illustrative comment serves to exemplify this point: "Most of the time I didn't even realize that I'm working because I just did what I love" (G36). Another WWOOFer compared the work experience to visiting a friend: "Many times, it felt more like visiting friends or vacationing, than being somewhere to work" (G215). The work undertaken on a farm may differ significantly from the activities carried out by a WWOOFer on a daily basis: "I really liked all tasks, so different from my daily routine in the office" (G187). In the narratives, work was depicted as enjoyable, rewarding, tranquil, and even as meditative experience. Routine activities such as lawn mowing, weed removal, plant watering, and vegetable irrigation were presented as examples of restorative work tasks. "I spent a lot of time weeding in the greenhouse and it was a meditative experience" (G252).

Although simple and unusual tasks can be relaxing and refreshing, varied tasks are seen by as particularly valuable in providing learning experiences, for example:

The work was always interesting as there were a lot of different tasks to do around the farm. That way, you always got to learn something new. (G186)

...the manager, was really minding giving us diversified tasks, so time flew. She and [another host at the farm] were always keen on explaining about the plants and the work. (G251)

For the daily tasks, we were a bit disappointed. We just have harvested blueberries 6 hours per day for one week. Which was quite repetitive and not so knowledgeable. (G204)

Lack of learning opportunities can make the experience disappointing, as highlighted in the last quote.

Varied tasks also add a sense of novelty to the work: “The work was consisted mainly of garden work and honey, and the workload was a good mix of a lot of different jobs, which made the days feel fresh and inspiring” (G188). On the other hand, repetitive tasks are part of everyday life on small farms, so it can be a challenge to provide variety: “tasks will be the same, irrigate, fumigate, weed, build, sow or plant” (H10). Thus, it is necessary for the WWOOFer and the host to negotiate the appropriate share of repetitive tasks on a situational basis. The variability of the work also depends a lot on the natural conditions. For example, a volunteer may have to do more repetitive work during the low season:

As they don’t have farm animals anymore and I came before the high season, the tasks I had were probably not the most exciting: a lot of weeding, cutting grass, maintenance of the garden etc. However, this was communicated beforehand and [the host] tried to make it as varied as possible for me. (G242)

In this case, the WWOOFer felt that the exchange was fair, because the matter had been discussed in advance and the WWOOF host aimed for variety in the work. A similar finding was made in another study centred on WWOOFing, illustrating how the different interpretations of values and expectations between both parties lead to an experienced imbalance (Wengel et al., 2018, p. 51).

Transformative experiences were prominent in the narratives of many WWOOFers (see also section 7.2). Deville and Wearing (2013) argue that a significant number of WWOOFers have transformative experiences through WWOOF encounters with the WWOOF hosts and their practices and aims. The transformative quality is not necessarily related to the work alone but can be constituted by the whole WWOOF experience. However, working on a farm with natural actors can be one component in the formation of transformative experiences:

The satisfaction of cultivating life, witnessing nature’s wonders, and being a part of an ancient cycle is an experience that forever leaves an indelible mark on the soul. The lessons learned and the sense of fulfilment gained from working in harmony with farmer and nature made it truly transformative and awe-inspiring adventure. (G109)

The previous quote emphasises how “working with nature” played its part in the transformative qualities of the experience.

For many in the comments, the freedom to manage their own work is seen as important: “You are free to make your own schedule, build your own little projects and do what you love, with the goal to leave your influence on this place” (G35). The next examples illustrate a supportive environment where individuals are trusted to make their own decisions:

They gave us a lot of freedom and they trust us. We could shape our own ideas and at the same time we learned a lot about different methods... (G27, authors translation)

You won't get micromanaged. [Hosts] are trying to encourage a philosophy of self-motivation and problem solving, so it is up to you to put the work in to get the most out of your stay. (G70)

However, communication of the management practices can be vital, as self-guided work philosophies were interpreted as a challenge in one of the narratives: "Instructions and advice were provided as needed and with a lot of smiles and good temper, though in a way that seemed to us more intuitive and poetic than rational and efficient..." (G202).

To be able to be independent in the farm work, it is also important to get guidance to unfamiliar tasks and practices:

[The hosts] took enough time to teach and explain every task for me. Through this I was able to work independently although I had no prior experience in farming. (G179)

[The host] told me what I have to do also how to do at every situation. Saved me from embarrassment. (G157)

As found in previous studies, managing unexperienced WWOOF labour takes a lot of time, and is considered as one of the main costs for hosting (Deville, 2011, p. 203; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001, p. 121). To compensate for the workload involved in guiding WWOOFers, many farms require a minimum length of stay (Terry, 2014, p. 104). However, if the farm has capacity for many guests, other WWOOFers may also be able to give advice to newcomers: "[Other WWOOFers] helped me a lot in explaining and teaching new tasks!" (G193).

Some of the narratives highlight work management as desirable, when one's own abilities, wishes, and wealth are considered, for example: "We truly believe, however, that everyone has their own unique set of skills & talents, so we truly hope you feel comfortable enough to share yours with the community, as well as your opinions and points of view" (H16). From the viewpoint of a WWOOFer that had visited the farm in question, this kind of hospitality in work management makes transformational experiences possible:

It's a place, where you will be accepted and supported like you are, where you can grow and transform, develop your abilities and gifts. People are not forced to do anything what they wouldn't like, so everybody can choose a work, which is right for their competence. It's especially perfect for creative ideas and innovations, because (almost) everything is welcomed (G36).

This emphasis on personalised work management and creative freedom contributes to an environment where individuals are empowered to explore new skills and ideas, fostering both personal growth and a deeper connection to the community.

Lastly, recognising nonhuman labour is evident in the narratives of many WWOOFers and hosts. Usually, WWOOFers express this by talking about experiencing “working with nature”. Also, the nonhuman work for human wellbeing is sometimes acknowledged: “...my time at the [farm] was spent continuously trying new things and learning about how nature heals the body and soul” (G105). In the narratives of hosts the nonhuman labour is depicted more vividly: “Everything we eat is involved in building soil and results from photosynthesis” (H68). “We coexist with nature and all its inhabitants, we apply fertilizers from the same land, and we try to respect natural processes...” (H29, authors translation). Human labour is also made to attract nonhuman labour to the site:

It all starts with an attitude of honouring the land, building healthy soil and hosting a diversity of animal and plant life... We...strive to develop interrelationships between cultivated crops and native prairie, wetland and wooded areas; attracting beneficial insects and small wildlife. (H30)

On the other hand, natural conditions and nonhumans also challenge human labour in various ways. Animals, for example, can be unwilling to do things as humans would like to: “I got to see what halter training was like and how difficult it can be to get a small cria into a trailer” (G121). Another example is climate and weather conditions, such as wet conditions in the rainforest, water scarcity, or hot summer days: “You should not underestimate the work especially on hot July days” (G191). Further examples of nonhumans affecting WWOOFing experiences and increasing understanding of the nature of nonhuman work and the interconnections between species are illustrated in chapter 6. What is noteworthy in this subchapter is that WWOOF as a context provides an arena for the recognition of nonhuman agency during human work experiences.

5.3 Amorphous leisure

The WWOOF Charter states that WWOOF is not intended to replace employment. However, there is no common policy on the balance between leisure and work. The amount of work is negotiated with each host individually, and the amount of free time is shaped accordingly. However, the interface between leisure and work is also blurred in WWOOFing in several ways. Wearing and Wearing (1988, p. 112) have described leisure as an ‘amorphous concept’, as it is rather challenging to define in the first place. Amorphousness fits notably well with the nature of WWOOF exchanges, emphasising not only the subjectivity of experiences but also the negotiations WWOOFers and hosts have with each other, with themselves, and with more-than-human entities.

Firstly, work in WWOOF activities offers experiential features (see section 5.2), which can make working feel more like leisure than work. Secondly, the WWOOFer's role is a mix of employee and tourist (see section 5.1). Thirdly, some WWOOFers engage in remote work or studies during their visit, which is constrained if the workload is excessive: "so you don't really have the opportunity to explore the area or in my case get uni stuff done" (G228). In addition, most of the leisure time can be spent close to the place of work – the farm.

In the study by Deville (2011, pp. 321–322), over half of the WWOOFers perceived their farm tasks as part of their leisure time, while around a quarter considered their tasks to be separate from their leisure time, and the remainder were unsure. The original idea of the WWOOF experience is reflected in this amorphousness: WWOOF was never intended to be a trading arrangement between two parties where services are exchanged for goods (Kosnik, 2014, p. 281).

Although work may occasionally be experienced as relaxing, refreshing, and inspiring, the feedback of WWOOFers highlights the importance of maintaining an equilibrium between work and time free from obligations, with sufficient time given for relaxation and exploration of the surrounding environment, or even the remote work. An excess of work can lead to a perception of unfairness regarding the exchange:

"Sometimes I thought that I deserved a pay for all that work, in the end of the day I just wanted go to sleep and rest all the afternoon and the night" (G81).

The entire purpose of this program is to experience another country, not to work from morning to night with no days off and no pay. I would only recommend this farm to people who enjoy intense manual labour and dirty work, and don't mind working from 8am to midnight every day with no days off. The family was nice, this review has nothing to do with them. The workload was just unbearable and EXHAUSTING. (G230)

Furthermore, communicating the balance between working and free time is essential to make the exchange feel fair:

What would have made our experience better is more clarity on the modalities of the stay. In our case, we were told that we would work 4h/day, but this didn't include the time spent preparing the lunch for the family based on Aura's suggestions, setting the table, serving the food, and washing everyone's dishes. Unless you choose to make simple quick food (which we didn't), your day might end between 4pm and 5pm as it did for us, giving us little personal time. (G96)

Deville (2011, p. 322) has noted, the high level of uncertainty may reflect the complexity of the concept of leisure: nuanced cultural and individual perspectives on the concepts of labour and leisure contribute to the challenges inherent in the negotiations. Ultimately, the power to define what is and is not considered to be working lies with the host (Kosnik, 2014, p. 281).

However, WWOOFers might have some strategies to control over the exchange relationship. For example, some of the volunteers may try to work in an efficient way to have more time for their leisure: “To become efficient in work and to have more free time you need to listen carefully to instructions understand projects” (G185). When it comes to cooking, some WWOOFers may hide their cooking skills to avoid not being “abused” (Nimmo, 2001, p. 161, as cited in Kosnik, 2014, p. 281). Nevertheless, the way free time is shaped in agricultural work is not straightforward, given that natural conditions notably effect on it:

Sometimes you have to be prepared to switch days off to another. Country life is governed by weather and events. (H68)

The nearest town is... 2 hours walking/horse distance and vehicle access is 4X4 (dirt road) only possible when weather allows it. It is an option to go on small trips to town during non-working days and there is a nice river to visit and swim, but again, it will depend on weather and other conditions. (H16)

These factors underline the fluid and unpredictable nature of leisure time in an agricultural environment where natural elements play a dominant role.

During their leisure time, WWOOFers may have limited opportunities to engage in conventional tourism activities. The farm may be in a very remote area, in which case the free time of the WWOOFer will inevitably be spent on the farm:

If you come to the farm, you must know that you live a bit isolated. It's not easy to go sightseeing in town in your free afternoon. So, the free afternoons we mostly spend at the farm. (G38)

Although, the farm itself can be felt worth experiencing: “I truly loved spending time at this beautiful property as well as enjoyed the ocean which is a few minutes away” (G6). In the case of farms that engage in a combination of agricultural and tourism activities, volunteers may be offered the opportunity to participate in commercial tourism activities when possible. However, paying customers may have priority:

[The host] is a business meaning that the work you do and the way they operate is all catered to the [paying] guests and the business. The [paying] guests are the priority and you have to keep that in mind. For example, the guest spaces are off-limits and you have to get permission to go on excursions, use mountain bikes, or use the ping pong table. Most of the time, you will be able to but the [paying] guest will always take priority (naturally, as they are the paying client). (G77)

This dynamic illustrates the potential tension between the roles of volunteers and paying guests.

In their spare time, WWOOFers may spend a lot of time with their WWOOF host. And leisure activities do not necessarily differ much from everyday life: “In the evening we could have a lot

interesting conversations, watching movies and making pizza” (G85). WWOOF hosts may offer activities which involve doing things together:

Dinner, family style, is served after sunset and the rest of the evening flows as the host and the visitor flow. This may or may not include a bonfire, reading, drumming, sharing, star gazing, or nothing (which is something) at all. (H17)

Social interaction is experienced as integral factor in WWOOF movement, by the part of WWOOFers, but also by their hosts (Deville, 2011; Wengel et al., 2018, p. 50).

Moreover, WWOOFers can experience their free time differently than in their everyday environments. For example, lack of access to the Internet is mentioned as having an impact on the amount of leisure time available: ”No internet so a lot of spare time” (G254). Or even with web access, it might be an environment where it is easier to disconnect from digital devices for a while: ”To pace out from modern distractions there and just be present” (G79). WWOOF surroundings can thus create a unique opportunity for volunteers to engage more deeply with the environment.

Comments show that WWOOFers often get to know their surroundings and enjoy the natural phenomena. For example: ”When we weren’t working, we enjoyed walks down to the lake and trips into Lillestrom, as well as watching the sunset from the cabin we stayed in on the farm” (G182). Hosts sometimes have equipment WWOOFers can borrow to explore the area, such as mountain bikes. Spending free time at the farm and its surroundings provides opportunities for encountering nonhuman beings of the area. Some examples of activities with nonhumans, that are described in the data, are swimming and snorkelling with dolphins and turtles, enjoying the ocean or the hot springs, and seeing northern lights. These are typical tourist activities in the countries from these examples. Few comments suggest more personal nuance to gazing and experiencing nonhumans in the destinations. One WWOOFer describes observing a natural process in action: ”I also got to enjoy... watching flesh eating beetles clean off skeletons!” (G119). Another WWOOFer highlights: ”I particularly enjoyed the raven as the city bird of Isafjordur and the Mink whales popping up 50m from shore in the fjords” (G236).

5.4 Taking care

Working at the WWOOF farms can be a part of meaningful participation. Many of the comments show the importance that WWOOFers attach to the work that they do on the farm, for example: ”The biggest bonus of this work is that one can make its own contribution to preserve our earth, especially the endangered rainforest” (G87). As an older citizen, it is an opportunity to do

meaningful work after retirement, or when access to paid work is scarce: “As a healthy senior I was not confident I could contribute in a meaningful way, but I did my best and it didn’t go un-noticed” (G162). Furthermore, the knowledge of older WWOOFers can be appreciated by hosts: “I am an older WWOOFer (67 years) with a lot of working and volunteering experience doing many things and was welcomed for that” (G102).

Of course, meaningful participation also applies to farmers too, as they are doing a lot of work with regenerative practices. The organisation highlights that WWOOF hosts can have moral support from WWOOFers and the overall community: “It’s also an opportunity to receive physical and moral support for your agricultural project...” (O5). Previous research has found that the main benefits of hosting WWOOFers appear to be social and ethical (McIntosh & Campell, 2001, p. 121), and that hosting can increase motivation to continue farming and “keeping joy in what they do,” as volunteers find hosts lifestyle fascinating (Terry, 2014, p. 103). Deville (2011) also found that hosting can provide a sense of support. Moral support can be valuable in practicing forms of economies that are marginalised.

According to the WWOOF Charter, WWOOF actors are committed to providing inclusive spaces for members. Inclusive spaces in WWOOFing practices are the ones “being nice and friendly to visible and invisible beings surrounded us” (H52). Some hosts define inclusive spaces more precisely:

Important: Violence, sexual harassment, bullying, racism, bigotry/prejudice, or abuse of any kind will not be tolerated in any form of expression and will result in expulsion/termination of the experience regardless of inconveniences and expenses. (H16)

Safety is a topic brought up, especially within female WWOOFers: “...As a solo female traveller I felt so safe” (G39). In some comments, the term “non-violent communication” is used for the practice of encountering others in an inclusive manner. Nonviolent communication refers to a practice in which participants refrain from using judgmental language and strive to understand the core needs of those they are communicating with (Williams et al., 2021, p. 3). Verbalised into practices, inclusive communication becomes another skill that can be practiced through WWOOFing: “The family... practices non-violent communication and I loved refreshing up my skills in that too” (G235).

However, there is also discrimination within the WWOOFing community, even among verified hosts, who should be committed to positive WWOOFing experiences:

[The verified host] told me that I couldn't go to the ranch because I was a woman. I think the question of whether the work is very difficult for... women is a decision that is for us. OF COURSE it is not a decision that a man can make for women. So, this very sexist idea and method should not be in WWOOFing. Obviously, equality between men and women is not secondary in the WWOOF community. (G33, authors translation)

[The host] asked another woofers to leave on the day of her arrival because he didn't like her looks. He can also use fat phobic, transphobic, or racist words and be manipulative. (G222)

Discriminatory behaviour not only leads to an experience of injustice, but can also result in financial loss to the WWOOFer: "I lost two flights because of [hosts] unpredictable and unfair behaviour" (G221). In the data, the most obvious cases of discrimination are reported thoroughly in the feedback by many WWOOFers. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to gain insight into the ways in which subtle forms of discrimination manifest themselves and how the different parties involved can respond to them in practice.

