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Sustainable Consumption and the Shaping of Social Practices in the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair: A Case Study

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Content

List of Acronyms

ACABYE: Asociación Colombiana de la Agricultura Biológica y Ecodesarrollo **(**Colombian Association of Biological Agriculture and Ecodevelopment)

CIPAV: Centro para la investigación en sistemas sostenibles de producción agropecuaria (Center for Research in Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems)

FAU: Feria Agroecológica UNIMINUTO (UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair)

ICA: Colombian Agricultural Institute

IDEA: Institute of Environmental Studies of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia

IMCA: Instituto Mayor Campesino (Institute for Advanced Peasant Studies)

MAYDA: Group Environment and Development

RedAE: Ecological Agriculture Network

RMABR: Red de Mercados Agroecológicos de Bogotá (Bogotá Agroecological Markets Network)

SOCLA: Colombian Scientific Society of Agroecology

Abstract

This research examines the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair, a prominent example of solidarity economy and sustainable consumption in Bogotá, Colombia. Employing a social practice theory lens and semi-structured interviews with ten frequent attendees, this study identifies key consumer motivations, including support for local producers, product quality, health benefits, knowledge acquisition, and the overall fair experience. While the fair has successfully fostered these aspects, challenges related to product pricing and accessibility emerged.

This study contributes to closing the gap between social practices and agroecology by exploring how these concepts intertwine to shape consumer behaviours.

Key words: agroecology, agroecological university fairs, social practices, consumption, sustainable consumption, Bogota, Colombia, global south, Uniminuto, Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios

Word Count: 14.904

1. Introduction

There are three ways to understand agroecology: as a science, a practice, and a social movement (Wezel *et al.*, 2009; Acevedo-Osorio and Chohan, 2020). In its scientific capacity, agroecology examines and makes an effort to understand how agroecosystems function, emphasising the linkages, mechanisms, and biological, biophysical, ecological, social, cultural, historical, and political aspects of these systems (Rosset and Altieri, 2017). By using ecological principles and concepts, agroecology as a practice highlights potential technical changes in the planning and administration of agroecosystems. This viewpoint evolved from the fields of ethnobotany, agronomy, and ecology (Acevedo-Osorio and Chohan, 2020). These disciplines offer a viable substitute for industrial agriculture since they value traditional knowledge and practices and provide the means to adapt to a variety of environmental circumstances (Acevedo-Osorio and Chohan, 2020). Lastly, the aim of agroecology as a movement is to improve the ecological and social justice of farming, which have their roots in agrarian social theory and organisations that emerged in opposition to rural industrialization (Rosset and Altieri, 2017).

The global food system, dominated by large corporations, has led to standardised diets and growing concerns over food safety and sustainability. In response, alternative food networks have emerged, prioritising direct producer-consumer relationships and sustainable practices. These networks emphasise local production, community well-being, and healthier food options. By shortening the supply chain, they aim to rebuild trust and create a fairer food system. Incorporating agroecological, family, and community-based farming methods, these networks contribute to environmental, social, and economic benefits (Aranda *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, various actors participate in these initiatives, with universities playing a crucial role in research, support, and knowledge exchange benefits (Aranda *et al.*, 2021).

In Bogotá, Colombia, the Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios agroecological fair exemplifies a platform for knowledge exchange. Such fairs encourage people to eat a better, more conscientious, and pesticide-free diet, making them genuine advocates of food sovereignty. Therefore, they constitute one of the numerous effective means of accomplishing the second of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the United Nations (UN), which is to end hunger and guarantee that everyone, especially the elderly and young, has access to a healthy, balanced, and varied diet (Contreras, 2020).

Additionally, by promoting alternative exchange channels where its tenets—agroecology, solidarity economy, sustainable consumption, fair trade, local economies and short marketing circuits, food sovereignty, and radical democracy—the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair aims to support the sustainability of the agri-food system (Chaparro and Naranjo, 2021).

The agroecological fair organised by the Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios offers a compelling case study for examining consumer behaviour and its connection to sustainable consumption initiatives and the creation of new practices. In this context, this paper aims to address the following questions:

- What are the main motivations that lead regular consumers of the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair in Bogotá to attend and buy at the fair?

- What are the main barriers that prevent the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair in Bogotá from attracting new consumers?

- How the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair contributes to the principle of sustainable consumption?

2. Background

Guzmán, Molina, and Guzmán (2000) define agriculture as the transformation of natural resources to produce food. They distinguish between two perspectives of agriculture: one as a traditional way of life and the other as a profit-driven enterprise. In the traditional view, agriculture considers the intricate processes of replenishing resources and social and ecological reproduction, influenced by a worldview that emphasises the responsible management of natural resources and their ethical implications. Conversely, commercial agriculture tends to overlook the natural cycles of agrosystems, relying on the belief that scientific advancements can resolve any challenges. This transition from traditional to industrialised agriculture is attributed to the gradual replacement of internal energy and materials replenishment with industrial acquisition of external resources (Guzmán, Molina and Guzmán, 2000).

As mentioned before, this shift resulted in a type of agriculture that relies heavily on external inputs (pesticides, synthetic fertilisers, and high-yield potential seeds) as well as capital

(tractors and high-productivity gear). And it started to be known as industrial agriculture, high-yield agriculture, high-input agriculture, Green Revolution agriculture, or modern agriculture (Cáceres, 2003).

However, it also brought negative consequences such as environmental degradation and human health risks due to pesticides and chemical fertilisers. In response, a new approach emerged, emphasising sustainability and tailored to local socio-economic and environmental conditions (Guzmán, Molina and Guzmán, 2000).

Many movements with a wide conceptual base have emerged since the 1920s; these movements are collectively referred to as non-industrial agriculture. Though relegated to the periphery since the 1970s, these movements gained momentum as the detrimental impacts of agrochemicals and the public's increasing consciousness of environmental issues unfolded. These schools of thought affirm the importance of traditional knowledge as a basis for the advancement of modern processes employed, and they resist the overuse of industrialised agricultural inputs and the decline of the social basis of food. They believe that in order to reduce the demand for external inputs into the agroecosystem, the best course of action is to restructure production systems and acknowledge the significance of various ecological interactions in the agricultural production process. Nowadays, non-industrial production techniques are employed in a variety of environmental settings with positive ecological, agronomic, economic, and social outcomes. Simultaneously, the particular market for this kind of production has grown at an exponential rate (Assis, 2005).

2.1. Agroecology in Colombia

Agroecology emerged and developed in Colombia throughout the 1970s and 1980s due to the rise of environmental and development movements that questioned established lifestyles, the expansion of new markets for ecological or organic products, and the advancement of regulations that show political support for the particular values of food producers and consumers (León-Sicard, Prager and Osorio, 2017).

The late 1980s and 1990s saw the creation of agroecology-focused organisations like the Colombian Association of Biological Agriculture and Ecodevelopment (ACABYE), and the group Environment and Development (MAYDA). These organisations hosted events and strengthened the discourse around sustainable agriculture (León-Sicard, Prager and Osorio,

2017). Later, other well known experts joined the movement. This led to the creation of the Ecological Agriculture Network (RedAE), supported by the Ministry of Agriculture. RedAE facilitated national communication and collaboration. It also resulted in the formation of provincial agroecology committees (Palacios & Espinosa 2001, cited in León-Sicard et al., 2017, p. 298). Moreover, key figures from RedAE later formed a group that influenced agricultural policy. They advocated for incorporating environmental and biodiversity concerns. This work contributed to the creation of the Program of Ecological Agricultural Production (PAE) and laid the groundwork for the Colombian Scientific Society of Agroecology (SOCLA) in 2011 (León-Sicard, Prager and Osorio, 2017).

The agroecology movement also influenced academic institutions in Colombia. Between 1979 and 1989, a collaboration between the Center for Research in Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems (Centro para la Investigación en Sistemas Sostenibles de Producción Agropecuaria - CIPAV in Spanish), the Institute for Advanced Peasant Studies (Instituto Mayor Campesino - IMCA in Spanish), the Institute of Rural Studies, and the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana led to the creation of a Master's Programme in Sustainable Development of Agricultural Systems. In the 1990s the first Master's programme in agroecology was found by the Universidad de Caldas. In 1997 the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA) held the first formal course on organic agriculture in Santa Marta, with the support of various entities. Additionally, the Universidad Nacional de Colombia's Institute of Environmental Studies (IDEA) launched its Program of Environmental Agrarian Studies in that decade. Furthermore, the Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios (UNIMINUTO) established its Agroecological Engineering Programme in 2001, focusing on training professionals with a special emphasis on social inclusion (León-Sicard, Prager and Osorio, 2017). The movement gained further momentum in 2010 with the founding of Doctoral Programs in Agroecology at both the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and the Universidad de Antioquia. The programme at the Universidad Nacional, supported by the Colombian Scientific Society of Agroecology (SOCLA) and inspired by the work of Miguel Altieri, has become a leading research centre in the country, impacting agroecology research across Latin America (León-Sicard, Prager and Osorio, 2017).

The 1990s also saw an increment in national gatherings that brought together practitioners and thinkers in the field of agroecology. Additionally, alliances were created to generate

networks and increase training possibilities for technicians in agroecology (León-Sicard, Prager, and Osorio, 2017).

Rivera and Sicard (2013) mentioned that agroecology expanded quickly in Colombia as a result of a range of alternative farming practices that were progressively developing a theoretical framework within science, however it is not yet fully accepted or defined. Though there are still differences in opinions about the topic of study (which can range from the agroecosystem to the entire food system or the agricultural development models themselves) and the theoretical frameworks created to investigate it, the gaps and distinctions between schools of thought are generally acknowledged (Rivera and Sicard, 2013).

For example, researchers in Cundinamarca and Boyacá, near Bogotá, proposed two different schools of thought. One emphasised the soil as a living ecosystem, while the other offered a framework for understanding complex relationships between agriculture, environment, and culture. Alongside academic efforts, practical experiences emerged (León-Sicard, Prager and Osorio, 2017). By 2009, Varela, cited in León-Sicard, Prager, and Osorio (2017), documented 25 successful ecological farms operating in the Bogotá Savannah (León-Sicard, Prager and Osorio, 2017, p. 299).

2.2. Agroecological Markets and their Rise in Bogotá

Traditionally, farmers and indigenous people have used peasant markets as a platform to trade their produced goods with urban residents of towns and cities (Rivera Gómez, 2021). These markets were replaced as permanent locations for food concentration as a result of numerous changes in the peasant economy and the underlying dynamics of the industrialisation of towns and agriculture itself in the 20th century. This led to the emergence of marketplaces and intermediation. However, during the 21st century there was a resurgence of these traditional markets, not just as a way to sell goods, but also as a way to promote the values of the peasant economy (Rivera Gómez, 2021).

However, what actually are markets? They are socio-historical products (Mora, 2004; Hernandez *et al.*, 2022), not universal, self-contained realities (Mora, 2004). The presence of social institutions that enable their emergence, consolidation, and development shapes their configuration, structure, and dynamics (Mora, 2004). Moreover, markets depend on a

network of social exchanges. All of these interactions—producing goods, participating, buying, selling, and consuming— occur within the sphere of social relationships, some of which evolve into economic transactions (Hernandez *et al.*, 2022). These social interactions lead to the emergence of reciprocity, solidarity, and trust, and influence not only product pricing but also the definition of objectives and functions that shape the characteristics of agroecological markets around agroecology and its diffusion (Hernandez *et al.*, 2022).

Aranda Camacho *et al.*, (2021) mentioned that markets that sell goods obtained organically or agroecologically—that is, without the use of artificial chemical inputs and in an environmentally sustainable manner—are known as organic and agroecological markets (Aranda Camacho *et al.*, 2021). These products can be of agroecological origin or in transition to agroecology, and which are not only food items (Hernandez *et al.*, 2022). Food sovereignty and autonomy concepts, such as respect for local cultures and their customs of food production and preparation, are frequently incorporated into agroecological marketplaces (Aranda Camacho *et al.*, 2021).

These agroecological markets originate from a diverse organisation of peasant, ethnic, family, and community-based actors. They have an actively participating consumer population (including rural/urban settings) with shared forms of communication and interests that allow them to create alliances among market individuals, as well as with other institutions (Hernandez *et al.*, 2022).

Markets are becoming more and more synonymous with agroecology—not just as a way to produce food using agroecological methods, but also in contexts outside of it. Distribution, marketing, and consumption are included, with a sustainable transformation of food systems being the goal that is based on the agroecological principles (Hernandez *et al.*, 2022).

Agroecology markets have three main purposes: supporting peasant, family, ethnic, and community agriculture, educating about agroecology and its benefits, and planning actions for the transformation of food systems towards sustainability (Hernandez *et al.*, 2022).

Agroecological markets incorporate aspects of agroecology by taking into account the interactions and functions that support agroecosystems on an ecological, social, cultural, economic, and political level. They enable market participants to share knowledge about sustainable agriculture methods with one another, and are set up in this way as a network that

supports agroecological activities in various ways (Hernandez *et al.*, 2022). Hernandez *et al.*, (2022) even relate the success of agroecology to these types of markets, and how these places serve as socio-political platforms where market tactics are developed with the goal of influencing public policies and state behaviours (Hebinck, Ploeg and Schneider, 2015; Hernandez *et al.*, 2022), and develop tactics for resisting the globalisation and dominance of food conglomerates (Hernandez *et al.*, 2022).

As mentioned before, agroecological and organic marketplaces also reflect social economy and solidarity experiences (Romero, 2018). The solidarity economy promotes reciprocity as a valuable way to exchange goods and services, existing alongside traditional market transactions and government redistribution programs (Roustang, 2003). Moreover, the notion of a solidarity economy puts into perspective the division of the redistribution system, the reciprocity principle, and the market exchange and competitive system (Sabourin, 2018). Agroecological markets foster alternatives to the advanced capitalist dynamics (Romero, 2018), and place a higher priority on reciprocity and cooperation (Romero, 2018; Chaparro and Chocue, 2020).

Moreover, Hernández *et al.* (2022) argue that agroecological markets are social spaces where decisions go beyond economics. This means these markets take on a deeper meaning and purpose (Hernandez *et al.*, 2022). For example, they enable the personal and collective positioning of their participants to defend their territories, seeds, rights, and other actions. They empower participants to make decisions about the agro-food system they want for themselves and future generations. And serve as a platform for the visibility of intergenerational peasant social organisation and more equitable gender relations (Hernández *et al.*, 2022).

Additionally, peasant and social organisations lead marketing efforts in these markets, leveraging their structure and strategy to maintain their economic well-being. Beyond physical gatherings, virtual platforms and delivery systems now connect producers and consumers, fostering collaboration and learning across various aspects, from politics to education (Rivera Gómez, 2021).

Another aspect of these markets is the agroecological production, which is a holistic approach to food, personal hygiene, and medicinal/cosmetic products. It prioritises environmental,

social, and economic well-being (Chaparro and Naranjo, 2020). Agroecological production is inclusive, valuing traditional knowledge alongside scientific advancements, and focuses on natural processes and minimises harmful inputs, promoting long-term system resilience and sustainability (Chaparro and Naranjo, 2020). Moreover, what sets apart agroecological markets is their alternative approach. Unlike conventional markets, agroecological markets prioritise social well-being, environmental protection, and economic fairness for all participants (Chaparro, 2019).

However, these spaces face a variety of difficulties, from manufacturing to consumption. Obstacles faced by farmers include restricted access to resources such as land and water, out-of-date information, poor infrastructure, limited resources, high costs, and onerous laws. Obstacles pertaining to the market include a lack of government assistance, a lack of consumer education, weak producer groups, and poor marketing tactics (Chaparro and Naranjo, 2021).

In Bogotá, the rise of peasant markets in 2004 might be seen as a predecessor of the agroecological markets in the city. The establishment of these spaces marked a significant step towards addressing the invisibility of the rural economy. These markets emerged as a response to policies and initiatives that prioritised agribusiness, agricultural exports, and the diversion of rural land for non-food production purposes (Chaparro and Calle, 2017). Additionally, the support of local government policies contributed to their visibility, recognition, and logistical support (Rivera Gómez, 2021). Moreover, these scenarios have become relevant for agroecology because they provide platforms for the empowerment of rural actors, including Afro-descendant, indigenous, and peasant groups (Rivera Gómez, 2021).

In 2016, the Red de Mercados Agroecológicos de Bogotá - RMABR (Bogotá Agroecological Markets Network) was founded, and united Bogotá's agroecological markets through collaboration. This network, initiated by the Universidad Minuto de Dios, empowers its members by fostering knowledge sharing and advocacy. They work together to increase visibility and distribution of organic food, promoting food sovereignty. Their mission extends beyond production, aiming for equitable benefits for producers, consumers, and the environment. This network operates on ecological and production principles while also embracing social, cultural, and political aspects of agroecology. The RMABR comprises

eight markets (Chaparro and Chocue, 2020). Moreover, about 2.000 families and institutions have purchased products from the nearly 200 agroecological farmers with whom the RMABR has worked (Chaparro, 2019).

The existence of these kinds of markets in universities is another interesting aspect of them. While a definitive distinction between agroecological fairs and university agroecological fairs could not be drawn, one reason for their emergence was identified: the need to allow other social sectors to enter spaces where in-depth discussions and research are conducted to generate solutions that contribute to society, especially to rural areas, and the disconnect between academic faculties and the realities of the country (Acevedo Osorio, Elizalde and Sánchez, 2021).

Furthermore, such initiatives in higher education may have the potential to develop, for example, the educational approach, which involves students seeing, judging, acting and giving back creatively, for social, personal, family and community transformation, demonstrating how achievements can be made through innovation and perseverance, and despite limited resources (Chaparro, 2020), in specific cases.

2.3. Case Study: UNIMINUTO Agroecology Fair

In May 2012, the Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios organised the sixth fair for exchanging organic farming knowledge and goods as part of the Second International Agroecology Seminar. Seeing a need for a permanent platform for agroecological products, the university created the UNIMINUTO Agroecological and Swap Fair. This fair was held three times in 2013 with the support of the university (Chaparro, 2020; Aranda Camacho *et al.*, 2021; Chaparro and Garzón, 2021).

The UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair provides a valuable learning environment for students of this and other programmes, as well as external people (Chaparro and Garzón-Méndez, 2021), and contributes to the well-being of the UNIMINUTO community and Bogotá (Chaparro-Africano and Garzón-Méndez, 2021; Chaparro and Naranjo, 2021). Moreover, the fare aims to transform the food system by promoting sustainable practices like agroecology and fair trade. It challenges conventional markets by creating alternative models that prioritise local economies, responsible consumption, and food sovereignty. The FAU achieves this through three key strategies: developing alternative markets, fostering networks

of informed consumers, and supporting producers transitioning to agroecological methods with participatory certification (Chaparro and Naranjo, 2021).

In 2013 a home delivery program with a "solidarity basket" concept was launched. This initiative was eventually taken over by a student group and later called ALaCena. The solidarity basket ensured access to high-quality products for consumers while providing a reliable market for agroecological producers (Aranda Camacho *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, UNIMINUTO led the initiative to establish the Red de Mercados Agroecológicos de Bogotá (RMABR) in an effort to support these agroecological markets (Aranda Camacho *et al.*, 2021).This network unites several markets, such as physical fairs and delivery services. With a focus on advancing agroecological techniques, it encourages cooperation in fields like research, teaching, and logistics (Aranda Camacho *et al.*, 2021).

May 2018 saw the creation of Mercados Solidarios Minuto de Dios (MSMD), with the goal of increasing the advantages for both producers and customers (Aranda Camacho *et al.*, 2021; Chaparro-Africano and Garzón-Méndez, 2021). From Monday through Saturday of every week, it functions as a point of sale and a home delivery service (Chaparro-Africano and Garzón-Méndez, 2021). Moreover, UNIMINUTO connects about 37 producers, of which 58% practise agroecology and the remaining percentage are in transition (Aranda Camacho *et al.*, 2021).