A further safety concern relates to accident type issues, particularly those on farms situated at a distance:

Travel/health insurance is RECOMMENDED but not mandatory. Having said that, the closest clinic/pharmacy/hospital is a couple of hours away with unreliable, sometimes impossible ways to get there: This should be the driving thought behind all your decisions while you visit us. (H16)

In remote destinations, the concept of safety becomes a matter of internal debate. One must consider whether they can trust that, in the event of an accident, the local community will be able to provide adequate care for injuries.

Many of the farms provide much-needed space and security for other species to thrive. There are many farms that try their best to support the biodiversity parallel with the food production and livelihoods. These are just a few examples:

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, this conservation area represents a safe space and serves as a refuge and sanctuary for both humans and all living species flora and fauna alike. We are grateful to have found such a special place to call home, one shared by many species. (H7)

...our project is a nature sanctuary, where we preserve the native species of flora and fauna and plant food in harmony with the place... It is a space in recovery and regeneration of biodiversity, we live with titis monkeys, toucans, pecaries, arasarís, etc. (H23)

Our focus on organic shade grown cacao allows us to maintain a high level of biodiversity while producing enough for basic food and cash needs of the family. Essentially, we are looking for travellers who are interested in assisting us in saving the very fragile and endangered forests in our remote 310 acres of land... (H2)

I was surprised to hear when she mows lawn, she purposely leaves some grass for frogs and other insects to live. She even cares about the little lives! (G185)

As the last comments convey, the acts of providing space for companion species is not limited to the countryside. In the data, WWOOF farms in and around towns and cities contribute to supporting diversity, with overflowing yards that attract nonhuman life: “The diversity of birds and animal from the wild is also amazing when one considers that we are in the city” (H30).

Providing a safe space for nonhumans is ideal, but when companion species occupy the interior space, it can become a health issue for humans, thus compromising the physical and experienced safety of human participants:

The living conditions are anything but healthy. The kitchen is infested with ants, roaches and flies and there is no hot water to properly sanitize dishes, utensils, and cooking ware. The mold in the bathroom and overall condition of the bathroom provided for volunteers is a major health concern. (G137)

It is possible that cultural factors may play a role in the scenario. The differing expectations and standards between hosts and WWOOFers may be influenced by their respective cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. However, hosts should provide “clean, dry and safe accommodation” for WWOOFers (WWOOF Charter). The underlying issue is the balance between maintaining a safe space for nonhuman companions and ensuring healthy environment for human inhabitants in mutual understanding, while respecting socio-cultural differences.

The objective of some farms is to provide opportunities for healing: “An important part of the farm’s mission is to offer refugees, drug addicts, victims of domestic violence and others in need a place to build themselves and their lives” (H68). On occasion, the question is posed in the form of a voluntary comment: “The main farm manager... said he will always accept a request that includes someone saying they need to heal” (G145). Other hosts state that they are trying to adapt according to the situation of the WWOOFer:

Furthermore, if you have any anxiety, mental or physical problems or disabilities regarding the activities, which may limit some of the activities, we would appreciate it if you could inform us in advance. We will do our best to accommodate your situation. (H44)

However, these examples are in the minority in the narratives.

Some WWOOFers have found the activity to be healing, even if the farm description does not specifically mention this type of activity: “I arrived at this farm full of grief and sadness and left feeling healed and revived” (G84). The question of other species affecting mental health is relevant:

My experience at [the farm] was one to remember. It is so peaceful and healing there. It has created a sense of lightness within me in this chaotic world we live in. (G171)

I found that while caring for the garden, I was also planting new seeds of growth and prosperity for myself. As I learnt that sending good vibrations into the baby plants effects the growth, so does it resonate in my own body and my surroundings. With gratitude for earth, parallel did the connection sit with my own self-love. (G174)

The previous quotes illustrate not only spiritual restoration, but also empowerment, as the authors indirectly talk about inner growth, self-efficacy, and emotional strength. In addition to the peaceful environment and caring for the plants, the freedom to manage daily tasks was seen as an empowering factor: “Volunteers are expected to be able to organize themselves and take responsibility, which I found very empowering” (G163).

There are also some signs of cultural empowerment in the data, meaning that the WWOOF practices can preserve and promote cultural identity and heritage. For example, some hosts refer to the use and continuation of traditional knowledge and practices. Cultural empowerment can also be recognised by WWOOFers: “Without a doubt, [the farm] as an entity is a collective collaboration of conscious and mindful farming, earth stewardship, cultural healing, and enlightened way of co-existing...” (G146). Furthermore, there are practices within the WWOOF community, that participate on building wellbeing for the broader local community (see also Lai et al., 2020, p. 1977). One is that part of a WWOOFer’s duties may simply include interacting with local people, which increases local peoples opportunities for social interaction and cultural exchange. Some WWOOF hosts base their activities more broadly on local community welfare:

In our café, there is no price label on the dishes; customers decide what they want to pay and put it in the box after they eat... This attempt to guarantee a basic meal for a healthy life in the community, regardless of the economic situation at the time... (H42)

Our non-profit organisation supports the independence of young people who are not attending school (children with developmental disabilities) or are withdrawn. If you are interested in supporting the independence of children, young people, and people with disabilities, we can give you a lot of information... (H44)

WWOOFers are also included to activities, such as supporting local social groups, trail management, and building infrastructure. One common practice regarding local communities in the data is educating local people about sustainable living, environmental issues, and gardening:

The focus of our homestay is bringing city people, especially children, to the jungle to learn about sustainable lifestyles and the environmental issues facing Malaysia. We aim to give children a space to play freely and learn why our jungles are worth protecting. (H47)

These practices enable communities to gain the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to thrive, resonating with the concepts of empowerment discussed by scholars like Zimmerman (1995).

6. EMBODIED MULTISPECIES ENCOUNTERS

6.1 Affective experiences proximate to companion species

The data exposes varied sensations that WWOOFers undergo during their travels, especially relating to more-than-humans. The sensory experiences uncover some aspects that contribute creating the atmospheres in WWOOF farms. Aesthetics is contemporarily understood as producing atmospheres and exploring the affects that are evoked in them (Böhme, 1993, pp. 114–116). Affect, by contrast, refers to sensation or mood that circulates between bodies, beyond individual consciousness (Germann Molz & Buda, 2023, p. 3).

The farm and its surrounding landscape particularly influence the tourist's affective experiences. Landscapes are described in the data using words such as beautiful, incredible, wonderful, magnificent, or breathtaking. The significance of the affective experience is highlighted in a narrative of one WWOOFer: "The ranch is such a beautiful place to stay – we were sitting in the clouds every day and I was constantly struck by the beauty of the place..." (G45). The description conveys the emotional impact of "beauty" on the WWOOFer; the atmosphere of the place evoke strong sensations. One review reflects the work done by the host as part of shaping the landscape: "[Hosts] attitude is reflected to the animals, people, vegetables, and landscapes of this farm" (G185). Another WWOOFer also writes in a similar manner: "The flora of the area is epic, teaming with life, thanks in part to [the hosts] and their stewardship of the land (G71)". The comment does not refer directly to the aesthetic experience. However, the text clearly highlights the farmer's role in moulding the landscape.

The relationship between the diversity of nature and visual experiences is narrowly explored in the writings. One WWOOFer mentions certain insect species as part of an affective landscape: "The views and environment were so beautiful and each night as the sun set the farm would be aglow with fireflies" (G60). Another WWOOFer in an urban setting explains, that one host "doesn't have a 'farm' as much as her front- and backyard is overflowing (in the most beautiful way possible) with different fruits, vegetables, and, of course, herbs" (G107). The quote illustrates that even in urban environments, WWOOFers can discover appealing experiences in the variety of plant life and the plentiful edible crops. These two quotes emphasise the contribution of nonhuman species, such as plants and insects, in creating visually pleasurable experiences for WWOOFers.

Few comments mentioned the contribution of nonhuman species in shaping other enjoyable sensory experiences. One WWOOFer highlights the sensory experience of being outdoors and the diversity of plant life: “I was amazed how many different plants were growing in the greenhouses and the fields and it was very pleasing to be outside the whole day with the fresh late summers air in the lungs and the hands in the soil” (G251). Another WWOOFer emphasises the tactile and olfactory sensations associated with touching and smelling soil and plants: “Touching soil and plants made me relaxed, and I loved the smell of various plants” (G218).

Relating to the sense of hearing, one WWOOFer mentions birds as contributing to the relaxing atmosphere: “The jungle-forest that surrounds the farm is so beautiful and peaceful with sounds of birds each hour of the day...” (G9). One Nordic host considers bird sounds as part of the silence (H52), and one WWOOFer describes having enjoyed “hearing the sounds of nature at night” (G71). In sensory atmospheres, the sounds of nonhuman and human also intertwine: “...Some [locals] gather to play their happy music – which blends quite nicely with the sounds of nature” (G146).

The data commonly includes a description of the food provided by the farm, usually in a positive manner with words like good, amazing, awesome, clean, delicious, high quality, wholesome or crazy. Culinary offerings at the farm can elicit highly pleasurable sensations: “Food was to die for” (G24). The culinary delights can also be a significant highlight of the WWOOFing experience: “[The host] is an incredible baker, the pizzas are worth a stay in and of themselves” (G60). The WWOOFer implies that working at this farm would be worthwhile for the food. Another WWOOFer suggests a willingness to visit the farm as a paying guest, partly due to the culinary experiences.

More common in the data is depicting the overall atmosphere at the farm and its surroundings. WWOOFers may describe the experienced atmosphere generally in a positive manner, like: “The meals were wonderful, the farm is amazing and there is a fantastic atmosphere” (G25, authors translation). The poem by a WWOOFer presents a farm atmosphere in a comprehensive manner:

Welcome, wanderer.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grow,
Quite over-canopied with luscious appletree,
With sweet musk roses and with eglantine:
There sleeps Rosenhill sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with cakes, dances, and delight;

Dear wanderer, if thou passest this place, do it no harm,
It lies under sweet Demeter's friendly gentle charm.

WWOOFer & poet Annegret, Sweden (G256)

The poem depicts a picturesque scene by a river, rich in colourful imagery that evokes beauty and serenity. References to “wild thyme” and “sweet musk roses” suggest delightful fragrances. Mentions of lullabies and delight imply a peaceful, joyful atmosphere, perhaps with music and laughter. The mention of cakes adds a gustatory dimension. This interpretation appears valid when considering the farm and its activities, such as arranging gatherings and parties with live music. The poem portrays an enchanting setting, with the presence of Demeter, goddess of agriculture, fertility, and harvest in Greek mythology, implying divine protection. Overall, the poem captures the sensory richness and the affective essence of the farm.

The mystical dimension through the immersion of the senses is also present to some extent indirectly in a few other comments. Some WWOOFers describe atmosphere with a word “magical,” especially in Latin America, and its rainforests: “...The magical nature of the Amazon rainforest and the energies that emanate from it...” (G19). Another WWOOFer from a same farm emphasises the effect of biodiversity and diverse encounters in this experience:

A megabiodiversity, very special energies, human and nonhuman encounters so rich and unique. There's like a kind of magic here. (G18, authors translation)

In one of the farms in the data, it is only possible to get clean in a chilly natural creek without soap to protect the natural habitat. One WWOOFer finds this little uncomfortable, but “the creek was still magical place to get as clean as possible...” (G60). The term “magical” implies that bathing in the creek is sensed as a special and fascinating experience, even if the water is a little cold and soap cannot be used.

Human participants can also contribute to creating a “magical” atmosphere. In the following quote, the landscape and tranquillity together with fiction, shared experiences, acceptance, and relationships create enchanting atmosphere:

[The farm] is not just some ordinary community in the mountains. It is more like a peaceful place in the mythical Middle-earth, where you have an incredible view to Misty Mountains. It is home, love, family, unity, collaboration... And of course, full of magic! (G36)

The WWOOFer employs language which evoke emotions of warmth, belonging, and connection. The quote also draws upon mythical imagery by likening the farm to a place in Middle-earth, the fictional realm created by J.R. Tolkien in his “The Lord of the Rings” series. Tolkien's storytelling

of mythical realms contributes to the enchanting atmosphere of magic and fantasy in this experience.

A sense of relaxation and restoration are interpretable in previous examples of sensory atmospheres. Relaxation in urban settings is also possible while WWOOFing: "A farm in the middle of a metropolitan area is unusual, and even more unusual is how peaceful I've felt while volunteering at [the farm]" (G100). The quote implies that working at a farm, which hosts "a diversity of animal and plant life" (H30), can provide a peaceful and tranquil atmosphere, despite its location in the middle of a metropolitan area. The comment challenges traditional notions of rest and relaxation by showcasing the restorative power of nature's diversity, even within urban environments.

In relation to nonhuman entities, comments in the data about rest and relaxation are typically positive in tone: "The bog and lake host a marvellous choir of amphibians to sing one to sleep after a long day of work" (G132). One WWOOFer implies that the chance to rest and connect with nonhuman nature is more valuable than any material cost: "Sleep in the middle of the jungle with monkeys, insects, birds has no price" (G5). The quote contrasts affective experience with commodified forms of travel.

Sleeping in an accommodation, that is "closer to nature" can also provide experiences of cultural immersion and historical connection: "I slept in the Teepee at -30°C and had really interesting experiences sleeping like the indigenous people hundreds of years before me" (G155). The author claims to have had an experience of the culture and life of the indigenous peoples of North America, suggesting a desire to connect with history and heritage. Sleeping in an extremely cold environment adds a layer of challenge and adventure, highlighting a willingness to step outside of one's comfort zone.

However, in WWOOFing experiences, animal activity may disrupt and challenge one's rest. One host describes: "We also have animals of all kinds and we expect compassion and respect towards all living things, even the rooster who will likely wake us up at 5:30" (H16). While the crowing of the rooster may disrupt sleep, it also reflects the inherent rhythms and routines of farm life. The following comment also provides a mixed experience of rest in the context of WWOOFing: "My experience sleeping in this cabin was good and bad at the same time because I could have a good connection with the nature, but sometimes I could find snakes and many lizards into the wood cabin" (G81). The quote emphasises that rustic accommodations can also be a source of discomfort

and unpredictability in a place where one should be able to rest, even though there was an opportunity to connect with more-than-human nature. These encounters with animals disrupt the tranquillity of rest, introducing vulnerable moments with nonhuman nature.

Indeed, sensory experiences with nonhuman entities are not always enjoyable. Sensory discomfort shaped by nonhuman species was evident in experiences related to cold temperatures, wet conditions, hard physical work, dirt, and insects:

But it is really wilderness... So, people should be ready for cold nights and only cold water, few hours long hike to get there.... (G36)

It rained nearly every afternoon, and everything always seemed a little damp. The work was tough and dirty, and you just had to learn to ignore the itchy bites of insects and get on with things. (G60)

Working here you will be in a beautiful cloud forest, but it will be rainy, muddy, cold, and working to provide animals takes a certain mental and physical endurance especially in these conditions” (G49)

Work can be quite physical and I spent quite allot of time covered in goat poo, so maybe not the best place if that grosses you out too much. I however feel like goat poo is a miracle substance. (G70)

These quotes underline the sensory discomfort inherent in wilderness and farm work. WWOOF experiences may lack the amenities and comforts typically associated with urban or developed areas. Access to farms may require physical exertion and the work itself can also be exhausting and messy. Work cannot necessarily be postponed because of the weather, and the WWOOFer may have to tolerate damp conditions, which not only make clothing and equipment feel clammy and uncomfortable, but also make the ground muddy. Additionally, WWOOFers may have to deal with animal manure as part of their daily tasks. The constant itching caused by insect bites adds another layer of sensory discomfort to the experience. Despite the challenges, the comments suggest a sense of adaptation and resilience among the WWOOFers as they learn to cope with the discomforts. They learn to ignore insect bites and appreciate the value of a substance that may feel unpleasant.

Sensory discomfort may also be a feature of culinary preferences and lead to negotiations between the WWOOFer and the host:

You should only go if you like coriander though, as [the host] adds it to every meal. I asked him to make it optional as I really don't like it at all. He told me I'd learn to like it if I just ate it anyway. I picked it off. (G232)

The quote suggests that the guest would not have visited the farm if had known that coriander was served with every meal. Coriander is an herb that can evoke strong emotions and divide opinions. It is worth noting that there is even an international “I hate coriander” day. There were no other

unpleasant experiences regarding taste in the data. However, some people can be highly sensitive to certain food products. Encountering these products daily on one's plate can have a negative impact on the overall WWOOF experience and may even discourage individuals from visiting a farm.