The challenges of these markets range from production to consumption. Availability to clean land, water, soil, air, and agrobiodiversity; access to (obsolete or lost) knowledge and technology; size of production are all important factors in primary production. In terms of marketing, distribution, and consumption, there is an absence of political support to advance environmental protection, consumer associativity, and food and health security in Colombia; additionally, there is a lack of education regarding sustainable consumption, little awareness of marketing and communication strategies, and a unfamiliarity with ICTs that facilitate sustainable marketing (Aranda Camacho *et al.*, 2021).

3. Literature Review

This section is divided into three parts. The first part will explain the concept of agroecology, including their principles and their disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary perspectives. The second part will discuss some research on university agroecological fairs and the main findings. And the third part will address consumption, sustainable consumption, and practices.

3.1. Agroecology

During the start of the early 20th century the term "agroecology" appeared. From then on, it underwent substantial changes in both its definition and scope (Wezel *et al.*, 2009).

At its core, agroecology aims to design and manage agricultural systems with minimal reliance on external inputs like energy and agrochemicals, going beyond simply substituting alternative farming practices (Altieri and Toledo, 2011).

Moreover, in order to create and maintain diverse agroecosystems, agroecologists, according to Altieri (1995), employ well-established ecological principles (Altieri, 1995; Gómez Echeverri, Ríos Osorio and Eschenhagen Durán, 2017):

1. Enhance the recycling of biomass, with a view to optimizing organic matter decomposition and nutrient cycling over time
2. Strengthen the "immune system" of agricultural systems through enhancement of functional biodiversity — natural enemies, antagonists, etc., by creating appropriate habitats
3. Provide the most favourable soil conditions for plant growth, particularly by managing organic matter and by enhancing soil biological activity
4. Minimize losses of energy, water, nutrients and genetic resources by enhancing conservation and regeneration of soil and water resources and agrobiodiversity
5. Diversify species and genetic resources in the agroecosystem over time and space at the field and landscape level
6. Enhance beneficial biological interactions and synergies among the components of agrobiodiversity, thereby promoting key ecological processes and services

Table 1. Agroecological Principles (taken from Rosset and Altieri, 2017, p. 20)

In the 1980s there was a significant shift in agroecology. While its scientific grounding remained strong, it also began to develop as a social movement and a practical approach (Wezel *et al.*, 2009; Altieri and Nicholls, 2017). Several social movements that emerged during that time also contributed to its growth (Ruiz Rosado, 2006). Trujillo & Gliessman, cited in Ruiz Rosado (2006) mentioned that these movements addressed critical issues such as the response of Europe to the degradation of natural resources and changes in the landscape, the detrimental effects of pesticide use on human health in the United States, the loss of biodiversity, the resistance of Latin America to the loss of traditional knowledge, and criticism of the scientific paradigm (Ruiz Rosado, 2006, p. 141).

Agroecology, in particular, arose in Latin America in the 1970s in reaction to a number of crises that were starting to show up in the region, with an emphasis on cultural, ethical, political, ecological, and social dimensions as well as economic and social issues. Furthermore, it emerged as a response to the development models that were imposed on the rural areas of the region that were centred on extractivism, land grabs and concentration, the adoption of technology packages inspired by the Green Revolution, and agribusiness. These models combined the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), intensive soil mechanisation, monoculture implantation, and large amounts of agrochemicals for agricultural production with the replacement of specialised raw materials like sugarcane, maize, and palm for a variety of crops intended for human and animal consumption (Buriticá, 2021).

As a result, the concept of agroecology evolved and was no longer limited to being a science or discipline studying agroecosystems (Ruiz Rosado, 2006). The varied definitions provided by different ideological perspectives serve as an illustration of this. For instance, La Vía Campesina, a Latin American-born social movement with a global reach, has fostered a unified voice and identity for peasants around the world (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010). They understand agroecology as the solution for rebuilding a food system and rural world affected by industrial agriculture and its Green and Blue Revolutions, and see it as a crucial form of resistance against an economic model that prioritises profit over the well-being of people and the environment (La Vía Campesina, 2015).

In the case of Ruiz Rosado (2006), the author mentioned that agroecology can be understood as well as a philosophy and a practical approach to food production and fulfilling human needs. It focuses on minimising environmental and social damage over time, striking a

balance between meeting some requirements and protecting the environment and the communities it sustains (Ruiz Rosado, 2006).

However, agroecology has not had a straightforward path. For decades, its practitioners -researchers, professors, NGOs, farmers, activists, and others- faced dismissal from the mainstream and were labelled as visionaries, idealists, radicals, or frauds (Rosset and Altieri, 2017). But, over the past few decades, this has evolved. Agroecology has been rediscovered by major universities, research institutions, businesses, governments, and international organisations as a potential solution to pressing issues in the global food system, including soil degradation, declining yields, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change (Rosset and Altieri, 2017).

Another challenge for agroecology is the limited understanding of agroecosystems. Traditionally, these have been seen simply as human-made environments for food production (Ruiz Rosado, 2006).

However, agroecology recognizes the complex web of social, economic, and ecological factors at play, as well as the interactions happening at different scales within these systems (Ruiz Rosado, 2006). Agroecology thrives on contributions from diverse perspectives -disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary-. Additionally, local knowledge also plays a vital role, as it represents the real-world context where ecological, social, and economic principles are put into practice (Ruiz Rosado, 2006).

As mentioned by Ruiz Rosado (2006), the transdisciplinary approach aims to achieve a common goal by promoting collaboration and dialogue between diverse fields (Ruiz Rosado, 2006; Buriticá, 2021). The multidimensional approach broadens the scope of agroecosystem analysis, considering social, economic, environmental, and cultural aspects of agri-food systems, acknowledging their linkages (Buriticá, 2021).

It is also worth mentioning the connections between agroecology and the territorial, dialogical, and gender perspectives (Buriticá, 2021).

For Santos (2000) the way people use the land and their social interactions shape the territory. It is also where power battles take place and frame everything, from the economy to culture, as well as where societies reproduce themselves (Santos, 2000; Rivera Gómez, 2021).

The dialogical component is rooted in the understanding of the different ways in which knowledge is generated and emphasises the importance of having conversations between different actors and points of view (Buriticá, 2021).

The gender perspective focuses on the roles that women have played in agriculture and the growth of agroecology. These roles include their knowledge of plants, their work in agricultural production, their preservation of the environment, their production tasks for food preparation and self-consumption, their care for small animals, their household chores, and their care of the young and old. The "triple workday" that women in rural regions are believed to have is reflected in these roles (Buriticá, 2021).

Beyond its practical applications, agroecology is deeply intertwined with the cultural and spiritual life of a community. Ceremonies, rituals, symbols, and ancestral knowledge all play a role in agroecology, forming a spiritual connection to the land (Buriticá, 2021).

Ultimately, agroecology has the ability to shift the existing food system regime towards a more sustainable course because of the convergence of knowledge, practice, and social action (Drottberger, Melin and Lundgren, 2021).

3.2. University Agroecological Fairs

The initial literature review revealed a gap in research on university agroecological fairs, with most studies concentrated in South America. To address this gap, this section will highlight some relevant research from these regions, outlining their specific focus and areas of study. This initial exploration aims to establish the broader context for the main topic of this thesis.

Expanding upon the previous finding regarding the majority of research in the global south, this review noticed a particularly extensive body of work on Brazilian university agroecological markets. These include the fair at the Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA) (Contreras, 2020), the fair at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (Ferreira, Bispo and Almeida, 2018), the market at the Federal University of Tocantins in Palmas (Beraldo *et al.*, 2018), the inter-institutional fair in Goiás (Cruz Nóbreg and Ferreira,

2021), and the Organic Products Fair at the Federal University of Technology - Paraná (Flávia Padilha *et al.*, 2019).

The creation and establishment of these fairs, as well as the variety of goods exchanged in these spaces, were the subjects of these studies. Some of their findings, in the case of the Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA) Agroecological Fair, discuss how these spaces support a solid network of cooperation among participants, which includes the university, vendors, and customers; they also discuss how the initiative has been able to overcome challenges and establish itself as a viable alternative for food marketing within the academic setting (Contreras, 2020). Another study conducted at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul indicated that the fair has a large selection of goods and that the fair was experiencing a growth in consumer activity (Ferreira, Bispo and Almeida, 2018).

According to Beraldo *et al.* (2018), the Federal University of Tocantins stated that their agroecological fair became a space for exchanges. However, the university also mentioned that they were grappling with issues such as producing more agroecological food to meet the growing demand, strengthening the bonds between agroecological producers, and ensuring their financial sustainability (Beraldo *et al.*, 2018)

Additionally, the Federal University of Technology - Paraná (UTFPR)'s Organic Products Fair (FEPOUT) was successful in giving family farms a place to sell their organic goods, boosting their earnings and giving customers access to healthy foods. Sustainable rural development and agroecological techniques have also been promoted by the fair (Flávia Padilha *et al.*, 2019).

In Argentina, there was some research about the agroecological fair's experiences in Córdoba (Perez *et al.*, 2018), and the Producer to Consumer Fair at the Faculty of Agronomy of the University of Buenos Aires (Muzlera, 2020). The topics of research were the creation and experiences at the fair in Córdoba and the profile of the consumers who go to the fair at the University of Buenos Aires (Perez *et al.*, 2018; Muzlera, 2020). In the case of this second research, the main conclusion was that those who buy these foods are people from the urban middle class, with a higher than average level of formal education, and that their consumption is driven by their perception of this practice as a political and solidarity action in addition to the association with a healthier and better quality of life (Muzlera, 2020).

Studies conducted in Ecuador and Mexico provide further insights. The first one discussed the agroecological fair held by the Central University of Ecuador (León-Vega *et al.*, 2022). The results emphasise the main factors that influence customer choice, such as cost, health advantages, and agroecological or organic origins. The report also mentions the lack of involvement of teachers and the average age of attendance (20 to 30 years old) (León-Vega *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, León-Vega *et al.* (2022) noted that this project is one of the few in Ecuador that is being run by a university (León-Vega *et al.*, 2022). With a focus on the Ahimsa Fair Trade Market at the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico (UAEM), the second study wanted to understand the subjective effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on agroecological food producers in central Mexico. The producers' activities were severely impacted, with factors including workload, product demand, access to sales spaces, family and health, inputs, and production all being affected (Escobar-López and Moctezuma-Pérez, 2023).