Nonhuman beings have an impact on rest and relaxation in WWOOFing experiences and practices, as already discussed with the atmosphere theme. The data also illustrates more self-explanatory examples and named factors that participate on creating the feeling of relaxation. The lack of digital amenities is one. Without the distractions of digital devices, individuals can fully immerse themselves in the bodily experiences of the farm environment:

I really enjoyed the 'digital detox' and following a daylight schedule. I slept a lot and rested well. (G48)

At the farm in question, there is no Wi-Fi available, and the telephone signal is located a 10-minute walk away. Even if digital amenities are available on a certain farm, some WWOOFers may still feel it is a desirable place and situation to disconnect from them: "The place is magnificent and wild, it is very easy (and advisable) to pace out from modern distractions there and just be present and enjoy nature in good company" (G79). The absence of modern distractions enables these WWOOFers to fully engage with their sensory experiences and engage in multispecies encounters.

6.2 Enhancing multispecies knowledge and skills

The very founding idea of WWOOF community is to gain and share knowledge of organic agricultural practices and deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of all living beings (WWOOF). This approach to knowledge exchange and holistic understanding is illustrated in the data not only in the depicted experiences of WWOOFers, but also in the daily practices of farmers. For instance, one farmer describes:

We are migrants from the city to the countryside, in these years we have learned to live more attentive to nature, learning from the plants that we get to know, their processes and ways of life... We live in a calm way, giving ourselves the time to enjoy what we do, learn from this rural life, from the people, and the plants. (H11, authors translation)

This quote demonstrates the farmer's means of gaining knowledge through immersion in nature, observing and learning from plants and the local human community while slowing down the pace of life. By slowing down and taking time to appreciate the activities they engage in, the farmer creates a space for mindful observation and reflection.

Similarly, attentiveness to more-than-human nature is described by a WWOOFer:

It's an experience and challenge in being a good old fashion human. What do I mean by that? It's the act of remembering a world of knowledge lost over time in relation to North American native plants, their medicine, and nutritional use. You'll learn ways to make a forest bed in order to prepare the ground for new seeds. Over time, you'll start tuning into this natural intelligence through harvesting, transplanting, pruning, etc. (G154)

By engaging with native plants and learning about their cultural significance, the WWOOFer describes a reconnection with traditions and lore. The WWOOFer describes a process of tuning into “natural intelligence,” which suggests an improved awareness and tuning to the rhythms and patterns of nature.

The following quote illustrates not only the multidimensional understanding that a WWOOF host can have, but also the approach to more-than-human nature: “I think of the land as a classroom, studio, sanctuary, library, research centre, community space, and gallery” (H30). The host appreciates the land of its educational, spiritual, scientific, social, and aesthetic dimensions. The quote suggests implicitly the agency of nonhuman nature: the land itself offers insights and information, expresses creativity, provides peace and spiritual fulfilment, and it contributes to the creation and maintenance of community. Comprehensive understanding in this approach is acquired not only by observing nonhuman nature but also by appreciating the active role that more-than-human nature plays in human thinking and being, which is also at the heart of relational methodologies (Haraway, 2016; Kimmerer, 2013; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Tsing, 2015). However, there were also some narratives that objectified animals as resources by discussing the “processing” of animals or the quantity or quality of their products, such as eggs. These both views coexist within the community, highlighting a spectrum of attitudes toward more-than-human nature and the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

The role of WWOOF hosts in mediating knowledge about interdependencies is significant due to their extensive experience. Example of learning about interconnectedness is provided by one WWOOFer: “It was really cool to learn about why certain grasses and plants were included in seed mixtures and how animals influence soil health” (G112). The knowledge of hosts can extend to wide dimensions. “She has of course much of farming knowledge, but she is also guided by a deep, enervating philosophy about health and the role humans, and our food systems play in the larger biosphere, supported by her background as a biologist” (G134). Teaching novices about large ensembles and complex information can be challenging, especially within short timeframes. One experienced host explains how information about complex concepts such as interconnectedness can be made more accessible to WWOOFers:

I love passing on information. I explain that the soil works like our intestines: there's flora, fauna and there has to be a balance for everything to function properly. If we destroy the soil, we start to get sick, because environment is too fragile. I use a lot of analogies between plants, animals and our bodies, because we're all independent... And I also like to sharpen the plant sensibility of the WWOOFers who come to my home: teaching them to observe, to smell (the smell of humus, for example, is the smell of healthy soil). This helps them to understand and question their eating habits... (H70)

The host uses analogies to explain the complicated concepts of interdependence, aiding WWOOFers in comprehending the significance of preserving ecological balance. Additionally, the host provides education to WWOOFers to sharpen their senses to deepen their understanding. This hands-on approach to learning helps WWOOFers develop sensory interaction skills with the more-than-human world.

Learning through sensory experiences is present in one WWOOFer review, culminating in tasting the food:

The soil was teeming with life. All sorts of roots, insects, and earthworms. Finally, I got to taste the food grown from the farm, which made all the hard work worthwhile... and left me wondering what I have been eating my whole life. (G252)

The sensory experience of consuming freshly harvested produce represents the fulfilment of the WWOOFer's efforts. The contrast between the taste of food grown on the farm and previous culinary experiences prompt the WWOOFer to question the quality and origins of one's previous diet, suggesting a newfound awareness of the benefits of consuming organic produce. The quote underscores the impact of multisensory encounters on individual's perceptions and attitudes related to food and agriculture.

The data reveals, that WWOOF experiences can help to decrease fear of other species:

When I got to [the farm] I was full of fear, anxiety, and a lot of ignorant environmental soundbites. I was scared of chickens, goats, and learning where the meat on my plate actually comes from. Within 3 days I went from fearful to fearless, all thanks to my new life mentors. (G113)

...to fellow earthlings who are mildly afraid of birds (like me): THE CHICKENS ARE HARMLESS. They will not incessantly peck at you or attack you for no reason. Hollywood lied. You will be OK. (G99).

These examples illustrate how proximate interaction with other species can help individuals to overcome prejudices fuelled by ignorance and misinformation. The first of these quotes highlights the role of "life mentors," which I interpret as the WWOOF hosts. Knowledgeable guidance can thus play a pivotal role in overcoming fears and misconceptions about animals. Furthermore, the

direct engagement with animals enables individuals to see animals as fellow beings rather than sources of fear.

Similarly to the examples given in the previous paragraph, some WWOOFers state, that they have become accustomed to the presence of insects: “There are plenty of ants and other insects, but you soon get use to them” (G170). Mosquitos, in particular, are usually mentioned as a downside of the experience, often with a practical advice to bring some equipment to protect against them when visiting. However, some WWOOFers get accustomed to them as well: “...there are a lot of mosquitos... by the end I hardly noticed them!” (G143). These examples paint a picture of how interaction with nonhumans in WWOOF environments can help individuals to overcome discomforts. Nevertheless, some WWOOF members mention, that one should not fear spiders, dirt, bacteria, rain, insects or “a natural chaos” (H20) to go WWOOFing, valuing the approach of embracing the unpredictable and often untidy realities of working with more-than-human world.

Usually there is no essential need for pre-knowledge on farm practices in WWOOFing. However, tasks in some WWOOF farms may require pre-learned interaction skills with other species. This WWOOFer is writing from an experience from a horse ranch, where WWOOFers’ tasks include a lot of horse-riding due to the hosts old age:

I think you need to be a good rider to work the two complicated and unpredictable horses, but the other 10 are lovely and suitable for beginners and intermediates. You need to be independent with the horses and be able to go out on your own. (G220)

The comment implies that some horses at the farm can behave in ways that are challenging from a human perspective. Therefore, it is necessary to possess the ability to read horse body language, anticipate their reactions, and respond appropriately to maintain control and safety. However, the host emphasises, that the tasks depend on the level of the WWOOFer.

In extreme cases, inexperienced WWOOFer with an overconfident attitude can lead to problems and lost nonhuman lives:

[WWOOFer’s] “expert” opinion (having never worked with animals before, though he’s watched YouTube videos so he knows more than we do) was that chickens can be fed without having to buy chicken feed, and we found out too late that took it upon himself to experiment with our birds. We get spent grains that we feed to them as a treat, but [the WWOOFer] thought, “it’s free food so I’m going to give them more of that and less of their feed” and this only came out when we had a rash of dead chickens and much lower egg production. (H32)

Because of the WWOOFer’s unwillingness to learn from the farmer, nonhuman lives were lost in this case. The quote from the host highlights the WWOOFer’s lack of experience in working with

animals and dismissive attitude. This illustrates the impact that inexperienced or ill-informed individuals with an unsuitable attitude can have on the well-being of animals on the farm.

6.3 Encouraging emotional ties

Since the WWOOFer spends time in the same place as a visitor for a relatively long time, an emotional connection can form between the WWOOFer and the farm's animals. By interacting with companion species, WWOOFers get to know diverse animals: "There's such a variety of animals to learn how to care for while also seeing their personalities grow" (G117). Previous quote illustrates how WWOOFers can gain understanding of nonhuman individuality. Few examples demonstrate how WWOOFers can participate in different stages and phases of more-than-human life: "We were able to care for a llama who was ill and watch him get better" (G126). The emotional impact in these experiences can be powerful: "I have witnessed a horse death, and I was helping with his burial, which was strong experience!" (G209). Participating in the moments of nonhuman vulnerability, such as illness or death, are learning moments of mortality and empathy.

Dogs are the most usual nonhuman animals, that WWOOFers bring up in the comments. Emotional connection can be felt deeply. One WWOOFer tells us, how "Spiro the dog will forever be in my heart" (G158). Other comments, that "there is a dog named Coco living on the property, she is an angel, and I am a better person to have been graced by her presence" (G99). Dogs have a long history with humans and people have ability to interpret their moods (Donovan, 2006, as cited by Tallberg et al., 2022, p. 8), so they are not considered as "distant" to us than other species. It is therefore unsurprising that emotional connections with the farms' animals are typically formed with dogs, according to the data.

However, emotional bonding goes beyond dogs in these farms. Farm animals generally may be described, for example, as loving, friendly, kind, happy, or even as a part of WWOOFers' family: "[Hosts] and their wonderful animals have been more of a family to me than my own" (G113). One WWOOFer tells, how "...it hurts my heart to leave all the animals I had grown so close to in such a short amount of time" (G114). The quote highlights the depth of emotional attachment WWOOFers can develop with farm animals.

Some WWOOFers name certain non-canine species, that they have bonded with: "The ducks and ducklings are lovely, we were really fond of them, and it was wonderful to wake up every morning

to feed them and see the ducklings getting bigger every day” (G202). The narrative showcases the affection and joy derived from daily interactions with animals. Similarly, the next quote highlights the role of interaction in appreciation of unique traits of certain companion species: “Llamas are amazing animals, if you have never interacted with them, it is worth your time” (G126). The rhetoric of magic discussed in section 6.1 related to atmospheres is also extended to animals “Llamas are the most magical non-magical animals ever” (G127), illustrating the emotional impact of animals to WWOOFers.

Some WWOOFers also name individual non-canine others, such as cats: “...there is a wonderful cat named Orchid that I will miss dearly” (G173). Cats are common urban pets and therefore easy to connect with emotionally, but also more uncommon animals are brought up by WWOOFers: “Honestly go here just to meet Scooter the goat, her story along with many others shows the compassion [the hosts] have for their animals” (G116). Individual personalities can influence to the emotional bonding: “Cupie Dots was the friendliest llama out of all the others, this is not to say the others were not friendly” (G127). Even chickens, often seen as less individualistic, can become meaningful in the experience of a WWOOFer: “I will miss...friendliest chicken Stevie” (G156). Overall, these narratives illustrate that emotional bonding on farms transcend species boundaries.

Some WWOOF hosts describe their emotional relationship with their farm’s animals. Respectful attitude and love for the animals are common in these comments. One narrative emerged from the data, illustrating the influence of the relationship between humans and animals on lifestyle and human-human relationships:

[The hostess] was a city girl and rarely came to the barn unless baby animals were being born. The running joke around here is “before llamas, [the host] couldn’t get [the hostess] to come to the barn, but now he can’t get her to come back to the house.” [The hostess] has definitely turned into a farm girl and would spend 24/7 with the llamas if she could. Our shared passion for llamas has allowed us to find each other again, especially now that our two children are grown, and we are retired. (G120)

The transition from city dweller to farm enthusiast represents a significant lifestyle change, with llamas playing a pivotal role. This illustrates how a deepening bond with animals can transform one’s daily activities and priorities. Moreover, the shared connection with the specific companion species rekindled the emotional connection between the host and hostess.

The emotional connection between a WWOOFer and farm animals does not necessarily end when the WWOOFer leaves. As WWOOF hosts and WWOOFers can keep in touch, hosts can provide information about the animals on the farm:

I have been so lucky to see Siggy as a foal... I can't wait to see some pictures of him when he will be grown up! I daily took care about his mama, Disa, and I had some special moments of cuddle with them. (G207)

The WWOOFer expresses an interest in the welfare and growth of the animals, suggesting an abiding attachment with them.

Furthermore, an emotional bond with animals can also provide positive feelings, when host-guest interaction is difficult:

I can't stay with people who say grossophobic, transphobic comments. I also don't like some manipulative aspects in [hosts] personality to be the center of attention and divide the WWOOFers. So, I concentrated on the joy of being with the horses in these breathtaking landscapes. (G220)

The quote suggests that the author chose to stay on the farm despite the negative feelings in the host-guest dynamic. While there was a sense of discomfort and emotional disconnection in the host-guest relationship, a strong positive emotional bond with animals and nature provided a sense of emotional refuge for the WWOOFer.

WWOOFers express also emotional bonding with places. The emotional attachment to places is most evident in the comments, which express a desire to return one day: "I was very sad leaving, but I look forward to returning sometime in the future!" (G104). Such comments indicate a longing for continuity and a desire to preserve the memories and experiences associated with the farm. Some comments go beyond a simple desire to return and express an even deeper commitment to places: "I have a feeling I'll be going back to [the farm] for the rest of my life" (G84). The quote suggests that the farm has become an integral part of author's life narrative. The family rhetoric discussed in section 5.1 extends to places in the following comment: "...we are still a little homesick to the [farm]" (G192). The quotation implies that the farm represents a place of emotional security and comfort, where the author feels a sense of belonging. Overall, the emotional attachment in these narratives indicates powerful bonds that are formed between WWOOFers and the places they experience.

WWOOFers' comments talk a lot about "connecting with nature" or "harmony with the nature". One WWOOFer describes it like this: "Staying at [the farm] gave me the opportunity to really

connect with and understand the nature, seeing similarities between it and myself” (G80). The quote suggests an introspective journey, that fosters a sense of unity, belonging, and personal growth. A deeper sense of unity is expressed in the following comment: “I specifically remember, when I was working in the gardens, I felt this otherworldly connectivity with the plants around me” (G169). While the following comment provides a broader perspective on ethical and political considerations, it also emphasises the emotional engagement between human participants in the WWOOF community and more-than-human nature: [The farm] is a place to grow not only food and herbs, but also thoughts of collective awakening, leadership in the natural world, sympathy, empathy for the forces that live under our feet, and communal harmony” (G106). Overall these examples illustrate emotional bonding between WWOOFers and the natural environment.

Based on the data, food seems to play a central role in creating emotional bonds in WWOOF experiences. One WWOOFer captures the essence of connecting with others through food and communal meals:

The meals were fairly sparse but delicious, fresh and healthy. There was a beautiful feeling of harvesting an entire meal, preparing it, and eating it with the family. Almost everything we ate came from the [farm] or the local town. (G11)

Practical experience of gathering fresh produce and participating in meal preparation fosters a direct connection with edible plants, but it also evokes a sense of community and shared connection with the host family. Gathering around a meal prepared from freshly harvested ingredients strengthens bonds in the narrative. This communal experience enhances the enjoyment of the food and reinforces the idea of food as a unifying force that brings people together. The following comment states this directly: “[The host] shares our belief that food is a way to connect people and we loved this aspect of the stay too” (G23).

A sense of engagement and community is fostered as individuals work together in the cultivation, harvesting and preparation of food. The following quote emphasises the shared responsibility among participants: “The meals were consistently rich and beautiful, even experimental, because we all worked hard to tend to the [farms] plants to produce a variety of foods” (G101). Using the word “experimental” suggests that there was creativity and innovation in preparing the food. Cooking with the available ingredients can therefore challenge the WWOOFer to use imagination and creativity. This adds excitement and novelty to the dining experience but can also enhance the emotional connection with others involved in the cooking process, including the ingredients, as they work together to create tasty meals.