There is research on this topic at some universities in Colombia as well. The first one discussed the establishment and development of the agroecological fair at Universidad del Tolima, and how it has turned into a competitive alternative for the marketing of agroecological goods and the advancement of agroecology. The fair has benefited customers, producers, and students alike, and it has helped to foster a culture of conscientious consumption (Elcure and Vargas Varfas, 2021). Analysing the socioeconomic factors and consumption motivation in the UTP Agroecological Market "Food for Life" in the city of Pereira was the aim of the second study, which was a collaboration between Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira (UTP) and Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios - UNIMINUTO. According to their findings, the typical customer was a woman between the ages of 20 and 39, educated at a university, and from a medium-low income family. Purchasing locally made, handcrafted goods was the primary reason for attending the agroecological fair, while the high cost was the primary barrier (Chaparro - Africano, Sara and Garcia, 2023).

It is significant to note that the Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios - UNIMINUTO has extensive study on this topic and organises its own agroecological fair. In 2016 a framework of sustainability metrics was created to oversee the sustainability of the agroecological fair. These indicators measured aspects like sales, income, consumer participation, and production methods (Chaparro, 2019).

Moreover, research conducted on the UNIMINUTO fair and the larger RMABR network in 2016 and 2017 included an assess of the sustainability of four established agroecological markets, and a sustainability indicator assessment that revealed that the main obstacles were poor sales and a small customer base (Chaparro, 2019; Chaparro and Chocue, 2020).

In 2018 a sustainability indicator evaluation revealed weaknesses in the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair. The low number of consumers (only 359 out of 1,377 visitors) and modest sales figures paint a picture of limited market activity (Chaparro-Africano, 2019). In 2020, another study was conducted with the objective of defining the consumers and their consumption habits in the RMABR network in order to create efficient marketing, education, and communication plans. According to the research, the key factor influencing consumers to purchase agroecological products was their health, whereas the main barrier was cost. Nevertheless, buyers were prepared to spend an additional 10% for these goods. Cereals, fruits, and vegetables were the most popular products (Chaparro and Chocue, 2020).

Moreover, a 2019 study that examined consumer behaviour at the Minuto de Dios Solidarity Market and the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair aimed to comprehend the characteristics of people who frequented these markets and their consumption habits, considering the low volume of sales. Based on the study, the typical consumer profile is consistent with findings from other studies of a similar nature. It consists primarily of young adult university students who come from small homes in poor and lower-middle socioeconomic strata and are primarily female. The study revealed that consumers exhibited insufficient awareness regarding participatory certification, price, and agroecological products. The investigation underscored the necessity for improved consumer education. The analysis also found that the variety and quality of accessible agroecological products should be improved (Chaparro-Africano and Garzón-Méndez, 2021).

3.3. Consumption, Sustainable Consumption and Social Practices

The subsequent section of the literature review will examine various perspectives on consumption, with a particular emphasis on sustainable consumption. One of the reasons for this is that the majority of research on university agroecological fairs was focused on consumer behaviour.

In its most basic form, consumption refers to the gradual loss of resources necessary for our everyday needs. In order to survive, we must all consume (Middlemiss, 2018). Consumption,

according to García (1997), is a political act since it is a choice that considers factors such as identity formation, uniqueness, and health. They are even scenarios for decision-making, asserting the rights to engage in the reshaping of the socio-political system by defining what people want to be included in, as well as the rights to access and belong to it (García, 1997).

To the idea of consumption, Warde (2005) offers another angle. The author argues that consumption as the passing of messages to strangers falls foul of three confusions: an action can be understandable without having a consensus meaning; having meaning is not the same as constituting a message; and receiving a message does not imply that there was an intention to send that message. Although consumption is frequently a form of communication, consumption displays have limited capacity for communication. However, there is also a risk that it will drastically overlook the reality that the majority of activity is focused on achieving self-regarding, purposeful goals rather than on interacting with others. As a result, many purchasing decisions are still made based on factors like efficacy and efficiency in connection to completing regular chores with a purpose, or pursuing use-values (Warde, 2005).

If the purpose is to lessen the effects of consumption on the environment or other individuals, this thesis refers to sustainable development (Middlemiss, 2018). Scholars from various fields draw on a broad range of ideas and related theories to consider this subject, such as environmental citizenship (political science), pro-environmental behaviour (psychology), practice (sociology), and ethical consumption (business studies and cultural studies) (Middlemiss, 2018). Social scientists have long recognised that it is challenging to come to an agreement on the definition of sustainable consumption because of this multidisciplinary approach (Amaral Junior, Almeida and Klein Vieira, 2020). However they all agree that the word comprises much more than the culmination of individual customer decisions made in the marketplace. Every mainstream definition of sustainable consumption concurs that it encompasses the environmental effects at every stage of the product life cycle, from investment decisions connected to production to marketing and logistics, from retailing to trash disposal (Amaral Junior, Almeida and Klein Vieira, 2020).

This thesis will only cover two topics connected to sustainable consumption because of its relation to agroecology production consumption: conscious consumption, and responsible consumption.

Rivera Gómez (2021) begins by connecting the term sustainable consumption with the Royal Spanish Academy's definition, which states that conscious consumption is the understanding that an individual has of everything, particularly of their own acts and the results of those activities (Rivera Gómez, 2021; RAE, 2023). This thesis went with this definition due to the fact that Rivera Gómez (2021) connects conscious consumption to agroecology (Rivera Gómez, 2021).

Conscientious consumers comprehend the food system and their place within it, according to the author. But the source of this information shouldn't just come from customers. Since production and consumption are both essential components of a sustainable food system, an agroecological approach promotes education at every stage of the process (Rivera Gómez, 2021).

Moreover, three factors are given priority when it comes to conscious consumption of agro-ecological, peasant, or local products: environment, social impact, and economics. Consumers are ecologically conscious and prefer locally produced goods that reduce the environmental impact of transportation. They also look for products that are cultivated responsibly and free of hazardous chemicals. Socially, they respect the producers, who are frequently tiny, traditional families or organisations. This dimension acknowledges the items' cultural value as well as its support of local communities, especially the women, youth, and men who work in the production process. Ultimately, financially aware customers seek reasonable pricing that guarantees producers are fairly compensated while maintaining affordability for the consumer. The health of both producers and consumers is positively impacted by these interrelated characteristics. Food produced using agroecological techniques has a high nutritional value, which benefits all parties involved (Rivera Gómez, 2021).

On the other hand, Mauleón and Rivera (2009) offer a discussion on the idea of responsible consumption. Responsible consumption requires an individual to consider labour conditions, values, and environmental impact associated with the manufacture of a good or service, in addition to the social and environmental implications of marketing and consumption. It involves taking an intentional attitude to the surroundings and being aware of routines. Conscientious consumers are aware of their patterns and make an effort to match their values with the things they buy (Mauleón and Rivera, 2009).

This thesis will address how consumption is seen through the lens of social practices, after briefly addressing consumption, sustainable, conscious and responsible consumption.

According to Warde (2005), consumption habits are shaped by the activities people engage in. If individuals are viewed as simply as a collection of these practices, then consumption becomes a consequence of them. This opens up a new way to understand consumer behaviour and how it shapes the identities of individuals (Warde, 2005). Moreover, Warde (2005) suggests that the idea of "the consumer," a concept that has fascinated economists, political scientists, and social scientists alike, vanishes when viewed from the perspective of practices. Rather, the organisation of practices and the moments of enjoyment that are experienced become the primary focal areas. People encounter moments of consuming neither as passive recipients nor as independent decision-makers. Consumption is not a single, cohesive activity, nor is it a practice in and of itself. Instead, it is divided by the boundaries that exist within practices (Warde, 2005).

Consumption is not an integrated practice; rather, it is a dispersed practice that happens frequently and at several locations. Because they perceive their actions as merely driving, eating, or playing, most people consume without realising or acknowledging that this is what they are doing. They hardly ever recognise their actions as "consuming," yet the more widely accepted the idea and language of "the consumer" becomes, the more frequently people describe themselves as consumers. These statements, though, typically allude to buying and shopping. Contrarily, shopping is an integrated activity that involves teleo-affective structures, knowledge, and understanding. People express whether they enjoy or detest shopping, with the latter group frequently taking precautions to avoid it. Consumption, however, is unavoidable, temporary, and frequently happens completely unconsciously (Warde, 2005).

Warde (2005) delves further into people's consuming habits. The consumption habits of an individual are shaped by the practices they engage in, which in turn influence their identity. Participating in various practices, especially on diverse social networks, can fragment individual identity, not as a sign of self-disintegration but as a reflection of the social organisation of practices. Consumption patterns, such as spending, possessions, and cultural activities, are explained by the intensity of an individual's participation in different practices. The relationship between moments of consumption and the coherence of the resulting patterns depends on the intersection of social networks and the consistency of norms within

each practice. While marketing associates products with specific personalities or lifestyles, the perceived coherence in consumption is subjective and subject to social debate (Warde, 2005).

It is also worth noting that Ariztía (2017) mentioned that there are two key ways to understand consumption through the lens of practices, according to the work of Warde (2005). The first one is complementary consumption, which looks at how some activities naturally require multiple items due to their interconnected nature. This concept also considers the resources needed beyond the immediate goods. Every practice relies on infrastructure. Warde (2005) suggests that as people engage in more and more interconnected practices, the need for goods and resources naturally increases (Warde, 2005; Ariztía, 2017). The second approach analyses the components of practices to show how modifications to these practices affect patterns of consumption. Similar to that, changes to the components of practices can likewise change the dynamics of consuming. Thus, it is essential to research how resource supply networks and infrastructures define and constrain consumption in addition to easing the shift to more ecologically friendly and sustainable forms of consumption (Ariztía, 2017).

After examining agroecology through the lenses of market dynamics, and consumer behaviour, this study shifts to social practices. Although social practices and agroecology are frequently explored independently, this study aims to close this gap by looking at how these ideas interact to influence consumption patterns.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Social Practices Theory

First, this chapter will begin by exploring SPT's origins. Then, it will develop the main concepts of the Social Practice Theory (SPT) and how it will help to answer the research questions driving this thesis. This theoretical framework will not only guide the analysis but also serve as a foundation for structuring the discussion and conclusions of this work.

Social practice theory or practice theory emphasises the significance of practices in comprehending how individuals behave and how society operates (Reckwitz, 2002). Moreover, this theory explores the ways in which tangible resources, practical competencies,

and shared meanings interact to create and modify social patterns. Through reorienting the emphasis from persons or structures to the dynamics of practices, the theory of social practices presents an alternative approach on social interactions (Ariztía, 2017).

To Reckwitz (2002), practice theory is regarded as a subset of cultural theory (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). Cultural theories highlight how common symbolic systems influence social order and human behaviour. Furthermore, cultural theories differ from conventional social theories in that the former concentrate on the goals of the person (homo economicus) or the latter on society norms (homo sociologicus). In contrast to other cultural theories, practice theories give more weight to the embodied, situated, and regular facets of social life (Reckwitz, 2002).

To Ariztía (2007), there are three moments that contributed to the theoretical foundations of the social practices theory: post-subjectivist philosophies of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Pragmatist Philosophy; the sociological theory of the second half of the 20th century (especially the theories of Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu); and the ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel and Pragmatic Social Theory (Ariztía, 2017).

In addition to these social theorists already mentioned, Reckwitz (2002) suggested that other thinkers with different theoretical backgrounds like Michel Foucault, Bruno Latour, Charles Taylor, and Theodore Schatzki produced work that included aspects of a theory of social practices (Reckwitz, 2002). Moreover, Reckwitz (2002) considered that these ideas could be traced back to the work of Max Weber on action theory, as practices can be seen as patterns of action (Reckwitz, 2002).

However, Reckwitz (2002) and Kuijer (2014) mentioned that compared to certain other social theories, the range of terms provided by practice theorists is not as comprehensive and prescriptive, nor is it "systemized" (Reckwitz, 2002; Kuijer, 2014). Practice theory or social practice theory does not provide a cohesive explanation either (Kuijer, 2014).

Though there are many areas where these theorists diverge, such as the significance of material objects in practices (Kuijer, 2014), there are other areas where they agree, such as acknowledging the use of practices as a basic analytical unit (Kuijer, 2014; Ariztía, 2017), and sharing a common interest in everyday life (Reckwitz, 2002).

Nowadays, the theory of social practices is becoming more and more relevant (Kuijer, 2014; Ariztía, 2017) in a variety of social science disciplines, including economic and consumer sociology, organisational sociology, science, technology, and society studies. Furthermore, this theory has contributed to the expansion of the theoretical frameworks around sustainable lifestyles and consumption (Ariztía, 2017). But this spread has been limited in the Spanish-speaking academic circles due to the fact that there are not many translations of this kind of work (Ariztía, 2017).

So what exactly are practices then? "Practice" and "practices" are distinguished by Reckwitz (2002). When used in the single, "practice" (Praxis) it serves as an expressive term to characterise all human effort. However, when evaluated through the lens of the theory of social practices, "practices" might mean something quite distinct. Practice is defined as "a routinized type of behaviour consisting of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of mental and bodily activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249). A practice essentially creates a "block" that cannot be reduced to any one of these individual pieces and whose existence depends on the existence and particular interconnection of these elements. Similarly, a practice is a pattern that may be completed by numerous distinct, single acts that replicate the practice (many real acts of eating commodities can complete a particular technique of consuming goods) (Reckwitz, 2002).

Ariztía (2007) defines practice as a “nexus of forms of activity that are deployed in time and space and are identifiable as a unity” (Ariztía, 2017, p. 224). This collection of activities is made up of several components that are practically connected (Ariztía, 2017). Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012) defined practices as forms of doing and/or saying that arise from the spatiotemporal interrelation of three elements: competences, meanings, and materialities, this meaning was based on Schatzki's writings and Rekwitz's definition mentioned above (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012; Ariztía, 2017). The approach of Shove, Pantzar & Watson (2012) has recently gained notoriety, partly because it seeks to simplify and systematise the various elements of practices (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012; Ariztía, 2017). Due to these

characteristics, the formulation of this theory has been increasingly adopted in empirical research (Ariztía, 2017).

Ariztía (2017) also elaborates more about these three elements. The author mentioned that depending on the perspective, these elements are more or less significant. From a philosophical perspective, the focus is on practical knowledge and shared know-how. In contrast, from the perspective of sociology, science and technology studies the emphasis is on the sociomaterial and conventional nature of practices. However, as seen in the previous paragraph, these definitions share a common emphasis on the multiplicity of components that structure practices, characterised by the ability to weave together different elements in a "concrete activity" (Ariztía, 2017).

At this point, it is important to state that this thesis will use the simplified version of Shove, Pantzar & Watson (2012), and Ariztía (2007). Starting with competences, Shove, Pantzar & Watson (2012) built on the work of Guiddens and Warden and stated that competences are a practical skill set that enable the execution of a practice (Ariztía, 2017), which includes technique, expertise, and abilities; as well as many types of awareness and combined practical knowledgeability (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

To define the following concept, Shove, Pantzar & Watson (2012) combined what Reckwitz (2002) referred to as mental processes, feelings, and motivational information (Reckwitz, 2002) into the one broad element of "meaning" (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012), which refers to the shared beliefs, values, and emotions that give a practice meaning and purpose for those involved. These include ideas about what is desirable and good, as well as the cultural understanding of the practice. Similar to other aspects of practice, these shared meanings can be found in multiple practices (Ariztía, 2017). However, it is important to note that some scholars of social practices have disagreed greatly on the definitions of meaning, emotion, and motivation (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

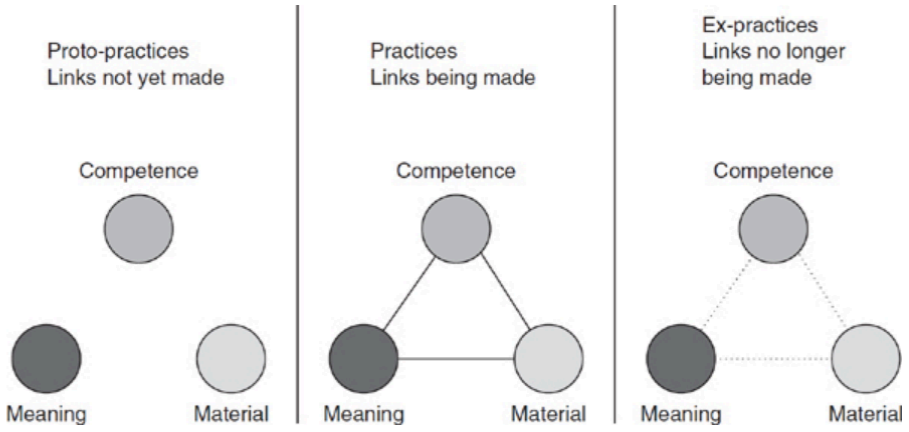
Lastly, materialities are essential components of practices, shaping what can and cannot be done. They include tools, infrastructure, and resources necessary to carry out the practice. These materials are not separate from the practice but define its nature and potential for change (Ariztía, 2017). Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012) constructed this term from the works of Giddens, Bourdieu, Schatzki, and Inge Røpke (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

In addition, Holtz (2014) mentioned that material includes the human body as well as the other physical components of performing an activity. It is a series of physical actions involving the usage of tangible objects. The material then goes over every action required, like arriving at the bus stop, purchasing a ticket, finding a seat, signalling the driver to stop, etc. (Holtz, 2014).

After presenting these three components, this thesis will return to the definition of social practices that Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012) established in their research, and it will discuss the ways in which these elements, along with a few others, combine to form a practice.

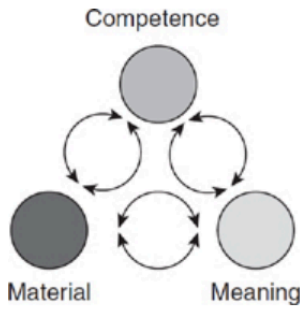
First, Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012) argue that social practices are formed by combining these elements (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012; Ariztía, 2017). Practices can start, continue, or end depending on how these elements are connected or disconnected (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012; Spurling *et al.*, 2013; Ariztía, 2017). The components of practices must be interconnected for them to exist. But elements can exist without creating a practice (a "proto-practice"); also, practices can disappear if these linkages break down (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

An example of these three scenarios can be find below:



Graph 1. Practices, proto-practices and ex-practices (taken from Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

Alternatively, when existing or new elements are combined in different ways, new practices emerge (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012; Ariztía, 2017). Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) added that when elements combine to form a practice, they change each other. Instead of simply existing side-by-side, these elements actively shape and are shaped by one another (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).



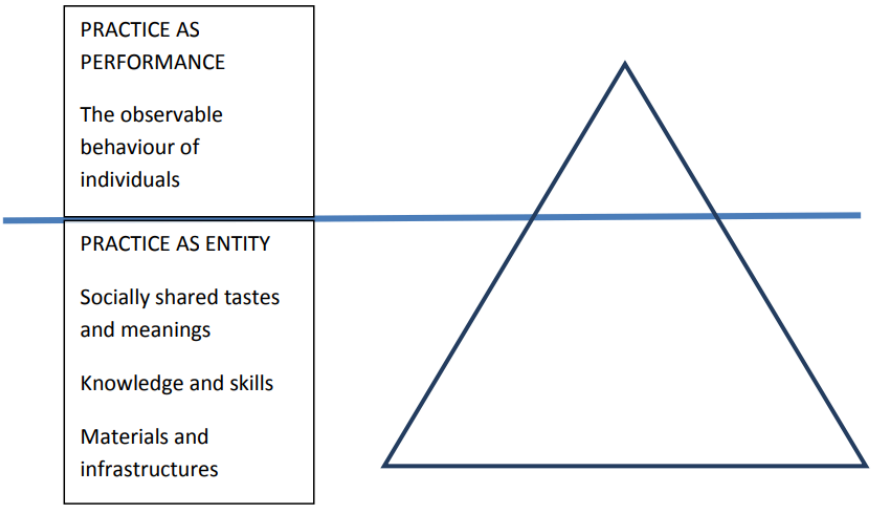
Graph 2. Elements shape each other (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

On the other hand, there is an analytical distinction for assessing the dynamics of practices (Ariztía, 2017). This proposal developed by Schatzky (1996) and highlighted by Ariztía (2017) distinguishes between practices as performances and practices as entities (Schatzki, 1996; Ariztía, 2017).