7. MOBILITY UNDERPINNING DIVERSITY

7.1 Multiplicity of physical and virtual mobilities

Participants move from place to place to take part in local food production in different parts of the world. The length of stay mentioned by WWOOFers in the data is often from one week to three months. Long stays are appreciated. For example, some comments belittle the amount of time spent on the farms: "...I stayed sadly only for 2 weeks" (G35). The rhetoric is also used for stays, which are conventionally understood as a long visit: "Even though I was there... for only one month..." (G169). In addition, many WWOOF hosts declare their wishes in their depiction, usually with a longer stay:

Creating sustainable and holistic culture is a slow-moving sport!!!! We are looking for WWOOFers to stay for a month or more. (H36)

Hosts may also offer alternative forms of accommodation for travellers who are unsure about staying for a long period of time, in this case, a minimum of 13 weeks: "Book a hostel stay... & see if we are all you imagine before committing to a [WWOOF] contract" (H39). Some hosts may even have an established practice of considering stays as paid if they are shorter: "Stays of less than 3 weeks outside the busy seasons are considered regular (fee-based) accommodations, not through WWOOF" (H45).

Furthermore, some WWOOFers highlight the slowness of the experience: "I came here for a slow traveling experience, and I couldn't have had a more authentic one" (G128). The person mentioned staying at the farm for just over two weeks. The slowness of an experience does not necessarily relate only to the length of the stay, but the investment of time and engagement to destinations is an essential part of the slow travel movement (e.g. Germann Molz, 2009).

So, talking about stays of month(s) is not unusual or surprising in the context of WWOOF. However, some hosts prefer shorter dwellings: "We have learned that the sweet spot for us is a 2 week stay, it may be that after that we all decide it's working well but generally it's 2 weeks" (H20). Some WWOOF hosts explain that they often have local day quests as well: "Length of stay is negotiable, we often have locals who come and work a day or two a week" (H30). However, the comments in the data do not represent the views of the local people who work on these farms, as narratives are written by hosts and WWOOFers who usually stay for more than one day. In addition, it is not clear whether the day visitors are using the WWOOF site as a channel to get in touch with these farms.

The opportunity to offer work and accommodation may also depend on the time of the year and the projects that the farm has at the time: "We can sometimes take a WWOOFer for one or two weeks in May to get the garden started and occasional WWOOFers in September, but the main WWOOF season is in June, July and August..." (H64). So, there is more than one successful way of organising the length of a WWOOFer's stay, and there are situational negotiations to be made.

WWOOFers may wish to visit more than one farm during their stay at a particular destination, as can be seen from the data where the same visitor has visited several farms in the area. In addition, WWOOF farm may be a transit site or a place to stop by for a while between travels: "... [the farm] was nice [place] to stop and work on something productive in between my travels" (G168). Plans are also subject to change. One WWOOF podcast guest, a former WWOOFer, describes how he had planned to visit several farms in Portugal, but the second farm turned out to be such a good place to work that he stayed there for almost three years. Although WWOOF offers the possibility of mobility to different farms, engagement to a farm and its community can sometimes seem a more attractive option than mobility. There are several comments in the material where the length of stay has been extended, although not as extreme as with the podcast guest. Of course, the length of stay has also been shorter than planned in the material, particularly in relation to situations that were perceived as unfair. The emotional ties created (Deville, 2011, p. 380; section 5.1) also have an impact on WWOOFers' mobility, by creating intentions to return or visit an acquaintance. For example, in the data one WWOOFer had heard that WWOOFers he had met previously had set up a WWOOF farm, he went to visit them. Return visits are acknowledged in the previous research by Deville (2015, p. 153).

WWOOF organisations place a strong emphasis on international and national mobility, as exemplified by their extensive global network and the structure of their destination-based listings, which are designed to attract volunteers travelling to explore new regions or countries. Reviews are often written by a WWOOFer from a country other than the one in which the farm is located, emphasising the transnational mobility of WWOOFers. Many WWOOFers mention that they travel to experience a foreign country and its scenery, for example: "The entire purpose of this program is to experience another country..." (G230).

While WWOOFers may travel long distances, hosts may not have many opportunities to travel far. However, through foreign WWOOFers, they can have a change to get to know other cultures:

Farming is a lot of work, but she loves it. And while that work doesn't allow her much time to travel away from her farm, the world – through WWOOFers – comes to her. (O1)

Deville (2015, p. 150) has brought up that the experience of novelty is an important and motivating factor in hosting. Host and guest can introduce each other to the customs of their own culture, such as food traditions: “[The host] shared how to make sourdough starter while [a WWOOFer] demonstrated how to make spaetzle and schnitzel” (O1). Through WWOOFers, hosts can gain touristic experiences without having to physically travel.

Although many of the WWOOFers featured in the material have travelled long distances, not all WWOOFers are keen on long journeys. There are also reviews written by a WWOOFer from within the same country as the farm. For example, one domestic WWOOFer travelling domestically states:

I'm not that much into travelling and no travellers were coming from other countries this summer because of covid-19. I wanted to have an active holiday and experience the country life... It was wonderful to do different kinds of jobs, spend time with the family and hang out in the beautiful countryside. (G203)

There are also a lot of other forms of short-distance mobility in the proximity of the WWOOF farms. For example, many farms have local customers who come to the farm to buy produce and services, such as educational programs, workshops, and events. This form of mobility also enables the farm to be “monitored,” according to many non-certified farms. Stream of short-distance visitors also influences the atmospheres at the farms. Even at remote locations, abundance of human mobility can create a social atmosphere: “The atmosphere can be very social & festive at times, and it is common to have visitors/hikers/campers pop-up from time to time” (H16). In addition, WWOOFers move around the area in their leisure time (see section 5.3), often walking or cycling, based on comments in the data.

Nonhuman actors can also be part of the attraction of a WWOOF destination, such as whales, northern lights, rainforests: “[The host] made my dream of seeing whale in the wild come true” (G150). One WWOOFer strictly declared to have chosen the destiny from the basis of a certain horse breed. Other important nonhuman actors involved in WWOOF mobility are those associated with farm practices, such as cheese or wine. In one case of the data, it is the horses that provide the mobility for people and their goods, providing access to the farm in a remote location. WWOOFers tasks may include moving animals around the area: “Activities on the farm will be sustainable gardening, hiking with llamas...” (H33). WWOOF participants also move non-animals, such as plants, and animal manure. For instance, they search for and plant cuttings, care for them, and subsequently plant them in an appropriate location. They take their produce to farmers' markets or

customers come to the farm and carry the produce home from there. Participants assist certain plants to spread: "We are also constantly improving pastures and landscaping to establish a wildflower meadows" (H40). However, they also prevent the mobility of nonhuman beings by moving "parasitic" plants, weeds, invasive species, and resisting desertification, monocultures, and pasture lands.

Food and bottled water are also carried to the farms: "...you should consider bringing specific things you like [to eat] as there are no supermarkets or stores in the vicinity" (H16). Especially while WWOOFing with children, there might be a need to carry more foodstuff to the farms, as they can have strong preferences: "With kids bring what they will need/want in terms of food" (G133). Additionally, WWOOFers may carry non-conventional items with them as travellers, such as rubber boots, and work clothes, to farms if such items are not available to WWOOFers there.

Internet, as a nonhuman entity, is a facilitator of virtual mobility. In the context of WWOOFing, it plays a major role in connecting with each other before the physical mobility and gaining the first steps of mutual trust. Consequently, it can be considered a substantial actor in the sympoiesis. It also enables nomadic lifestyle, as some WWOOFers work remotely during their visits. Furthermore, it provides a connection to the people back at home, so access to the internet can guide the decision of which farm to visit: "[The WWOOFer] wanted to communicate with his family in Austria so he looked for host farms in other states" (O6). Moreover, the internet provides a way to keeping up with the relationships shaped during the WWOOFing time.

7.2 Mobile practices and knowledge

The mobility of practices and skills is an essential part of WWOOFing. Through hands on activities, WWOOFers learn skills such as gardening, preserving, cooking, methods for resilience, handicrafts, and running a business. The most apparent and notoriously prevalent practices relate to agriculture. These comments demonstrate the mobility of knowledge as the participants intend to apply the agricultural knowledge gained during a WWOOF experience to one's own environment: "...I am pretty sure that I will be able to grow my own garden when I return to Genoa, Italy since it is so amazing to plant something and see it growing" (G82); "I'm writing this review now looking out onto my pasture from my little patio a property away from [the hosts] feeling overwhelmed, but mostly excited knowing I have their continued guidance and the tools to succeed" (G109).

One substantial aspect of culinary systems is the preservation of different ingredients. Depending on the time of year and geographical location, food preservation may be the focus on WWOOF farms: “I was the last WWOOFer of the season and my work was primarily picking the last fruits and vegetables and preserving them in all kinds of ways, I learned a lot of interesting new techniques” (G242). Learning preservation techniques is valuable, because these skills can be applied not only to one’s own garden produce, but also to fresh produce acquired from local markets or community supported agriculture (CSA) programs.

In some cases, the WWOOF hosts engage in culinary activities with WWOOFers, whereas in other situations, the WWOOFers may cook together with their peers or farm staff. Such practices may have an impact on the cooking skills of individual WWOOFers: “[hosts] cooking is absolutely amazing, and I often try to replicate her meals at home” (G104); “I loved seeing how they use their own produce for cooking...” (G242). This depiction illustrates how the exchange of culinary knowledge contributes to the spread of culinary diversity: “You will be able to learn not only Japanese cuisine, but also various cuisines of different countries from other WWOOFers and local people” (H42). The WWOOF host in this case is not a farm, but a community restaurant, where the WWOOFers’ tasks are mainly related to cooking and interacting with customers.

Other possible practices mentioned in the WWOOF websites include constructing with ecological methods, renewable energy production, mechanics, tools, and technology, among others. In the data I collected, handicrafts, such as accessories made of natural materials were brought up: “My favourite moments include... making jewellery with [the host] using seed beads from the garden” (G95). The podcast guest mentioned above initially wanted to learn how to grow potatoes, but later it became important to learn how to build with the materials that were available. So, there are lots of different skills for self-sufficiency to learn through practical work on WWOOF farms.

In the times of environmental urgencies, it is timely to also learn adaptation methods to increase resilience to specific environmental challenges, such as water scarcity and drought conditions. WWOOFing can provide a channel to distribute such knowledge in practice: “...We learned a lot about different methods of dealing with the challenges of dry climate” (G27). However, there were not many examples relating to adaptation methods in the data.

By sharing information of financial management, marketing strategies and overall business operations of the farms, hosts can inform WWOOFers about the financial resilience associated with

small-scale farming: “They ... made me privy to all the business of running their farm” (G125). By learning about the business aspects of operating a small-scale farm, WWOOFers are better equipped to understand and navigate with the financial challenges of agricultural work. There were not many examples of this type of knowledge sharing in the data but given the challenges around farmers’ financial livelihoods (e.g. Sage, 2012), it is an aspect that should not be ignored.

Through their experiences, WWOOF participants can gain linguistic skills, learning the local language and its regional expressions. WWOOFers may be tasked with teaching English to staff and other locals, or to engage in other forms of communication with locals as part of their duties. Such practices immerse participants to different languages, thus enabling the mobility of languages. In addition to language-exchange, there is a niche practice of non-violent communication among WWOOF: “Here I learned... to communicate non-violently” (G140). Deville (2011, p. 214) has noted, that effective communication skills are one outcome of WWOOF experiencing. So, even without explicit non-violent communication practice, WWOOF exchanges can contribute to improving interaction skills.

When discussing the mobility of practical learning and involvement in agricultural practices, it is worth noting that some of the hosts within the WWOOFing community have previously been WWOOFers themselves:

Farmers have themselves WWOOFed in various countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa in recent years. Now they have finally fulfilled their dream of having their own farm. (O4)

I met [the hosts] in 2018 when I was traveling in Europe. Coincidentally, they were WWOOFing on farms throughout Europe when I met them. When I found out that they had started a farm in Ohio, I couldn’t help but be inspired to go check out what they have going on and see where I could help. (G136)

Be ready to listen [and] absorb their practices [and] routines, take initiative when possible [and] make yourself useful, respect what they’ve created, ask questions (their own WWOOFing experiences are amazing), get dirty, [and] have fun! (G133)

The narratives demonstrate how these hosts gained experience as WWOOFers before establishing their own farm. This experiential learning, acquired through WWOOFing in various countries, has equipped them not only with practical knowledge and skills in organic agriculture, but also with practical knowledge of WWOOFing and the WWOOFers’ point of view. By offering mentorship and guidance, these hosts create environments that foster personal and professional development. WWOOFers gain knowledge about interconnections between elements of the ecosystem (section 6.2). Learning about ecosystems and co-dependency can influence on adopting or reinforcing response-ability of individuals: “It felt like a graduate course in reciprocity and alternative living as

much as it did a work experience on an organic farm” (G145); “Learning sustainable farming methods and learning the value of trying to live in symbiosis with the environment was very interesting” (G183). WWOOF experiences can even have a life-changing impact (see also Deville & Wearing, 2013; Deville, 2015). They can increase understanding, knowledge, and skills, leading to a shift in perceptions about the connection to nature, oneself, and the future. Few examples highlight the transformative dimension of WWOOFing experiences:

Not to be dramatic, but the staying here has literally changed my life. I am now going on to study horticulture in the hopes I can experience something close to what I did at their farm. (G130)

This past month, I’ve grown so much as a person in so many different ways: becoming more connected to myself and nature. I have a clearer understanding of the direction I would like my future to go in, and I have a better sense of what feeds my soul and makes me happy. (G171)

After three months in, I can’t think about not doing anything with growing vegetables anymore. The impact especially for local food supplies and the environment can be so big, I love it. (G255)

These narratives highlight the capacity to increase understanding, knowledge, and skills, while additionally cultivating deep passion for growing vegetables and an appreciation for the potential impact on organic food supplies and the biodiversity. These individuals express a shift in priorities and direction for the future. Engaging in meaningful work with plants and animals can lead to introspection, self-discovery, and heightened appreciation for the interconnectedness of all living beings (see also Deville & Wearing 2013, pp. 161–163).

Although WWOOF members operate at a local level, they are aware of global challenges and often seek to promote more sustainable practices as part of the global symposium (Deville, 2015, p. 148; Mostafanezhad, 2016; Terry, 2014, p. 103). Hosts can, for example, aspire to inspire other people to act more sustainably:

Acting locally and thinking globally offers a new perspective of progressive nature of society. We seek to be a perennial source of inspiration for all, through its exemplary commitment to its visions and selfless service in all areas. (H22)

Indeed, hosts can have a motivational effect on individual WWOOFers: “We had wonderful conversations and [the host is] inspiring in action, to making the world a cleaner and more biodiverse place” (G20). In the context of interconnectedness of food, culture, and sustainability, the kitchen becomes a meaningful space for sharing ideas and values: “...We consider the everyday conversation at the kitchen table and nourishing meal to be a center of much that we do to bring physical and spiritual health to the future” (H30).

Mobility of values and perceptions appears to be a meaningful part of WWOOFing. Values of food production, for example, can change while participating as a WWOOFer: “Industrial food production and its ills is something we discussed as well (G252)”. The mobility of values can be about beginning to recognise and evaluate one’s own eating habits and the impact of food production on society and the environment. This can lead to changes in diets and consumption habits. Participants have perceptions about food and farming which may be challenged through immersive experiences: “I’ve learned so much under such a short period of time, and quite honestly, a lot of it was by unlearning societal standards and norms of acceptable foods” (G154). Through practical activities, the WWOOFer may encounter social norms. Similarly, the following quote suggest a step away from conventional dietary practices towards exploring diverse perspectives and embracing a wider range of foods and culinary traditions:

[Farmers’] passion is medical and eatable herbs. She taught me a lot. It’s such important that there are people who care about exploring of edible herbs... (G108)

Countering social norms can therefore be a meaningful part of learning processes in WWOOFing experiences.

Similarly, the next quote suggests that the industrial food systems have led to a significant distance between consumers and food origins:

We believe that food is a political and cultural act and therefore needs to be remodelled. The distance between the final consumer and the farmer is huge, which makes people unaware of how their food is grown. (H26)

The quote implies that reshaping the food systems involves reconnecting consumers with the processes of food production and the individuals who produce it to make social norms visible to consumers. Viewing food as a political and cultural act highlights its broader significance beyond mere sustenance. Connecting with food production processes can also be described as the reason for becoming a farmer: “After 30 years in hospitality and with ancestry in farming I paid attention to have direct connection with my food sources” (H17). Some narratives suggests that the roles of WWOOFing host farms is to reconnect their WWOOFers with the systems that sustain them:

[WWOOFer] always bought her food from the supermarket, and she’s never had a small domestic farm either... Once again, I realized that a large part of the population was really deprived of contact with living things. And that reconnecting people to their sustenance was really our role as a WWOOFing host farm. (H71)

The quote implies that WWOOFing experiences have potential in shaping perceptions and practices through multispecies encounters, particularly in terms of enhancing knowledge of food production and agriculture.