To Spurling *et al.* (2013) practices as performances are the visible acts of people that are frequently referred to as "behaviours" (Spurling *et al.*, 2013). It involves the actions and expressions that bring practices into existence and maintain them in an interconnected sense (Schatzki, 1996; Warde, 2005).

When practices are seen as entities, the emphasis is shifted from individual performances to the practice's fundamental core. Moreover, practices are not limited to particular instances of their execution, but rather possess a unique character and continuity. Their performance is shaped by recurrent patterns and a temporal trajectory. According to this viewpoint, people who carry out a practice are its carriers—people who give it life in a certain setting—rather than its creators. Both people and institutions come before the practice itself since it is from the constant application of the practice that these things form and take shape (Schatzki, 1996; Ariztía, 2017).

On the next page is an example of how practices as performances and practices as entities differ from one another:



Graph 3. Differents of practices as performances, and practices as entities (taken from Spurling *et al.*, 2013, p. 8).

The concept of linking pieces is crucial for comprehending practices, but it doesn't explain how these linkages function or evolve over time. Aspects such as the distribution of resources, the parties involved, and the processes by which practices change are still absent. It is evident, however, that sustaining these relationships is essential to a practice's survival (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

However, linkages are not limited to elements; they are also possible between practices (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) distinguish between two kinds of connections. The first one involves a more loose link between practices that frequently co-locate, co-exist, or share certain elements, such an object or infrastructure that is essential to their execution. These connections are known as bundles, where practices share the same physical location for implementation with other practices (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012; Ariztía, 2017).

Complexes are another type of closely-knit group of practices where the components are intricately entwined. They may unite to such an extent that they operate as a single unit, impacting every practice (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

As was indicated in the preceding section, individual motivation and/or behaviour are the focus of the majority of research on agroecological university fairs. Because of this, one of the goals of these thesis is to shift from the individual perspective to the viewpoint of the social practices theory in order to examine the various factors that link and enable this collection of activities that are taking part in an agroecological university fair, their impact, and how they can help to promote new practices related to sustainable consumption.

5. Methodology

The methodical choices made for this thesis will be explained in this section in order to determine the motivations, and barriers of the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair, in addition to its contribution to sustainable consumption in Bogotá, Colombia.

Firstly, the research design, collecting data strategies, and data analysis methodologies will be presented. Then, the positionality, ethical considerations and limitations of the researcher will be covered.

5.1. Research Design

Understanding the significance that individuals or groups assign to a social or human situation can be accomplished through qualitative research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). In a more simpler way, qualitative research is a study approach that typically prioritises language above numbers when gathering and analysing data (Bryman, 2016).

While qualitative research can be done in a variety of ways (Creswell and Creswell, 2018), this thesis will use a case study approach. Used in various disciplines, this method analyses a case in-depth, usually focussing on a program, event, activity, process, or number of people (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). It attempts to gradually develop generalisable knowledge about society. In order to establish which explanations of social phenomena are more accurate than others, case studies methodologies make an effort to develop and apply precise criteria (Beckmann *et al.*, 2007).

Given that the emphasis of this thesis will be the agroecological fair held by Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios in Bogotá and the individuals who attend these types of markets, using a case study method is the most appropriate way to address the research topics.

Furthermore, the qualitative approach, which works inductively, builds patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organising the data into increasingly more abstract units of information (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) is another reason to consider this as the ideal methodology.

Ten consumers, including professors, students, farmers, and other agroecological fair participants, were interviewed in semi-structured interviews. The following section will detail the procedures for gaining access to the participants, conducting the interviews, and processing the data.

5.2. Data Collection Methods

5.2.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews can be used for many different situations. It refers to a scenario when the interviewer is given a set of questions that roughly follow the format of an interview guide, but they are free to ask the questions in any order they prefer to (Bryman, 2016). These questions can be a combination between open-ended and more theoretically oriented enquiries to elicit information that is based on the participant's experience as well as existing constructs in the field of study that the interview is being conducted in. The process of creating and organising interview questions takes a lot of effort, trial and error. Every question in the interview should have a clear connection to the research goal, and its arrangement within the protocol should demonstrate the researcher's methodical approach to a thorough examination of the phenomenon being studied (Galletta, 2013).

The semistructured interview design for this study was carried out in Spanish because both the researcher and the interviewees were native speakers of the language. Prior to starting each interview, participants were informed about the study's purpose and granted the option to consent and record the meeting. The interview was divided into three sections: an introduction, questions about the fair's initial impression, and specific questions about the use

of agro-ecological products, shopping patterns, costs, convenience, identification of barriers, and the fair's contributions. **The Appendix 1 contains the interview guidance.**

Furthermore, the interviews took place over Zoom and lasted for thirty to sixty minutes. Their names and other private information won't be mentioned in this thesis. The interviews were carried out based on the participants' availability. Furthermore, the consumers' profiles were arranged in the same sequence as previously said.

5.2.2. Sampling

Following the decision to use the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair as the research case, communication was established with the fair's organiser since it was the most convenient means of reaching the participants for interviews. It's crucial to obtain permission from gatekeepers—those at the location who grant access and authorise research to be conducted—as noted by Creswell & Creswell (2018).

Once communication with the professor and leader of the agroecological fair was established, a brief proposal and an explanation of interest in the agroecological fair were made. Because of their extensive research in agroecology in academic contexts, Adriana Chaparro not only gave the consumer access, but later became a co-supervisor of this thesis.

Based on this preliminary consumer access, a purposive sample was selected. This kind of sampling basically involves choosing units—which could be individuals, groups, organisations, along with others—by making specific reference to the research questions that are being posed. The notion is that the research questions need to indicate which segments require sampling (Bryman, 2016).

A snowball sampling was then employed. With snowball sampling, a small number of participants who are initially related to the research questions are sampled by the researcher, and these sampled individuals then suggest more participants who possess the experience or qualities that are important to the research. These participants will then recommend more, and so forth (Bryman, 2016).

The sample selection process focused on people who have visited the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair in one of its versions and have bought agroecological products. These individuals included citizens, workers, producers, students, and employees. The aim of this sample was to encompass individuals with varying demographics, including age, gender, income, and educational attainment. To ensure that the participants could comprehend and respond to the research questions, the only condition for exclusion was that they had to be of legal age.

Following this clarification and the completion of the intended sampling, ten semi-structured interviews with six women and four men residing in various parts of Bogotá and its surrounding areas were done. In addition to their roles as customers, some of them were also producers, teachers, or students who also produced agroecological goods. Below is the characterisation of the consumers in Table 2.

Profile of Interviewees			
Consumer	**Consumer Profile**	**Source Interview**	**Length of the interview**
Consumer 1	Consumer / Agroecological Producer	Zoom	00.47.38
Consumer 2	Consumer / Former Professor	Zoom	00.36.03
Consumer 3	Consumer / Professor/ Agroecological Producer	Zoom	00.21.31
Consumer 4	Consumer / Student	Zoom	00.48.51
Consumer 5	Consumer / Professor/ Agroecological Producer	Zoom	00.58.16
Consumer 6	Consumer /Student/ Organiser of the Market	Zoom	00.33.47
Consumer 7	Consumer	Zoom	00.47.43
Consumer 8	Consumer / Student	Zoom	00.40.52
Consumer 9	Consumer / Professor	Zoom	00.38.51
Consumer 10	Consumer /Student / Agroecological Producer	Zoom	00.26.30

Table 2. Profile of Interviewers. (Own creation).

5.3. Analysis Methods

Following the completion of the semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis was selected as the most suitable method for data analysis. Identifying and characterising implicit and

explicit ideas within the data—that is, themes—is the primary goal of thematic analysis, which goes beyond simply counting explicit words or phrases (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012). This method was chosen not only for its ability to reveal deeper meanings but also because it is a widely used and established technique for analysing qualitative data (Terry and Hayfield, 2021). Another reason for selecting thematic analysis is its adaptability. Unlike other methods, thematic analysis can be applied with a wide range of theoretical frameworks (Terry and Hayfield, 2021).

The thematic analysis was conducted in two rounds, with the theoretical framework serving as the starting point. As Bryman (2016) mentioned, thematic analysis examines the information to find overarching themes that distinguish between and within transcripts. One of the main ways to find themes is through coding, which is the process of breaking down qualitative data into its component pieces and giving labels to those parts (Bryman, 2016).

In accordance with the theoretical framework, the data was categorised in the first round into three primary categories and seven subcategories. The themes that appeared most frequently were then determined by reviewing each major category and each of its subcategories. Following the identification of these overarching themes within each category and subcategory, a list of practices that are also connected to the theoretical framework was extracted. Ultimately, an additional categorization was made by characterising consumers and their buying patterns.

5.4. Considerations

Having discussed the research design, the data collections methods, and the analysis framework, the next section will address the positionality, ethical considerations, and limitations of this research.

5.4.1. Positionality

Researchers must continuously examine their own perspectives and biases throughout the study process. This self-reflection is crucial for understanding how personal experiences and beliefs shape the research and its findings (Holmes, 2020). Moreover, by examining how personal experiences and social positions influence research, reflexivity challenges the idea of purely objective knowledge (Lichterman, 2017). In light of this, I will evaluate my experiences and beliefs in the context of this research in the section that follows.