8. DISCUSSION

8.1 Economic viewpoints of WWOOF sympoiesis

The WWOOF community is a fascinating context for exploring diverse economic practices aimed at creating more liveable futures and sustainable livelihoods. As previously discussed, the WWOOF community currently faces a collision between two distinct spaces, the idealistic and the commodified (Deville et al., 2016a). The idealistic space refers to the aims and values rooted in the original idea of WWOOF organisation, while the commodified space relates to the commercial pressures and financial realities that participants navigate. Narratives within the WWOOF community are not formed in isolation; they are constructed in a social environment where they interact with and respond to other narratives told (Hyvärinen, 2021). Consequently, the values, perceptions, and ideals of different participants are deeply entwined, colliding and negotiating with each other.

The purpose of this thesis is not to make recommendations for the practice and management of the WWOOF movement. Rather, it seeks to understand what can be learned from the community instead of how we can guide them (Höckert, 2014, p. 112), as it navigates these complexities. By focusing on what is considered fair and desirable from the perspective of different participants, this discussion chapter aims to illustrate the varied perceptions of diverse economic practices and values within WWOOF community. Through this lens, a nuanced understanding emerges of how these practices contribute to sustainable livelihoods and ethical exchanges.

Many WWOOFers and WWOOF hosts use the expression "volunteer" for tourists who come to work on the farm. However, in WWOOFing, there is an agreement of transactions. The fundamental transaction of WWOOFing does not fully align with the concept of volunteering when the latter is defined as an activity with no guaranteed compensation. In accordance with the principles of WWOOF, some form of subsistence is always expected in return for the work performed. However, the participation is done in voluntary manner and both parties have the freedom to end the stay if they feel it is unjust (WWOOF Help Center), making the power dynamic in the arrangement fairly balanced (Deville, 2011). Furthermore, the organisation emphasises the mutual and situational negotiation between the WWOOFer and the WWOOF host regarding the specifics of the exchange, with the aim of establishing work as the primary means of exchange for food and accommodation.

In these situational negotiations, there is also an aspect of unilateral giving (Deville, 2011). The concept of unilateral giving is comparable to gift-giving in that both are open-ended events without negotiation: "if there is a 'return', it can take a very different and even unexpected form that the original gift and can involve a quite different time frame than the immediate time frame in which we've come to expect transactions to occur" (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013, p. 105). Drawing on Molm's (2010) theorising of reciprocity, Deville (2011, p. 353) argues, that the ethical WWOOF exchange is reciprocal in nature, encouraging to unilateral giving, i.e. practicing random acts of kindness, and producing ongoing relations rather than separate transactions.

In these reciprocal exchanges, capital in the form of knowledge and skills seems to be appreciated (see section 5.1). Indeed, much research has identified learning as a motivating factor for WWOOFers and volunteers in general (Deville, 2011; Sin, 2009; Terry, 2014; Wengel et al., 2018). Hence, the traditional roles of mentor and apprentice are reversed: farmers who are conventionally regarded as peripheral locals are now perceived as having valuable knowledge, while those who are conventionally categorised as wealthy Westerners or city dwellers are now the ones taking advice. This creates a space for deconstructing the conventional dichotomy between rural areas requiring urban expertise for economic development.

As hosts can also learn new skills and insights from WWOOFers, at best the exchange involves mutual learning, which can be transformational for the host as well (Deville, 2015). Both human parties are therefore ideally open to learning from each other, thus deconstructing the binary between apprentice and mentor. The deconstruction of the mentor–apprentice dichotomy and the valuing of rural knowledge resonates with Gibson-Graham's (2006) call for economic practices that disrupt traditional power dynamics and enhances more horizontal and democratic social relations (see also Ávila Romero, 2018, p. 87). However, it is worth recalling that in the commodified sphere of the context, WWOOFing can contribute to reinforcing neoliberal power dynamic in food systems (Mostafanezhad, 2016).

Given the multitude of variables inherent to the exchange, such as communication obstacles and natural phenomena, the opportunities for learning are inherently unpredictable and therefore cannot be fully negotiated in advance. Consequently, flexibility and an openness to emerging encounters are beneficial approaches to exchanges within the WWOOF community. It is also considered a good quality in a WWOOFer to be open to different viewpoints and circumstances (see also Deville, 2011, p. 192). Deville et al. (2016b, p. 104) have noted not only that all encounters in the

WWOOF context require a degree of openness, but also that the capability to embrace diverse encounters contributes to better outcomes. Their insights, along with the analysis of the data in this thesis, resonate with Höckert's (2015) suggestion that openness towards the unpredictable and unexpected is essential to fostering ethical relationships in community projects.

Capability to embrace unexpected shares characteristics with Deleuze's (2003, p. 93 as cited in Guia & Jamal, 2023, p. 7) concept of team subjectivity, which is characterised by an embrace of the unknown, a hospitable attitude towards others, and a capacity for transformation in encounters. In contrast, less desirable WWOOF guest seeking only cheap travel costs (see Deville et al., 2016a), aligns with Deleuze's (2003, p. 93, as cited in Guia & Jamal, 2023, p. 7) concept of mediocre individual, who is trying to integrate others into their own frameworks of interaction. The same applies to WWOOF hosts, as it is those who engage in interaction like family members who are perceived as good hosts, and the expression of appreciation is two-way in "positive feedback loops" of WWOOF exchanges (Deville, 2011, p. 195). When WWOOFers become members of the host family, the host–guest dichotomy dissolves (see also Kosnik, 2014). The ideal subject of WWOOF community thus has similarities with the ethical form of subjectivity in Deleuze's philosophy, encouraging participants to build their capacity to affect and be affected. Affect in Deleuzian perspective means "the ability of bodies to form and transform assemblages with other bodies and be formed and transformed in and by them" (Guia & Jamal, 2023, p. 8). In other words, the community values the ability to engage with each other in transformative way, to *become with* (Haraway, 2008) each other. Obviously, values are not shared by all members and do not always translate into action, as can be seen, for example, in cases of discrimination in the data.

The widespread use of family rhetoric in the narratives underlines the expectation and appreciation of social interaction, also confirmed by previous research (Deville, 2011; Kosnik, 2014; Wengel et al., 2018, p. 50). Experiencing connection with others is one element of the tourism experience (Lüthje & Tarssanen, 2013, s. 62), so it is understandable that WWOOFers would want this, as they value travelling as a high motivator (Deville, 2011, p. 373). The use of family rhetoric in these narratives emphasises reciprocity more strongly than trends like "live like a local," which are often associated with platforms such as Airbnb. While "live like a local" focuses on providing an authentic experience through immersion in local lifestyles, the family rhetoric within the WWOOF community goes further by fostering deeper, mutual relationships between hosts and WWOOFers. This dynamic not only enhances the sense of belonging but also creates an environment where both parties contribute to and benefit from the exchange in a more personal and meaningful way. The

emphasis on reciprocal relationships within the WWOOF context thus distinguishes it from other forms of tourism (see also Deville, 2011).

But social interaction in economic encounters requires emotional work. Emotional labour can be understood as the effort and energy expended by individuals to regulate their emotions to fulfil the expectations of a situation (Hochschild, 1983/2020). Previous studies have acknowledged that hosting involves emotional labour that hosts may have to perform when interacting with WWOOFers (Deville, 2011, p. 203), that emotional labour can be increased due language barriers (Deville, 2015, p. 152) or when work ethics, attitudes and expectations do not correspond to each other (Lai et al., 2020, p. 1989), and that balance between social interactions and work can be experienced challenging by both parties (Wengel et al., 2018, p. 50).

While emotional labour is indeed inherent in many economic activities (Hochschild, 1983/2020), it becomes particularly pronounced in the context of immersive WWOOF exchanges. Considering that emotional resources are inherent factors of economic transactions (Bandelj, 2012, p. 181), emotional labour in WWOOF exchange is not merely situational, but a core component of economic interaction within the system when expectations are placed on social connection (see section 5.1). This also applies to situations where WWOOFers are required to engage with nonhuman nature in ways that challenge their personal comfort zones and perceptions (see section 6.2), as participants need to process their uncomfortable feelings and regulate their emotions to perform their tasks. The commitment to interactions in WWOOF exchanges necessitates the performance of emotional labour. Emotional investments (Voronov & Vince, 2012) therefore shape the outcomes of these exchanges.

Regarding the category of work, WWOOFers see their work as more than a series of tasks. Terry (2014, p. 102) argues that WWOOFers work for self-fulfilment and reciprocity, which is why some farmers also prefer them to hired workers. In the data of this thesis, WWOOFers describe their farm work as experiencing rather than working (see section 5.2). In the context of tourism, the concept of the "otherness" relates to the experiences that tourists seek to engage with, and these experiences may differ from, for example, one's own culture, geographical location, or awareness (MacCannel, 1989/2013). By deviating from their everyday working routines, WWOOFers can experience a different kind of labour without engaging in it for a longer period. In the practice of WWOOFing, the experience of otherness can be sought through the activities that travellers put at the expense of their accommodations, work. But bartering was not the original idea of WWOOF, as mentioned

above. When WWOOF sympoiesis was starting to form, “helping on the farm was the essential aspect of the experience” (Sue Coppard, the founder of WWOOF, as cited in Kosnik, 2014, p. 281). Experiencing lies at the heart of the idea of WWOOFing, thus connecting it closely to the core ideas of travelling.

The narratives collected to this thesis reveal a complex intertwining of work and tourism experience. The components of tourist experiences include factors such as enjoyment, refreshment, relaxation, challenge, adventure, novelty, learning, uniqueness, and the feeling of freedom (Lüthje & Tarssanen, 2013, pp. 61–62). Simple work tasks related to plants enable experiences of refreshment and relaxation for WWOOFers. Indeed, the presence of plants has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on stress reduction and improvement in concentration and mental health (Hall & Knuth, 2019). The importance of plant agency in hospitality is thus highlighted, with plants becoming not merely resources but hosts and participants in human experience (Grimwood & Höckert, 2023).

By participating to the simple tasks WWOOFers enable their hosts to utilise their time on more demanding projects. Instead, a variety of tasks provides novelty and learning, contributing to a sense that WWOOF work is an experience rather than a job. Managing work independently gives WWOOFers a feeling of freedom and adds to the sense of a tourist experience. However, providing a variety of tasks may increase the amount of training time for the WWOOF hosts, thereby paradoxically extending their daily working hours and reducing their personal time (Dewille, 2011, p. 203; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001, p. 121). Moreover, the freedom to manage one’s own work can increase the cost to hosts of mistakes made by unskilled WWOOFers (Dewille, 2011, p. 203). For hosts, the balance between providing experiential work and receiving benefits can therefore be challenging. Further studies would be needed to find out whether focusing on other experiential qualities, such as relaxation, could compensate for the challenges hosts face in offering freedom and a variety of tasks.

Working on WWOOF farms can be not only experiential but also transformational (Dewille & Wearing, 2013; section 5.2). Reisinger’s (2013) review of the research on transformation highlights that transformational experiences are the those that create a permanent change in one’s assumptions and beliefs about people and the world. The idea of transformational experiences differs from Haraway’s (2008) concept of becoming with, which is ongoing by nature and more subtle, reshaping all parties involved. However, both transformational experiences and the concept of

becoming with underscore the importance of interactions in producing change. WWOOFing requires interaction and “engagement with strangers” (Deville et al., 2016b, p. 103), human and nonhuman. Sometimes there are challenges posed by personal or cultural differences, or by the untamed nature of the more-than-human world. However, working is often described as collaboration with human and nonhuman actors, thus recognising the “work” of nonhuman nature. Collaborating despite differences changes us (Tsing, 2015, p. 29), thus working in the context of WWOOF also facilitates the process of change, the process of becoming with others.

Partly due to the enmeshment of work and tourism experiences, the division between leisure and work gets blurred (see section 5.3). Nevertheless, too much work leads easily to experiences of unjustness and raises a question of exploitation in the context of WWOOF (see Wengel et al., 2018). Different perceptions of what is work and what is not, challenge the negotiations between WWOOF participants. Kosnik (2014) posits that especially cooking occupies a liminal space between these realms of exchange. As WWOOF participants experience the right balance from their subjective perspectives, the need for clear communication of expectations becomes a fundamental starting point for a fair exchange. Hosting can teach effective communication, but WWOOFing experiences can also contribute to the development of communication skills (Deville, 2011, pp. 214, 292). In this way, the accumulation of experience can shape practice towards reciprocal exchanges. It is also worth considering the less explored perspective, that the participants must negotiate their working time not only with each other, but also with more-than-human actors, such as weather, which may change the pre-set working schedules and limit activities during the free time. So once again, flexibility is expected especially from WWOOFers. Furthermore, the absence of some nonhuman elements, such as digital devices, may affect how leisure gets experienced.

In the narratives, the nonhumans in relation to free time are sometimes described in a way, that emphasises the conventional tourist attractions and experiences in the destinations, such as hot springs and northern lights in Iceland. However, WWOOFers spend much of their free time near the farm, as the locations can be remote, and the free time is limited during the working days. WWOOFing places participants in close contact with the immediate, everyday environments of their host farms. Therefore, WWOOFers also observe the proximate surroundings of the farms. In this manner, the practice of WWOOFing encourages travellers to engage with the surrounding environment of diverse destinations in a manner that transcends the representations of destinations in tourism marketing. Thus, this practice can contribute to creating a more-than-representational understanding (Kallio & LaFleur, 2023, p. 3) to travellers about the places visited, connecting the

landscape to everyday life and livelihoods. A further question is whether this practice encourages the travellers to observe their everyday environments with a sense of proximity, that is, with curiosity and attention to the seemingly mundane or familiar (Rantala, Höckert et al., 2024).

The narratives of the WWOOF community about wellbeing demonstrate that WWOOFing practices can provide a space for a meaningful participation (section 5.4). With meaningful participation, I refer to engagement in activities that individuals find personally significant, that can lead to a sense of purpose (Allan et al., 2019, p. 505). Embodied interaction with nonhuman nature is one facilitator of personally meaningful WWOOFing experiences (McIntosh & Bonneman, 2006, p. 94), and this topic is discussed in more detail in the section 8.2. What comes to WWOOF hosts, their sense of meaningful work can be enhanced by the moral support of WWOOFers, which can be invaluable in engaging with marginalised economic practices.

At times, WWOOFers describe their experiences as healing (section 5.4). Healing opportunities are sometimes provided by hosts, but also by the nonhuman environment. This highlights the power of the nonhuman world to influence on human psychological wellbeing (e.g. Buxton et al., 2021; Fuller et al., 2007). Moreover, advancing safe and inclusive spaces to both human and more-than-human participants are much appreciated in the narratives, although the balance between maintaining nonhuman diversity and experiencing a safe environment can be complicated. For what it is worth, these inclusive spaces offering meaningful participation can contribute to disrupting the traditional power dynamics and creating more inclusive economic relations, central targets of diverse economies (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

Having autonomy and responsibility in the farm is not only experienced as part of touristic experience (section 5.2), but it also provides feelings of empowerment. When community-focused activities, such as supporting local social groups, promoting inclusivity, participation, and capacity building are included in WWOOF practices (section 5.4), it contributes to wider community empowerment. Such activities enrich the social goods created, extending beyond the WWOOF farm and the WWOOFer “to benefit the local community through cultural exchanges and knowledge sharing” (Lai et al., 2020, p. 1977). Community empowerment refers to the processes by which a community gain the skills, knowledge, resources, and confidence to participate actively in the development and decision-making processes that affect the quality of their lives (e.g. Israel et al. 1994; Zimmerman, 1995). Empowerment in the context of idealistic WWOOFing practice involves also enabling nonhuman entities and ecosystems to thrive.

However, the data also reveal instances of discrimination and unsafe conditions leading to experiences of injustice and financial losses, highlighting areas where the practice falls short of its ideals. Experienced injustices are thoroughly described in the reviews, which can be perceived as a means of compensating for perceived unfairness (Lee-Wingate & Corfman, 2011) and of informing other members of the community about unacceptable behaviour within the community. The act of writing a review is something that is not covered much in the WWOOF literature. However, reviews are descriptions of the farms and their practices that WWOOFers looking for a farm can engage with in the first stage. WWOOF hosts can also write a review about WWOOFers, which can be read when logged into the website. Reviews are only published after both the host and WWOOFer have written their review, or when the 14-day review period has expired, to encourage honest and unbiased feedback (WWOOF Help Center). The reviews help the members to get a better picture of the patterns of the farms and the WWOOFers, the other participants, who are still distant in the early stages of the transactions. In the words of Gibson-Graham et al. (2013, p. 104), they help to “‘see’ distant others more clearly”. I therefore perceive the act of writing a review, whether negative, positive or something in between, as an essential contribution to building a more just economy. It is also noteworthy that this act is not obligatory, so it is unilateral by nature, a gift of time and effort with no certainty of a return.

In conclusion, the nature of the encounter in an economic transaction is opposite to the neoliberal agricultural model, where encounters are “masked,” i.e. the social and environmental impacts of transactions are not noticeable to the consumers (Gibson-Graham, 2013, p. 86). Price loses its power of commanding the attention in WWOOF encounters, as “the price distant others pay” (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013, p. 89) becomes observable. The ideal in WWOOF exchange is not to separate leisure and work, but to see work as an experience and a social activity that builds relationships (see also Kosnik, 2014, p. 281). WWOOFing offers spaces for affective encounters (see also section 6.1). This encourages participants to engage in practices that are relational, situated, and embodied, thereby inspiring economic participants to engage with one another and fostering a sense of presence and engagement in the moment. “Staying with the trouble requires to learning to be truly present” (Haraway, 2016, p. 1).

Responsible behaviour in WWOOFing is continuously re-defined and negotiated in relations with human and nonhuman companions. Intimate experiences that allow participants to overcome inequalities create spaces for developing identities (Hollas et al., 2022, p. 769). WWOOF transaction ideals therefore cultivate an approach, where participants are encouraged to embrace

team subjectivity, where oppositional binaries are being dissolved and becoming with takes place (Deleuze, 2003, as cited in Guia & Jamal, 2023, p. 7). By doing so, it aligns with Gibson-Graham's call for economic practices that disrupt traditional power dynamics and Haraway's vision of interconnected living. In the idealistic realm, WWOOF participants foster a community economy in which both hosts and WWOOFers engage in reciprocal exchanges that emphasise relational, experiential and empowering value over monetary gain. Relational investments made by the participants target for "growth of a different sort" (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013, p. 174) than purely monetary: emotional bonds, experiences of becoming with others, and care for others.

8.2 Multispecies encounters shaping the economy

Acknowledging the sensory dimension is crucial for a holistic understanding of affective human experience and behaviour (e.g. Verlie, 2019). To recap, affects are sensations that cannot be reduced to the individual body (Germann Molz & Boda, 2023, p. 3). When discussing collective bodily experiences, the concept of atmospheres becomes particularly meaningful. As Böhme (1993, p. 119) explains: "atmospheres are evidently what are experienced in bodily presence in relation to persons and things or in spaces". Bodies receive atmospheres affectively, evoking various emotions. The concept of atmospheres enables to build more comprehensive picture of affective encounters, that cannot be reduced to individual's or group's feelings (Bille & Simonsen, 2019). By recognising the affective dimensions of WWOOF experiences, we can better understand how these experiences contribute to shaping WWOOF economies, as the political significance of affects and their influence on collective experiences can be substantial (Stephens, 2016). Consequently, this approach can also reveal the wider socio-political implications of these experiences.

The narratives of sensory experiences demonstrate the impact of more-than-human nature on the WWOOFers residing on WWOOF farms and their surroundings. Experiences attached to landscapes are among the most frequently described sensory issues among WWOOFers. However, experiencing landscape depends on the knowledge of the observer. Kallio and LaFleur (2023, p. 4) describe citing several scholars that in modernity, landscapes are represented as objects and disconnected from everyday life and livelihoods. Furthermore, they demonstrate how monoculture landscapes are often perceived as "idyllic" views of the countryside. According to Ingold (2000), an understanding and relationship with the landscape is created through activities that shape the landscape. WWOOF participants, hosts and travellers, contribute to shaping the landscapes through agricultural practices, thus likely increasing the understanding of the diverse interconnected and

interacting networks in them. Through proximate and sensuous encounters with landscapes, WWOOF participants can learn “more-than-representational” ways of observing the landscape, thus the landscapes contribute to changing them as well (Kallio & LaFleur, 2023, p. 5). WWOOF practices can therefore enhance the processes of becoming with landscapes.

As aesthetics relate to producing overall atmospheres (Böhme, 1993, p. 116), the visual experiences are only one dimension. Atmospheres are experienced through the whole human body (Bille & Simonsen, 2019). Böhme (1993), and Bille and Simonsen (2019) highlight how spaces and their atmospheres influence the experiences of people. Furthermore, Jóhannesson and Lund (2017), in their study of Northern Lights tours, illustrate how more-than-humans actively participate in shaping the atmospheres. The aesthetics become tangible in the lived experiences detailed in the data. The narratives in my research illustrate how sensory interactions, such as touching and smelling plants, hearing birds and local music, or tasting culinary offerings, contribute to the creation of these emotionally engaging atmospheres. The atmospheres are formed through multi-species encounters and they play a significant role in the creation of experiences, described with words such as “magical” or “striking”. Even in slightly uncomfortable conditions, such as having only chilly bathing possibilities, WWOOFers are able to find magical experiences. WWOOF narratives in the data of this thesis construct an image of relaxed, pleasurable, and enchanting atmospheres, with some narratives suggesting that these atmospheres are particularly powerful in influencing WWOOF experiences (see section 6.1).

The role of human practices in cocreating atmospheres with companion species is substantial (Bille & Simonsen, 2019). The data explored in this thesis enlighten some of the practices that WWOOF participants engage in to contribute to the creation of tranquil, pleasurable, and enchanting atmospheres, where moments of discomfort can provide possibilities of (un)learning, but also moments in which acts of reciprocity are negotiated. These include disconnecting from digital amenities, enhancing biodiversity in landscapes, storytelling, and fostering acceptance and collaboration. Disconnecting from digital devices seems to be favoured by WWOOFers. Digital detox can lead to a heightened sense of presence (Syvertsen, 2020) and thus a more conscious experience of atmospheres. It also helps in attuning “the patterns of activities and communications” to the cyclical rhythms of nature (Rantala, 2018, p. 63). However, it would be important to ask whether the presence or absence of an online connection might also affect the feeling of safety and security in a foreign place with new acquaintances.

The effect of enhancing biodiversity on the experienced atmospheres is prominent in the narratives relating to urban sites, as WWOOFers marvel at the tranquillity and abundance of these spaces. This highlights the significance of urban nature as a perceived sensory environment. From the perspective of WWOOFers, these diverse urban spaces create restorative atmospheres, but from a multispecies perspective we can ask whether these spaces provide same type of atmospheres for other species as well. The stories of abundance suggest that this may be the case on urban WWOOF farms and backyards. This calls for a more comprehensive approach to urban planning and development, with a focus on the sensory experiences of both humans and other species, and their impact on multispecies wellbeing (Veijola et al., 2023).

The examples of interpreting the aesthetics of one farm through Tolkien's tales and experiencing a historical connection while sleeping in a teepee illustrate how storytelling and imagination influence the atmospheres experienced. These examples highlight the significance of storytelling in creating meanings. Haraway (2016) suggests that imaginative storytelling can help us envision alternative futures and more ethical ways of living in multispecies communities. Kimmerer (2013) similarly highlights the power of stories, especially indigenous, in shaping our relationship to the more-than-human world. Likewise, Tsing (2015) emphasises storytelling in shaping the unfolding of new relationships and practices, making it a vital tool in multispecies worlds. Through imaginative storytelling, whether rooted in history, fiction or personal experience, individuals can experience surroundings intensely, fostering a sense of belonging and responsibility that goes beyond mere presence. In this way, storytelling and imagination serve as powerful agents of change, encouraging participants to see their actions as part of larger, interconnected systems worldmaking.

Lastly, fostering acceptance and collaboration were mentioned as part of the enjoyable and magical atmospheres. Given that social wellbeing derives from having support, and community wellbeing from being involved (Rath & Harter, 2010, as cited in Gibson-Graham et al., 2013, p. 21–22), it is applicable to link these practices to creating positive atmospheres. More research would be needed to understand the atmospheric practices in WWOOFing holistically.

However, the enchanting atmosphere can also be shattered if nonhumans associated with insecurity, such as lizards or mould, find their way into the accommodation of WWOOFers. Sensory experiences are not indeed always pleasurable while WWOOFing. Hard physical work and dealing with “dirt,” for example, can be part of WWOOFing anywhere in the world. Emotions of discomfort and vulnerability are always worth attention, because such moments can be moments of

(un)learning prior assumptions and the affective attachments to them (e.g. Everingham & Motta, 2023; Höckert et al., 2022). The narratives in the data in this thesis suggest that many of their authors have learned to tolerate with the feelings of bodily discomfort, and even to appreciate the source of the discomfort, such as animal manure. The moments of discomfort and vulnerability can provide valuable learning experiences to WWOOFers. By confronting and working through these sensory challenges, individuals may develop greater resilience and deeper understanding of the interrelationships within agroecological systems.

Yet, it is good to recall, that “different bodies relate and respond to their surroundings” in many ways (Jensen & Barry, 2024, p. 127), as the experience of sensory stimuli is individual and may be more demanding for some people than others (e.g. Aron et al., 2012). Therefore, coping with sensory discomfort is not equally achievable for all, and there is a need for sensitivity when encouraging individuals to encounter their limits of comfort. Dietary discomforts were one example of sensory experiences limiting choices, challenging interaction between hosts and WWOOFers, and producing negative experiences (see also Kosnik, 2014, p. 284). In this way, moments of discomfort can also be moments in which acts of reciprocity are negotiated. To provide a more detailed discussion of the topic, there is a need for more research in sensory discomfort and emotional vulnerability.

Section 6.2 illustrates *how* knowledge about multispecies interconnections in food sympoiesis is produced and mediated in WWOOF encounters. The narratives underline attentiveness to more-than-human nature, slowing down the phase of life, tuning to the rhythms and patterns of nature, using senses and learning through traditions. In WWOOFing, then, atmospheric practices and practices of knowledge production seem to intersect.

Attentiveness to nature in these narratives includes the acknowledgment and appreciation of the nonhuman agency and the ways in which they participate in worldmaking. The data suggests that listening to the stories and teachings of previous generations and companion species, such as plants, is part of the knowledge production (Grimwood & Höckert, 2023; Kimmerer, 2013; Kinnunen et al., 2023) that shapes the practices of WWOOF economies. Nevertheless, more conventional approaches that objectify nonhumans also coexist with these in the community.

Slowing down and attuning activities to natural rhythms of light and darkness, bodily rhythms and weather has the potential to promote this attentiveness towards the environment (Rantala, 2018).

Sensory elements affect the WWOOFing experience and provide information about the understanding of concepts developed that goes beyond mere verbal or conceptual knowledge, such as the embodied experience of physical labour, the tactile connection to the soil, the sounds of the natural environment, and the embodied responses to the smells and textures of organic farming. These sensory experiences foster a deeper, more intuitive grasp of ecological processes and sustainability practices that cannot be fully captured through language alone.

However, understanding interconnections is not straightforward or thoroughly achievable through embodied exposure. For instance, soil ecosystems are complex and challenging to “make sense of,” so caring for them involves also speculation and hope, and knowledge of how to care for them is mainly gained through participation in “evolving communities of practice” (Krzywoszynska, 2019a, p. 669). Communities of practice refers to “groups of individuals who share certain practices and who jointly negotiate the meaning of and ascribe value to these practices” (Wenger, 1998, as cited in Krzywoszynska, 2019b, p. 161). Organic farming is one community of practice for WWOOF members, but other communities of practice co-exist, such as regenerative agriculture or the slow travel movement (section 8.3). These evolving communities are not static, they adapt and change as new knowledge and practices emerge, they influence each other and contribute to the wider mosaic of sustainable and ethical practices in both tourism and agriculture.

Knowledge is being produced in these communities, and physical and virtual mobility are essential part of it (chapter 7; section 8.3). WWOOF hosts play a key role in disseminating knowledge about organic farming to WWOOFers, who may be in the information-seeking stage or new to the community of practice (see Krzywoszynska, 2019b). WWOOF hosts can use means such as using analogies to explain complicated concepts and to illustrate the similarities between humans and more-than-human world. They also teach WWOOFers to use their senses to understand and interact with the nonhuman world. However, it is also worth noting that the country of origin of the WWOOFer does affect what the host considers worth communicating; domestic WWOOFers can be educated more about farming, while international WWOOFers can be introduced to local culture (Kosnik, 2014, p. 279).

A natural setting in the WWOOF context where discussions can take place is around shared meals. Previous research has shown that food plays an important role in the formation and development of social relationships (Kosnik, 2014). However, this thesis suggests that food itself can be meaningful in (un)learning perceptions within the WWOOF context. The act of sharing meals not only fosters

social bonds but also creates opportunities for the exchange of ideas about sustainability, self-sufficiency and alternative lifestyles. Moreover, the sensory experiences associated with food, its taste, smell and texture, can also contribute to this process (section 6.2). The agency of food itself could become significant, as the sensory encounters may reinforce or challenge existing values and perceptions. Communities of practice are also “spaces where norms shaping individual behaviour are collectively constructed” (Dolinska & d’Aquino, 2016, as cited in Krzywoszynska, 2019b, p. 161). Unlearning social norms can be an essential part of this process, as the data suggests.

Lack of knowledge of other species, especially insects, can be connected to the discomfort around a broader range of them (Fukano & Soga, 2021). Furthermore, fear of certain species and general aversion to nature, i.e. biophobias, are common and potentially increasing due to urbanisation and decreased interactions with natural environment (Correia & Mammola, 2023). Enhancing interactions with nature could help reduce the prevalence of these fears, promoting a healthier relationship between humans and the natural world (Correia & Mammola, 2023, p. 968). The data of this thesis illustrates cases, where interaction with nonhumans has reduced fear of other species, such as chickens, or eased the discomfort at the presence of insects. The data suggests that embodied experiences with animals and other species allow WWOOFers to make direct encounters that challenge preconceived notions and build confidence to interact with them and tolerate their presence, or perhaps even positioning them as fellows (Valtonen et al., 2020). In addition, guidance and information from WWOOF hosts can be important in the process of reducing fears, as one WWOOFer implies.

When discussing about how knowledge is produced, an important aspect is the approach of individuals. As a WWOOFer, no previous knowledge of agroecological practices is usually required. What is needed, is an attitude that respects the knowledge of the host: dismissive attitude can ultimately be detrimental to the wellbeing of the nonhumans in the farms, as the data illustrates. From a learning point of view, it is therefore essential that the individual implements openness to different ways of “being, doing and knowing together” (Höckert, 2015, p. 5).

The WWOOFing experience has the potential to foster emotional connections between WWOOF hosts and WWOOFers (Deville, 2011). Data from this study suggests that WWOOFing also creates emotional bonds with nonhumans (section 6.3). Whereas in conventional tourism the relationship with the local animals can remain distant and abstract, in the context of WWOOFing the conditions for the formation of deeper emotional bonds can be more favourable with physical closeness and

working with animals. WWOOFers can experience different stages and phases of more-than-human life, which can be strong emotional moments of compassion and empathy. As WWOOFing includes direct interaction with nonhumans, WWOOFers can observe individuality of animals, which was prominent in the data. These immersive moments can lead to higher affective proximity with them. Affective proximity emphasises the care and emotional bonds formed through shared experiences and physical closeness (Tallberg et al., 2022, p. 7).

WWOOFers form emotional connections, affective proximity, with farm animals, with dogs being the most frequently mentioned species. However, the emotional bonding extends beyond dogs to other farm animals such as ducks, llamas, goats, and chickens. These bonds are described with affectionate narratives, highlighting the joy and companionship that these animals provide. Tallberg et al. (2022) have suggested that animals should be considered as key stakeholders in organisations, particularly because of their emotional influence on human behaviour. Furthermore, they suggest that even memories of embodied encounters have action-triggering emotional impacts, which they term affective salience (Tallberg et al., 2022, p. 11). WWOOF narratives of emotional attachment to animals illustrate well how memories of proximate encounters with animals have affected WWOOFers to write positive reviews and experience feelings of wonder and longing. Likewise, the narratives also reveal that these emotional connections can influence the lifestyle, mobility and wellbeing of both WWOOFers and hosts. For example, the account of a city dweller becoming a farm enthusiast due to her affective proximity with llamas underscores how animals can impact on human lives and social dynamics with their affective salience.

In addition to animals, WWOOFers make emotional attachment with places. Comments expressing a desire to return or describing the farm as a place of emotional security indicate that the physical environment of the farm plays a pivotal role in their overall experience. The emotional bonding extends to a broader connection with nature, as WWOOFers frequently mention feeling a sense of unity and harmony with the natural environment. Previous research has found that using nature for psychological restoration can motivate environmentally friendly behaviour, partly through personal concern for the environment (Hartig et al., 2007). Additionally, increased environmental awareness is one outcome of WWOOF experiences (Deville, 2011, p. 290; Deville & Wearing, 2013, p. 161). Emotional attachment to places can encourage a desire to protect local places (Kyle et al, 2004, as cited in Hollenhorst et al., 2014, p. 312). This leads to an interesting dynamic where a place that is potentially far from home is perceived as meaningful and worth protecting, which can be relevant in the era of climate change as its effects are felt differently and with varying intensity in different

places. The narratives in the data also suggest that an emotional bonding with more-than-human nature can enhance pro-environmental behaviour, wherein individuals commit to the implementation of practical, ecologically sustainable solutions in their daily lives.