Given my lack of experience with university agroecological fairs and sociology theories, I consider myself an outsider to this research area. This aligns with the concept of an 'outsider' perspective in research, often referred to as an 'etic' viewpoint (Holmes, 2020). This realistic perspective seeks to understand a culture from an ontological standpoint, using predefined standards and assumptions about reality (Nagar and Geiger, 2007; Holmes, 2020). From a cultural relativist standpoint, an emic views behaviour and acts as culturally relative, depending on the individual's culture and the circumstances that make the behaviour or deed both reasonable and significant, according to Fetterman (cited in Holmes, 2020, p. 5). In simpler terms: Being an "insider" or "outsider" could also mean whether or not someone is a member of the group they are studying (Holmes, 2020).

Previous to this research, I had no prior involvement with the Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, despite being from Colombia. While my professional experience included working for an international conservation organisation, I was unfamiliar with the concepts of agroecology and agroecological markets. My closest exposure was through traditional farmer's markets. However, my conservation work introduced me to the fields of food systems and sustainable consumption, which sparked my interest in agroecology initiatives during the Autumn semester of 2023.

I recognise the knowledge I produce may have an impact on the agroecological fair and the individuals driving that initiative, but I hope it will support the fair in expanding the scholarly discourse on this engaging topic and in developing further versions of the fair. I consider that having an outsider perspective will also enable me to be truthful and self-aware both throughout and after this study.

5.4.2. Ethical Considerations

A significant portion of qualitative research uses gatekeepers—those who can "permit" access to others so that interviews can take place—as a means of gaining initial access to participants (Miller, 2012). This was also the case, as was indicated in the section on sampling. This thesis revisits the topic because, as Miller (2012) notes, it raises an ethical dilemma regarding some power dynamics that might arise (Miller, 2012). To mitigate any conflicts of interest and bias towards the gatekeeper, this thesis employed a snowball sampling technique to expand data collection and lower the likelihood of biases. Furthermore, because the professor in charge of the agroecological fair participated actively—that is, she assisted with the revision of this thesis and provided some methodological advice—it made

sense to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to clarify roles between her and the main supervisor of Lund University, to which she kindly consented.

Furthermore, as previously indicated, the interviewers were given a consent form outlining the specifics of their involvement as well as requesting their consent for any recording of the interviews. This thesis reaffirms that the testimonies and names of the participants will remain anonymous, be maintained in a secure location, and be used solely for the purposes of this thesis.

5.4.3. Limitations

It is imperative to recognise certain limitations within this study. First, having conversations with students in faculties other than the agroecology engineer program would have added depth to the analysis part.

Similarly, the limited sample size of 10 individuals was prompted by the challenge of conducting interviews with administrative staff and solely consumers who resided in places distance from the university. Another drawback, as mentioned by one participant, was that the interviews were conducted online, which might have limited the answers to some questions.

Moreover, I was unable to visit the agroecological fair for two reasons when I was gathering data: first, I was living outside of Colombia; and second, the fair has not been renewed for a new event in 2024, which prevented me from using active observation, another method of data collection.

6. Findings and Analysis

The following section examines data from semi-structured interviews in an attempt to answer the three main questions stated in the introduction through the lens of social practice theory. Additionally, it will look at how the UNIMINUTO agroecology fair is developed through a variety of practices and examine the connections and exchanges between three essential components—materialities, meanings, and competencies—that are always changing and resulting in the emergence of new practices.

6.1. Characterisation of Consumers Habits at the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair

Table 3 provides details about the ten consumers interviewed at the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair. The group consisted of six women and four men. Three participants began consuming agroecological products due to their academic studies, while two attributed it to their professional experience, and a fourth noted both. Another two participants had a rural background that influenced their consumption habits. The most popular products purchased at the fair included quinoa-based items, cleaning products, fresh vegetables, handicrafts, baked goods, panela (a raw cane sugar product), honey, and marmalades.

Even though fresh vegetables were the third most popular item, it's crucial to note that consumers who have attended the fair since their beginning were primarily drawn to the initial offerings of vegetables and fruits. As the fair expanded its product range to include processed foods, the overall availability of fresh produce decreased, as indicated above:

"During the early years when the fair was developed, there was a very comprehensive, very agro-biodiverse, very cool market where you would prepare to go shopping. Later, it became a fair with many products, and it is part of what happens in many markets, many processed products that are not essential goods." - (C5)

When purchasing agroecological products at a fair, consumers tend to place a higher value on the farmers. In particular, by having a conversation or meeting them. The costs and the production's presentation are the next two considerations they make.

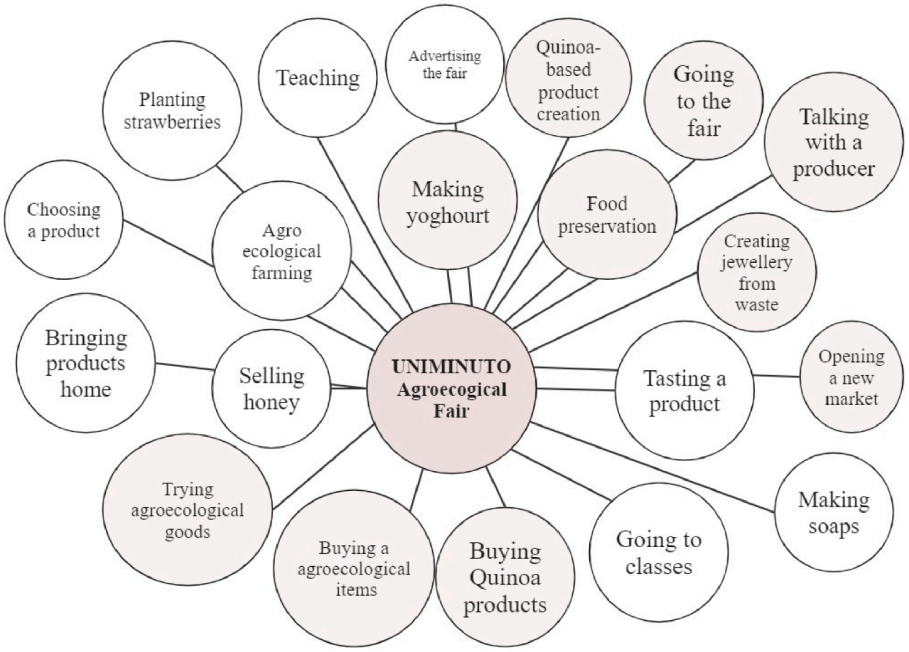
When making purchases, consumers most frequently relied on tasting or trying the products before buying. Examining the product's appearance and aroma was the second most common behaviour. Lastly, interacting with the producer and inquiring about chemical-free products was a common practice among consumers.

Participant	Reasons to start consuming agro-ecological products	Most bought products	Purchasing priorities	Purchasing process
C1	Upbringing	Fruits and vegetables, Panela, honey, artisanal foodstuffs	Quality, producer, asking about the production process	Quality, presentation of the product, smelling, tasting
C2	Professional experience	Beauty creams, Panela, Quinoa bars	Talking with the farmers and producers, product presentation, innovation	Talking with producers and farmers
C3	Academic studies, and professional experience	Panela, honey, chocolat	Peasant production, product presentation, prices	Tasting, smelling
C4	Academic studies	Quinoa products, cleaning items, vegetables	Talking with the producer, environmental benefits, health benefits	Tasting, talking with producers and farmers
C5	Peasant origin	Quinoa products, cheese, vegetables, fruits, baked goods	Prices, who are the producers, type or market	Knowing about the origin of production
C6	Reflexibility / curiosity about the origins of the products	Quinoa production, handicrafts, organic infusions	Visual aspect, interest in farmers' history	Visual aspect, tasting, Entrepreneurship support
C7	Interest in chemical-free products	Eggs, honey, soaps, cleaning items	Organic origins, price, proximity	Visual aspect
C8	Academic studies	Quinoa products, marmalades, jewellery	Origin of the product, talking with the producer	Visual aspect, smelling, product presentation
C9	Academic background	Vegetables, fruits, baked goods,	Novelty, prices, support,	Talking with producers,
C10	Peasant origin	Mermalaids, chili sauces, pickled vegetables,	Quality, tasting, product origin,	Tasting

Table 3. Characterisation of Consumers Habits at the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair (own creation)

6.2. Practices and New Practices at the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair

As mentioned in the theoretical framework section, in order to create and alter social patterns (Ariztía, 2017), a practice combines three components: materialities, skills, and meanings (Spurling *et al.*, 2013). It was also remarkable to note from the interviews that the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair is a place where social practices are constantly developing and changing. In the next graph is illustrated some practices that emerged during the interviews:



Graph 4. Practices and new practices at the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair. The white bubbles show the current practices, while the grey bubbles indicate the proposed new practices based on the interview data (own creation).

The following passage provides an illustration of how a practice is carried out:

"*Through a workshop that we were given here, I learned how to make yoghurt. A workshop given by a city hall official. And I said, oh, I want to learn because my children were little, and I thought, if I have milk nearby, then I want to learn for them, right? They were the initial motivation for everything. And then people would say, it's tasty, why don't you sell me a litre? Sell me a litre, make me a litre. That's how it really started.*" - (C1)

Consumer 1 described learning to make yoghurt as a precursor to engaging in the practice itself. Yoghourt production involves a combination of *competencies* such as handling milk, controlling temperature, and understanding material transformations, along with *materialities* like milk, equipment, and containers. The practice is also shaped by *meanings* attributed to the process, including economic potential, family well-being, and community connections.

The variety of practices that exist now, according to Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012), is the product of an uninterrupted lineage of historical patterns of persistence, transformation,

and disappearance (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). New practices can arise because of these trends. They may result from the introduction of fresh elements or from the reorganisation of already-existing elements (Ariztía, 2017):

"So, for example, I didn't know that quinoa could be transformed in this way, and I didn't know it either. So, it's a way of getting to know a lot of things that you didn't know about and seeing how they transform it. Because it's not just like I go and harvest this and I go and sell it. No, that has an undercurrent of something else." - (C6)

The experience of the consumer 6 highlights how attending the fair can foster the development of new practices. Their unfamiliarity with quinoa product variations demonstrates how the fair can introduce consumers to new consumption possibilities. This process involves acquiring new knowledge about ingredients and their potential applications. Moreover, the association of quinoa-based products with health and conscious consumption suggests the creation of new meanings and practices around these items.