Kosnik (2014) suggests that food plays a central role in the negotiation of relationships between WWOOF participants, and the boundaries and power relations associated with the exchange. In her research, she found that, for example, WWOOFers may experience feelings of exploitation if the quantity and quality of food provided is inadequate. WWOOFers may then begin to reduce their work effort or even leave earlier than they had originally planned (Kosnik, 2014, p. 234). The data in this thesis also indicates that food plays a central role in fostering emotional bonds and shaping understandings within the WWOOF community, highlighting the affective agency of food produce. Indeed, WWOOFing can increase appreciation of organic produce (Dewille, 2011, p. 385). The act of growing and eating food in a WWOOF community can be a collective, relational practice that not only connects individuals to each other and more-than-human beings, such as places, and provides an arena for discussions about social change, but also impacts on (un)learning assumptions and norms.

In conclusion, the multispecies encounters within the WWOOFing experience shape not only the immediate atmospheres but also the broader economy of practices and relations that define these communities. Sensory experiences are fundamental to this process, creating a deeper connection between WWOOFers, hosts, animals, landscapes, and the food systems they engage with. The atmospheres within WWOOFing, influenced by multispecies interactions, storytelling, and the practice of co-creating spaces, contribute to experiences of becoming with. These affective engagements have the potential to reshape individuals' perspectives on food production, animal care, and environmental care, encouraging sustainable lifestyles. The affective proximity fostered through embodied interactions with more-than-humans emphasises the importance of emotional bonds in shaping sustainable behaviours, ethical practices, and communal resilience.

As the data demonstrates, the creation of multispecies livelihoods within WWOOFing is not without its challenges, as moments of discomfort and vulnerability present opportunities for growth, (un)learning, adaptation, and negotiating. Ultimately, WWOOFing becomes a space where participants can navigate the complexities and ethical dilemmas of multispecies worlds.

8.3 Mobilities in the symposium

WWOOF provides an alternative to the commodified holiday experience (e.g. Deville et al., 2016b), with qualities associated with slow tourism, such as reducing pace of activities, making conscious decisions, and engaging with people and places (Guiver & McGrath, 2016). Slow travel is also entangled with the slow food movement emphasising local food and sustainable farming (e.g. Germann Molz, 2009). It is therefore not surprising that many stories tend to describe the ideal length of stay as long, as longer stays are encouraged by the slow travel movement when travelling long distances (Caffyn, 2012, p. 77). The argument is that tourists will travel less if they stay longer in a destination, reducing the number of flights they take and their greenhouse gas emissions. Many narratives from hosts and WWOOFers emphasise staying long as a positive quality. Deville (2011, p. 388) has noted that the longer a WWOOFer stays, the more engaged the exchange is likely to be. Engagement is essential because it fosters mutual benefit: it enhances the achievement of mutual and individual goals, reduces power imbalances and increases trust and reciprocity in the WWOOFing experience (Deville, 2011).

However, the data reveals that day guests or weekend guests are also welcomed by some hosts. The history of WWOOF organisations started with the idea of shorter stays – spending weekends on the farms (WWOOF UK), and these kinds of shorter dwellings are still part of WWOOF context. The advantage of one-day visits for farmers is that they do not need to have the accommodation infrastructure to welcome visitors (WWOOF Help Center). Engagement can form in shorter encounters as well, for example when participating in an action for several times: in food collectives, participants can build on-going relationships with each other by connecting on regular basis (see Kallio, 2020, p. 1103). But WWOOF may not be the ideal network for fostering localised, repeated interactions, as the organisations have focus on international and national mobility. Perhaps the question is not in the continuity of encounters: the relevant question could be, how to enhance the engagement in shorter dwellings. Deville (2011, p. 388) has argued that random acts of kindness are essential in the early stages of getting to know the other WWOOF party, as they strengthen affective bonds, increase the level of interpersonal engagement and can positively prolong the exchange. While the extension of the length of the exchange may not be important to all the participants, Deville's proposal of unilateral giving is interesting. For him, unilateral giving highlights the significance of small, spontaneous gestures that can cultivate a sense of belonging, such as offering extra assistance or sharing a meal. Such gestures can serve as a gateway for meaningful engagement, regardless of the duration of the stay.

For Haraway (2008, p. 20), engagement with others is about learning to pay attention to and become curious about other ways of "doing, feeling, thinking, or perhaps making available to" others. Engagement is not only about the amount of time spent together, but also about the quality of attention and curiosity that each participant brings to the encounter. Ultimately, by embracing the principles of kindness, reciprocity, curiosity, and attentiveness, WWOOFing could provide meaningful engagement even in brief encounters. In this context, engagement becomes less about the length of the stay and more about the depth of the interaction. These shorter encounters, which can still be significant, should not therefore be underestimated or ignored. Exploring these shorter interactions could provide valuable insights into the dynamics of WWOOF encounters and tourism encounters in general and would require further research.

The variation in the length of stay, from brief visits of a few days to extended stays of several months, draw attention to the flexibility and diversity inherent in the WWOOF sympoiesis. The interplay between long-term and short-term stays demonstrates the ability to respond to different types of needs and conditions. The versatility ensures that hosts can receive the help they need when they need it most, aligning labour supply with diverse rhythms of nature and project-specific requirements. At the same time, this diversity and flexibility allows travellers to tailor their WWOOF experience to suit their own schedules, making it accessible to a wider range of participants and travel styles, regardless of their time constraints.

The data from this thesis suggests that travelling to a foreign country and culture is preferred by many WWOOFers. This is consistent with previous research suggesting that many WWOOFers are motivated by the desire to experience different cultures and landscapes in foreign countries, and that interest in an organic lifestyle comes after the touristic motives, if at all (Deville, 2011; Deville et al., 2016a; 2016b, p. 99; McIntosh & Bonneman, 2006, p. 93; Terry, 2014, p. 96). Nevertheless, previous research has shown that WWOOF representatives have preferred to separate WWOOF from tourism (Dana, 2012; Ord, 2010, as cited in Wengel et al., 2018, p. 47), ignoring the global networks and mobility-based entry points that WWOOF organisations have today. The reason probably lies in WWOOF's origins and its early mission, which aimed to provide urban dwellers with opportunities to experience rural life and support lifestyles connected to organic farming and sustainable living (WWOOF UK). However, times have changed, and with the rise of international travel and the expansion of the WWOOF network into a global sympoiesis, the motivations of WWOOFers have become increasingly intertwined with those of contemporary tourists. Deville et al. (2016a, p. 424) suggest that the rise of alternative, new and postmodern forms of tourism as a

counterpart of mass tourism suggests that larger historical and social changes are affecting many of those choosing WWOOF. Consequently, many may now see WWOOFing as a form of cultural exchange and “living like a local,” an alternative to mass tourism, not just rural living.

However, the critical analysis in the context of slow travel movement has brought out the risk of essentialising and immobilising local cultures (Germann Molz, 2009). The process of essentialising and immobilising local cultures can create a dynamic in which local people are asked “to play along” in a “slow motion drama” that accommodates more to the travellers’ quest for self-actualisation rather than to the genuine needs and realities of the host communities (Germann Molz, 2009, p. 281). The emphasis on the traveller’s quest for self-realisation can shift the focus from meaningful exchange to a more transactional interaction, reflected in the commodified space of the WWOOF context (Deville et al., 2016a). Once again, it is the approach that matters, emphasising the hospitable attitude towards others and recalling the concepts of team subjectivity and becoming with others.

From the perspective of growth-critical thinking, there is an emphasis on finding alternative ways to manage tourism, focusing on limiting the growth of tourism consumption (e.g. Hall, 2009; Lundmark et al., 2021). In this context, lifestyle entrepreneurs who organise nature tourism are often seen as small business operators whose activities are driven by a passion for sharing practical skills and caring for nature (Cederholm et al. 2021; Margaryan et al. 2021). In the context of WWOOF, hosts are like lifestyle entrepreneurs, motivated partly by the same things as small-scale nature tourism operators; sharing knowledge, skills and values (see Deville 2015). However, WWOOF hosts can also be seen as consumers of tourism experiences enabled by their guests. While WWOOFers may travel long distances to engage in farm activities, the hosts themselves often have limited opportunities to travel far from home. However, they still experience cultural exchange in their everyday environment, as the presence of WWOOFers introduces an element of otherness into their lives (see also Deville, 2011; Deville, 2015; Lai et al. 2020, p. 1977). Experiencing otherness in mundane settings is rooted on the chance of confronting the unknown or unexpected, approached with wonder (Salmela et al., 2021, p. 54). In other words, it is the perspective that matters when encountering strangers.

Even WWOOFers don't have to search for tourist experiences in distant countries. Not all WWOOFers are interested in travelling abroad, they are looking for new experiences closer to home. This type of approach can be linked to a tourism perspective in which “experiences of

wonder and adventure” are not limited to distant places (Hollenhorst et al., 2014, p. 314). Curiosity is fundamental to this approach (Salmela et al., 2021). In the case study from the material, one WWOOFer expressed a desire to experience rural life, reflecting the original motivations of the WWOOF ideology and discovering adventure and wonder nearby. Hollenhorst et al. (2014) have argued that breaking the oil dependency, which generates the majority of tourism’s carbon emissions, is only possible if local places are seen as worthy of our wonder and respect as distant ones. Since WWOOFing inherently offers a variety of elements of the tourist experience (section 5.2), it can serve as an attractive alternative to long-distance travel. Moreover, travelling near can also be linked to the concept of stillness as a form of political resistance to the hegemony of mobility in tourism, and by extension, to the dominance of the prevailing economic system in tourism (Germann Molz, 2009). Tourism urgently needs such a paradigm shift in its understanding and practice amid planetary crises (Rantala, Höckert et al., 2024). However, this type of approach seems currently underrepresented in the WWOOF symposiums.

While it has been recognised that WWOOFers provide company to hosts in remote areas (Wengel et al., 2018, p. 52), the impact of visiting day guests has received less attention. By examining other forms of short-distance mobility in the data from this paper, it becomes clear how the flow of day visitors can create a vibrant community atmosphere even in remote areas where social interactions may otherwise be limited. In addition, from the perspective of several farmers, the visits of local guests and customers ensure quality control, eliminating the need for expensive and complex certifications. This reflection could be extended to explore how local engagement in WWOOF environments can participate to shaping the local food systems, but this topic is beyond the limits of this thesis.

Nonhumans play their part in the performativity of tourism, influencing on experiences and behaviours. So, they also guide and affect the movement and actions of tourists (Jóhannesson & Lund, 2017). WWOOFers are attracted to a variety of nonhumans, such as whales or certain horse breeds, reflecting their affective contribution in constructing tourism destinations (Ren, 2011). This influences the overall choice of WWOOF destination and therefore the mobility of WWOOFers. Those involved in agricultural practices, such as cheese-making or beekeeping, are also important nonhuman actors in the context of WWOOF. For example, a WWOOFer may choose to visit a farm that is specifically engaged in viticulture. These nonhuman actors, whether animals or agricultural products, shape not only the decision process of the destination but also the daily practices and routines of WWOOFers.

Participants may find themselves moving livestock, planting crops, or even transporting produce to markets, all of which are patterns of mobility in the agricultural practices affected by these nonhuman actors. WWOOFers also engage in managing the mobility of nonhumans, such as by removing invasive species or facilitating the spread of desired plants, which further highlights the shared nature of worldmaking. Previous research has shown, for example, that the intensity of labour resulting from the vitality of weeds provides the basis for ethical negotiations about weeding (Savinotko, 2022, p. 74). In the context of WWOOFing, this may be reflected, for example, in negotiations about how much weeding can be included in the WWOOFers' tasks, as they also want variability in their tasks (section 5.2). Additionally, the need to carry specific materials or supplies, such as food, water or work clothes, reflects how materiality plays a role in WWOOF mobility, as WWOOFers must navigate the negotiations inherent in their journey. Material considerations can be an essential part of the planning process and the experience, requiring flexibility and adaptability, but they are less explored in the context of WWOOF.

While specific farm activities or products, such as cheese or wine production, may influence the final decision, the website infrastructure requires WWOOFers to first select a country before filtering options based on these practices. In addition, the nonhuman actors presented in the selection process are themselves selected by the WWOOF representatives. Despite the initial limitations imposed by the structure of the website, the platform does eventually enable nonhuman actors to influence in the final choice of destination. This highlights how the affective agency of more-than-human actors is both shaped and constrained by the digital infrastructure.

The role of virtual infrastructure cannot be overstated. Internet connectivity enables the initial matching of WWOOFers and hosts, supports remote working and allows participants to maintain social connections while engaging in WWOOF practices. A stable internet connection can make rural and isolated areas more accessible. In this sense, the digital dimension of mobility intertwines with the physical, as the ability to stay connected virtually can influence the choice of destination. Digital devices therefore play a contradictory role in WWOOF experiences, as the absence of digital connectivity is considered an essential part of the restorative atmospheres (section 6.1). This duality highlights the tension between the desire for digital disconnection and the practical benefits of remaining connected.

The emotional bonds created within the WWOOF community have an impact on mobility. These emotional connections, forged through interactions with other people in the WWOOF network, may

influence where individuals choose to travel, stay or return to, based on their relationships and experiences within the community. While the direct impact of emotional ties to nonhuman actors, such as landscapes or animals, on mobility is less clear from the data, it is reasonable to consider that the affective salience (Tallberg et al., 2022, p. 11) of nonhumans could similarly impact on travel decisions and mobility patterns.

Whereas the section 6.2 focused on *how* knowledge perceptions, and skills are produced in WWOOF practices, section 7.2 focused on *what* knowledge, perceptions, and skills are being produced and transferred. Through practical participation, WWOOFers learn skills such as gardening, preserving, cooking, crafts, and, at times, about resilience methods and agricultural business management. These skills are valuable because they can be applied in a variety of ways to one's home environment, even without the possibility to grow food. For example, techniques of preserving raw ingredients and cooking fresh produce can largely be applied to the products from local sources.

In a sustainable food system, it is not sufficient to possess the knowledge required to cultivate and preserve food. It is also necessary to be able to utilise the produce (Ericksen, 2008, p. 240), although the social sphere of utilising food is scarcely studied in the literature on sustainable diets (Jones et al., 2016). The development of culinary skills becomes particularly important when aiming to promote sustainable eating habits, as they enable individuals to transform raw ingredients into appealing meals. These skills make sustainable and healthy food more accessible to individuals, given that “the best way to facilitate a shift from using convenience products towards basic ingredient cooking, points in the direction of teaching basic cooking and food skills” (Lavelle et al., 2016, p. 389). The potential of WWOOFing practices of transferring food skills seems even more significant, when considering the phenomenon of culinary deskilling perceived in some Western countries (Caraher et al., 1999; Slater, 2013). In addition, the issue of culinary deskilling may be more widespread across cultures, where the prevalence of obesity has become a substantial concern, as the increased use of convenience foods is linked to this phenomenon (Slater, 2013).

The WWOOF community facilitates the dissemination of practical skills related to self-sufficiency, such as construction, handicrafts and the use of available natural resources for daily sustenance. WWOOFers learn to make use of these resources and gain valuable knowledge of self-sufficiency beyond the boundaries of mainstream education. Importantly, as previous research has noted, the learning of self-sufficiency skills is not a one-way process from host to WWOOFer; rather,

WWOOFers may bring with them specific skills, such as construction techniques, that the hosts themselves can learn (Terry, 2014, p. 103). The acquisition of self-sufficiency skills by both WWOOFers and hosts provides an opportunity to explore alternative forms of economic activity, thereby reducing the dependence on neoliberal capitalist patterns of production and consumption.

Additionally, if the knowledge of financial management and sustainable small-scale farming practices is incorporated into this skill set, it could empower individuals to build resilience as future entrepreneurs. Drawing on the insights of Tsing (2015), such resilience is not about thriving in a stable, predictable world, but about surviving in a landscape characterised by precarity and uncertainty. In this context, the skills and knowledge gained through WWOOFing can help individuals develop the adaptability and creativity needed to function in settings where economic stability may not be viable, such as small-scale farming.

Among the niche practices observable in the WWOOF context, nonviolent communication (NVC) emerges as particularly relevant in today's context, where global polarisation of values threatens the stability of democracies (e.g. McCoy & Somer, 2021). In the context of WWOOF, where exchanges often take place between urban WWOOFers and rural hosts, the growing divergence in values between urban and rural populations, particularly in high-income regions, becomes particularly relevant (Luca et al., 2023). In this setting, the practice of nonviolent communication holds significant potential for fostering meaningful dialogue between differing values (e.g. Williams et al., 2021).

Even where NVC is not explicitly practised, WWOOF exchanges inherently involve a commitment to interpersonal engagement with strangers (Deville, 2011; section 8.1). This commitment fosters a setting where people from diverse backgrounds find themselves in situations where ideas and values are shared in a spirit of hospitality. Indeed, previous research has shown that a WWOOF exchange can produce a more open and trusting attitude towards other people (Deville & Wearing, 2013, p. 161) among with increased communication skills (Deville, 2011, p. 214). As Tsing (2015, p. 29) argues, collaboration, working together despite differences, changes us and therefore enhances diversity. Simplification, which is at the heart of polarisation (McCoy & Somer, 2021), is then challenged by the diversity of viewpoints.

Many WWOOF hosts actively seek to mobilise social change (Deville, 2015, p. 148; Mostafanezhad, 2016). The failure of markets and governments to adequately address social and

environmental values can motivate farmers to explore alternative ways of making a difference (Lai et al., 2020, p. 1976). In this context, WWOOFing emerges as a means of promoting change. Through participation in the WWOOF network, individuals are encouraged to critically examine the social norms they have internalised within the industrial food systems. These norms, which may have previously gone unquestioned, are brought into focus, allowing individuals to question and challenge the ideas and practices to which they have become accustomed. The process of engaging with alternative farming practices and lifestyles within the WWOOF community can lead to a deeper appreciation of organic production and the values held by farmers who operate outside the industrial framework (Deville & Wearing, 2013, p. 161). This increased awareness and appreciation not only promotes personal transformation (Deville & Wearing, 2013), but also has the potential to contribute to wider societal change (Terry, 2014, p. 105).

WWOOFers gain insights into ecosystems and interdependence through experiential learning, which can significantly influence their sense of environmental responsibility (Deville & Wearing, 2013, p. 161; Terry, 2014, p. 105). This raises questions about those WWOOFers who may not initially be interested in organic farming but are motivated by cheaper form of holiday (see Deville et al., 2016a). In the context of Norwegian nature tourism, Hartig et al. (2007) concluded that using nature for restoration can lead to heightened ecological behaviour. This suggests that the restorative atmospheres of WWOOF farms (see section 8.2) might also promote ecological responsibility among travellers whose primary interest lies in affordable vacations and local culture rather than environmental concerns. However, from the perspective of the WWOOF host, this possibility presents challenges and potential inequities. If a guest approaches the exchange primarily as a cheap accommodation option, this can lead to the neglect of practices that are essential to the sustainability and livelihood of the farm (see Wengel et al., 2018, p. 50).

In conclusion, WWOOF is intertwined with tourism trends by integrating the values of the slow travel movement, such as a slower pace of travel and a more conscious approach to engaging with local communities. In this context, other sustainable tourism trends are also possible, such as proximity tourism, where curiosity can open opportunities to experience “otherness” even in geographically close surroundings. WWOOF therefore serves as an inspiring space where ethical discussions in tourism encounter ethical discussions in agriculture. WWOOF functions as a form of symposium where diverse practices, with an emphasis on ethical approaches to people, places and companion species, come together and shape each other. Therefore, WWOOF plays a role in building knowledge across different communities of practice, facilitating the exchange of skills and

values related to organic farming, healthy diets, sustainable tourism and diverse economic activities. It also contributes to environmentally conscious behaviour. WWOOF also has the potential to promote a culture of constructive dialogue.

9. CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to explore the livelihoods of both human and nonhuman participants in the Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farming (WWOOF). The main research question is: How can tourism enhance multispecies livelihoods in culinary sympoiesis? Sub-questions focus on how WWOOF members relate their practices to conventional categories of the economy, how WWOOF experiences and practices are shaped by multispecies encounters, and how does the WWOOF sympoiesis manifest from a tourism perspective. Methodologically, the study uses a narrative approach and theory-guided content analysis. The analysis examines economic diversity and multispecies relations to bring marginalised actors and economic arrangements to the fore.

The string figures of WWOOF sympoiesis highlight how family-style hospitality, with flexibility and openness to the unexpected, operates in the community as a framework for economic exchange, requesting for more horizontal and democratic power dynamics than in neoliberal capitalist arrangements (Ávila-Romero, 2018, p. 87). Social, experiential and empowering qualities are valued over monetary gain in these economic exchanges, emphasising “a caring, curious and sensitive orientation” (Rantala, Höckert et al., 2024, p. 1) towards others as a guiding ethos. The aesthetics of WWOOF centres on the recreational atmospheres together with nonhuman entities, and the absence of some, such as digital devices. In these restorative settings, the bodily encounters between humans, plants, animals, and other beings have the potential to reshape individuals’ assumptions and perspectives on food production and the distant “others” who are easily made invisible in neoliberal production chains (see Gibson-Graham et al., 2013). Thus, the context of WWOOF at least enables staying with the troubles as an ethical practice (see Haraway 2016).

WWOOF provides a fruitful platform for sustainable tourism and sustainable food systems to become with each other, as it provides a space for different communities of practice to collaborate. It participates to the mobility of skills and values related to food production and consumption, self-sufficiency, pro-environmental performance, and diversifying debates. Additionally, WWOOFing currently focuses on globality and cultural exchange, therefore promoting global mobility and the high carbon emissions associated with it (Hollenhorst et al., 2014). However, it also offers opportunities for slow tourism, including travel by land, and it includes potential to experience “otherness” while travelling nearby.

In this study, WWOOF emerges as a form of tourism that allows participants to engage with the everyday practices of local culinary systems, in line with the observation by Sage et al. (2021, p. 3) that a sustainable culinary future requires a commitment to local action. This aspect also distinguishes it from other forms of volunteer tourism.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the WWOOFing is its resistance to dualistic definitions and categorisations. The narratives shared by WWOOF participants often blur traditionally opposing concepts, such as work and leisure, stranger and family member, food production and consumption, dwelling and visiting, enchanting and uncomfortable, or even alternative and commodified. This blurring creates simultaneous and overlapping meanings, challenging conventional ways of understanding these practices.

This thesis contributes to the study of WWOOF, tourism and culinary systems by integrating multispecies entanglements into these discussions. By exploring the context of WWOOF, this research highlights that the practices, experiences, and mobilities that emerge within this community are not solely human driven, but rather the outcomes of complex interactions involving nonhumans and material processes. This approach enriches our understanding of how more-than-human actors contribute to shaping practices, experiences, knowledge and mobility within WWOOFing and communities of practice, that are intertwined with it.

In addition, while previous studies have often focused on the transformative potential of WWOOFing through the lens of rapid and profound change, this thesis shifts the focus to slower, more subtle processes of “becoming with” and “affecting”. These concepts emphasise the gradual and relational nature of change and provide a nuanced view of how participants in the WWOOF community change alongside the environments and nonhumans with whom they engage. This perspective not only deepens our understanding of WWOOFing, but also contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism and culinary systems by challenging dominant narratives that prioritise immediate and intense change.

Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of nonhuman actors in co-creating atmospheres favourable to rest, relaxation, and wonder, but also encourages to encounter feelings of discomfort, which open a space for change. The involvement of more-than-humans in these processes not only affect to outcomes of the WWOOF experience, but also points to broader suggestions for the development of tourism and hospitality. By recognising the affective role of more-than-human

actors, we can better appreciate the complex, interconnected systems that make up our agricultural and tourism landscapes and consider how these systems can be harnessed to support a future in which species can co-exist well with each other.

The objective of this thesis is not to offer moral lessons or to establish dualistic divisions between good and bad, as these are not a good foundation for collaboration and mutual care (Höckert, 2020). Instead, the study acknowledges the complexities and nuances inherent in the multispecies encounters and alternative economic practices within the WWOOF network. For example, in exploring multispecies interactions, this study does not avoid discussing the unpleasant sensations, sensory discomfort and ambivalence that participants may experience. Similarly, the exploration of mobility in the context of WWOOF highlights the different perspectives on length of stay and distance travelled. Moreover, it is not my intention to present definitive solutions regarding the implementation of sustainable tourism and associated culinary systems. In contrast, it is necessary “to complicate, tease out nuances, speculate, and hesitate” (Höckert, 2020, p. 66). While my work highlights the ideals, values and “sense of wonder” that emerge from the data, I have also sought to counterbalance this by acknowledging the complexities, contradictions and challenges that emerge.

The study identifies ways to assess the value of diverse culinary systems within tourism on a broader scale, and to explore potential new approaches in different settings. It offers insights for future sustainable tourism planning and contributes to the wider discussion of the tourism economy as a political, social and ecological practice. Culinary systems in tourism could increase the contribution that tourists make to local development. In this perspective, tourism is not just about culinary experiences. Tourists can be seen as more-than-clients, as co-creators of favourable change in tourist sites and local culinary systems, as in WWOOF (Moscardo, 2008, p. 9, as cited in Deville et al., 2016a, p. 427). This can involve not only financial contributions from tourists but also other transactions through which “growth of a different sort” can be produced (see Gibson-Graham et al., 2013, p. 174). This thesis encourages to imagine new possibilities where tourists could participate in activities such as harvesting or other agricultural work on a local farm, and in return receive, for example, practical lessons on how to turn these raw ingredients into tasty meals. In this way, tourists can have a “live-like-a-local” experience while actively contributing to the production of the food they consume on site.

In tourism development work, more attention should be paid to these types of economic dynamics, the impacts of which can be difficult to detect initially due to difficulties in measurability (Brouder,

2018). My study brings to light some of these subtle outcomes that can be pursued and sometimes achieved through non-capitalist arrangements, and furthermore demonstrates their potential to contribute to response-able tourism practices. Furthermore, this thesis encourages consideration of how tourism can promote the principles of reciprocity, curiosity, attentiveness and kindness among individuals, communities, cultures and species. In examining WWOOF, one aspect that appears to promote these principles is the presence of low-hierarchy systems where power dynamics are as equitable as possible and where engagement with others is valued high.

The thesis calls for greater attention to the sensory environments of tourism, encouraging the development of opportunities for embodied encounters with other species, including those conventionally considered uncomfortable, such as insects. It also calls for consideration of how to facilitate “becoming-with landscapes” in tourism to promote a more-than-representational understanding of rural and tourism landscapes. This thesis suggests a participatory approach in which guests could have an active role in shaping agricultural landscapes with the guidance of farmers. Another question is whether this participatory approach is applicable to other landscapes in tourism.

In addition, the study encourages the tourism industry to consider how slow tourism can be flexibly supported in accordance with the needs of different stakeholders and the rhythms and patterns of nature. It also invites reflection on how nonhuman actors, such as food and related practices, are part of mobility systems and tourism development. Furthermore, the study proposes at rethinking tourism by considering local environments as tourist destinations and invites individuals and regional developers to cultivate curiosity towards community gardens and other local food production sites as recreational spaces.

In line with Gibson-Graham’s (2008) suggestion that academics have a responsibility to take the performativity of their practice into account, this thesis consciously contributes to a representation of tourism and food systems that emphasises the viability and significance of non-capitalist economic practices. By highlighting the diverse economies and multispecies livelihoods within the WWOOF network, my research challenges the dominant narrative that prioritises capitalist frameworks as the only viable economic model. Instead, it gives visibility to alternative practices that are often marginalised or overlooked and demonstrates their potential to foster surviving well (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013) in multispecies sympoiesis on a damaged planet (Haraway, 2016).

Through this representation, I seek to make these alternative practices “more real” and accessible, advocating for their consideration in both academic research and practical tourism development.

Posthumanist research seeks to shift the focus away from human-centred perspectives to include more-than-human actors by examining the circumstances under which something new is produced (Guia & Jamal, 2020, p. 3). The study addresses this by investigating the multispecies entanglements and affects in the practices that characterise the WWOOF experience. However, while the research offers valuable insights into the co-creation of practices within the WWOOF community, the complexity and dynamic nature of these processes mean that any conclusions drawn are, by necessity, approximations rather than definitive truths (Guia & Jamal, 2020, p 3).

Despite the breadth of the data collected, it is important to acknowledge that the study does not fully capture the diversity of the WWOOF community and its nuances. The WWOOF network is vast and varied, encompassing a wide range of experiences, practices, and cultural contexts. As such, no study can claim to represent the entire spectrum of the WWOOF community. The research provides a valuable picture, but it is also important to recognise that certain voices and perspectives may be underrepresented. The study largely relies on narratives from WWOOFers who write reviews and WWOOF hosts who describe their activities in a variety of ways, which may introduce bias. This limitation highlights the need for alternative methods of data collection that can better capture the experiences of those who are less willing to express their thoughts by writing within the community. Future research could explore ways to reach these voices through ethnography and anonymised in-depth interviews, for example.

While the concept of culinary sympoiesis captures the open, historical, and evolving nature of the WWOOF community, there is a risk of oversimplifying the diverse and localised food systems that exist within it. As Haraway (2016) notes, "string figures are not everywhere the same game," suggesting that the practices and meanings associated with WWOOFing in one setting may not directly translate to another. Similarly, the concept of livelihoods often refers to more localised, context-specific dynamics (Miller & Gibson-Graham, 2019), which may be obscured by the broader approach taken in this study. Future research would benefit from a more situated approach, exploring how, for example, meanings, temporal layers and material conditions (Kinnunen, et al., 2023) affect these practices at a local level.

The narrative methodology employed in this research was instrumental in capturing and understanding the experiences and practices of the WWOOF community members. The narrative lens provided valuable insights into the values, perceptions, and ideals that participants bring into the WWOOF exchange. One strength of the narrative methodology is its capacity to uncover the multiplicity of voices and perspectives within the community, offering a rich, layered understanding. However, it cannot fully account for the material and embodied dimensions of these interactions. This is where an ethnographic approach could have provided additional depth. The use of ethnography, with its emphasis on participant observation and immersion in the field, could have offered a more comprehensive view of the affective and embodied experiences of WWOOFing. A more detailed exploration of affective atmospheres and the embodied responses of participants could reveal how these experiences shape perceptions and influence behaviour in ways that are not always articulated in narrative form.

As this thesis draws to a close, it is evident that the exploration of the WWOOF context has only begun to uncover the complexities of this global movement. This thesis opens several avenues for further investigation, highlighting the rich potential for future studies to delve deeper into specific aspects of WWOOF and its broader implications. As the movement grows, further study is required to examine the commodification of WWOOFing (Deville et al., 2016a). Investigating the experiences of individuals who engage with WWOOF primarily for commercial reasons could reveal how their attitudes and practices change, if they change, through their participation. Additionally, research could explore strategies to prevent the commodification of WWOOF while maintaining its ethical foundations. One promising area for future research is the role of affects in (re)producing these commodified structures. Understanding how emotions and affective experiences contribute to shaping these dynamics could provide valuable insights into the development of WWOOFing and the overall intersection of culinary systems and tourism.

Another important area for further research is the influence of climatic atmospheres on the WWOOF experience. Climatic atmospheres recognise the entanglement of climatic and affective processes (Verlie, 2019). For example, future studies could examine how affects contribute to the normalisation of practices that impact climate change in WWOOFing, such as long-distance mobility, which can contribute to increasing the carbon emissions, accelerating climate change (Hollenhorst et al., 2014) and further threatening global food security (Mbow et al., 2019).

The potential of WWOOF to facilitate mobility of values, knowledge, and perceptions, together with fostering dialogue between differing value systems is another critical area for future research. While this thesis touched on the “becoming with” experiences of WWOOFers and WWOOF hosts, more focused research could examine whether and how WWOOF exchanges truly open opportunities for meaningful dialogue across polarised worldviews, or are political topics avoided in the dinner table conversations. This line of inquiry is particularly relevant in the context of growing political polarisation, as it could reveal the potential of the intersection of tourism and culinary practices to contribute to democratic engagement and social cohesion.

While WWOOFing is often associated with rural settings, there is a growing need to explore WWOOF practices in urban and suburban environments. Future research could investigate the unique challenges and opportunities presented by urban and suburban WWOOF farms. This could include examining how urban WWOOFing practices contribute to food security, community building, and the reimagining of urban spaces as sites of sustainable food production.

Finally, the sensory experiences of fear and discomfort related to other species deserve more attention within the WWOOF context and culinary discourse more broadly. Future research could explore how these emotions shape participants’ experiences and interactions with the more-than-human world, offering insights into the challenges of fostering multispecies coexistence. Understanding these dynamics could contribute to broader discussions on how to create more inclusive culinary systems that recognise the importance of all species involved.

To conclude, WWOOFing offers a form of resistance to the dominant power/knowledge formations maintained by the business of tourism (Deville et al., 2016a, p. 423). WWOOF serves as an example of how active citizenship can contribute to the creation of more sustainable and just food utopias through tourism, aligning with the notion that moving toward such futures requires collective participation and the willingness to embrace alternative ways of living and engaging in affective encounters with human and nonhuman others. I would like to end this thesis with a quote that illustrates the essence of the successful WWOOF exchanges so well:

WWOOFing rocks! Sharing living and working spaces, landscapes for which the protection and care of those who live there are just as important as the fruitful contribution of those who pass by, linger and go. Having frequent opportunities to celebrate arrivals or departures, being in the flow of life and friendships that are born and leave traces, opening up to change and to another perception of space and time. Growing. (Claudio, founder of WWOOF Italy)

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