Furthermore, as their lives progress, people continuously pick up and abandon new practices. People end up adopting particular routines for a variety of reasons. Past experiences, place of birth or social networks are all significant factors. Social networks play a crucial role in spreading and shaping practices. The strength of social connections influences how quickly and widely these practices are adopted (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson, 2012).

"We have a collective of peasant women and with them we said, come on, but we have to do something that allows us to stay at home with the children, but also to have some resources. And so at that point we started to organise here how to get, how to produce. Well, that's when the Secretariat of Economic Development intervened and we were invited to some farmers' markets. And so intuitively I brought the yoghurts, right? And that's how it started, that's how this began. I mean, I've wanted to change to other things, but they still ask for yoghurt, so I've kept it. And through some social networks I saw about the Minuto de Dios Agroecological Fair. And I decided to approach them and propose my products and I told them how I obtained them, always trying to make them very healthy, because they were originally for me and for my children" - (C1)

The above testimony not only describes how being in contact with other producers brought her to the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair to sell the yoghurt she made, leading her to a new practice. It also illustrates the interconnection between practices.

Practices can be connected in two primary ways. They can form complexes, where they are tightly intertwined and dependent on each other, requiring specific conditions and sequences, such as cooking or eating. Alternatively, practices can be grouped into bundles, where they are loosely connected and influence one another without strict dependence (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012; Castelo, Schäfer and Silva, 2021). These loosely related practices are typically performed in the same location and influence one another (Castelo, Schäfer and Silva, 2021).

For two primary reasons, attending the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair can be viewed as a bundle of practices: 1) location: The fair is held in the UNIMINUTO university, a specific physical location; and 2) the practices' flexible structure, which allows some practices—such as visiting producers and purchasing goods—to occur without strictly following a set order or dependence on one another. Furthermore, the fair's adaptability—which has evolved since its original design—supports the notion of a less rigid structure.

Beyond complexes and bundles, a nexus describes indirect relationships. It involves the creation of links between "seemingly unrelated" practices through interactions with other practices (Spurling *et al.*, 2013; Castelo, Schäfer and Silva, 2021). These shared aspects or overlapping elements between different practices are called dimensions of intersection. These can be physical things, or shared ideas. These shared elements can connect different practices and make it easy to switch between them (Hui, 2016).

A central theme connecting the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair is sustainable food production and consumption. This idea links different places involved in the process, like farms, the university, and people's homes. It also connects various activities, such as buying, tasting, and cooking agroecological food.

6.3. Meanings at the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair

By examining the associations and mental processes made at the fair, this part will explore the motives behind the assistance to this initiative. During the interviews, more than 70

associations between meanings, emotions, and reasons emerged:

Graph 5. Word Cloud with different meanings found during the interviews. (Own creation).

Nevertheless, six of these meanings emerged as the most frequent during the data analysis. The first and primary association with the fair is its support of regional farmers and producers:

"For me it is very important who the producers are, who is present, who I am supporting. So, if I know that the price may be a little higher, the product may not be the one I like the most, but I know that I am going to take it because I am helping an initiative that comes from a process that is starting up, that is doing important work there in rural areas, that is a collective initiative." - (C5)

In his book '*After virtue : a study in moral theory,*', MacIntyre (2007) argues that performing social activities well generates internal rewards for individuals (Wallace, 1989; MacIntyre, 2007). These 'internal rewards', as also noted by Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012), can influence people's participation in activities that bring personal satisfaction (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). Thus, supporting a producer at the fair could be seen as a source of reward, encouraging attendance at the agroecological fair.

The second most prominent association that emerged from the interviews was the high price of agroecological products:

"The prices at the fair were not really very comfortable prices. They are prices that can be at the same level of the market, a little bit higher generally. So, there was not really a differential factor there. And this happens with most of the fairs that we have at the moment in the market." - (C5)

The responses provided by customers 1 and 3 were similar to those of customer 5. remarkably, all of them are agroecological producers. The consumer testimonies 1 and 3 further demonstrate the complexity of perceptions regarding the cost of agro-ecological products. Although consumer 3 questions the high prices of organic products in comparison to conventional items, consumer 1 displays an awareness of the expenses related to small-scale production. The varying positions expressed by consumers are indicative of their expectations, knowledge, and experiences.

Additional mentions on the costs of the goods at the agroecological fair emerged as well:

"But when I realised at the fair that making a product is not as easy as it looks, I started to understand why the prices. And I realised that they are really not as expensive as I had previously considered them to be. In fact, I find them very economical for all the effort and the process they have to go through." - (C6)

" I feel that in terms of quality and price, I could also relate it to the fact that we are finally providing quality of life to this producer, whether small or medium-sized, or to this family that practises family and community farming, or family farming only. And we are going to allow the price that they are asking for this product to finally keep their profit for themselves" - (C8)

The third most prominent association—conscious consumption—may also be connected to these statements. Conscious consumption was discussed in the literature review section and is defined as a state of concern to consume in a way that enhances the social, environmental, and economic aspects of quality of life (Balderjahn *et al.*, 2013, 2018; Lira and Costa, 2022).

On the other hand, the conversations with customers 4 and 7 revealed a very interesting find. A connection was made by both, between the agroecological origin of the products, their superior quality and the benefits they bring to their health: "*I know that I am paying for something that has, let's say, a product that is of higher quality because in my case, let's say, it has, it doesn't contain, let's say, elements that are going to harm me, but then, and also at*

the same time, well, one is, let's say, supporting a type of market that seems to me, let's say, politically more, more interesting." - (C7)

Consumer 7 highlights the health advantages of these products, while C4 sees them as added benefits of shopping at the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair. These three assets—health, added value, and agroecological origin—are the three remaining associations of this initial analysis.

6.4. Knowledges at the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair

The second part of this analysis reveals a range of knowledge and abilities among consumers regarding agroecological products. Notably, experience in consuming these items emerged as a primary theme:

"In the market, one often finds products that smell like other scents, added by the industry (...) Maybe in the case of panela, I also look a lot at the texture, right? If it is powdered panela, you should also feel the texture, that it is not, let's say, compacted, that you notice it has moisture." - (C3)

It's noteworthy to note that C3 is an agroecological producer, C4 and C6 gained knowledge about selecting agroecological products from their involvement in the fair and their academic backgrounds, and C9 and C10 are both from peasant backgrounds. Knowledge is dynamic and can change as it moves between different environments. In the case of the agroecological fair, this space could be considered as a setting for transformative processes of learning and exchange between individuals (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson, 2012).

The second domain of expertise pertains to the production of agroecological items. Customers 4, 6, and 8 are students from the Corporación Universitaria UNIMINUTO's agroecological engineering program. As previously stated, consumers 1, 3, 5, and 10 are agroecological food producers. It's interesting to observe that these two groups fit the definition of communities of practice, which denotes that individuals usually gather in groups to carry out tasks related to daily living, employment, and education (Barton and Tusting, 2005). People participate in numerous practices, which leads them to be members of multiple communities at the same time (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). This may be the case in this instance because of the various roles that these consumers play and the ways that their previous and present practices have shaped their knowledge.

A third type of knowledge is related to understanding the quality of agroecological products: *“In other words, what you see, you see it as very natural, you see it as very artisanal. The taste is very different. It doesn't have, you don't feel that, for example, the quinoa empanada is very different from a normal empanada because you don't see those reddish colours. Like that kind of strong flavour that you normally get with empanadas. It's softer. It has a different look.”* - (C6)

As seen in the example of consumer 6, customers learn new abilities by attending the fair, like appreciating the quality of agroecological products. They create deeper ideas about the worth of artisanal work and the significance of bolstering the local economy by interacting directly with producers. They are able to value the reasonable price of the items as well as the full value chain, from planting to selling.

6.5. Tangible Aspects at the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair

This next section of findings relates to some physical aspects of attending the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair:

“Well, while I was in the office, sometimes, they’d say, 'Oh! Have you been to the fair? Let’s go to the fair, let’s go shopping.' And so we’d go, sometimes we’d all go if it was convenient. Yes, I had the opportunity to take my husband and my daughter to the fair as well." -(C9)

Interestingly, attending the fair became a routine for many participants, with consumers 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 visiting regularly. Often, these visits were social occasions, involving colleagues, friends, or family. This transformed the fair into a familiar part of daily life, leading to the creation of new consumer practices. Moreover, these practices often extended beyond the fair itself, as consumers introduced agroecological products into their homes:

“Seeing my mom, seeing my house, my family who are in education, but not in these topics, let’s say that I started bringing things like this in, that I also introduced this at home, implies that now they try to do it. So now they say, 'Well, let’s try to buy this somewhere else or see if we can afford this.' So I do believe that it works." - (C2)

The fair had an impact on participants' daily schedules and family interactions. In addition to changing their eating habits, consumers who included agroecological goods in their diets also

experienced a shift in their relationship with food. This shift towards conscious consumption suggests a broader impact of the fair on participants' lifestyles.

The next two trends that emerged during the analysis were common practices such as using the senses to evaluate products and interacting with producers. These interactions were essential components of the overall fair experience. As consumers 5, 6, 8 and 9 noted:

"That was always the first thing I did. At least with the quinoa producer, I always asked her the question: Where do you get your quinoa from? What process has your quinoa gone through? How do you take care of it? So, from that point on, for me that is the most important aspect" - (C8)

Its focus on direct interaction draws attention to how important it is to be physically present and have sensory experiences that influence the opinions and decisions of customers.

The physical layout of the fair also influenced participants' experiences. With opinions ranging from easy accessibility to parking challenges and limited space. Seven of the ten interviewees brought up this subject:

"I feel that sometimes the producers, even the visitors themselves, could see the issue of parking as something negative. There were times when there was not enough space for, I don't know, people visiting with their cars, or even the producers themselves arriving with their cars to bring their products." - (C8)

These infrastructural elements underscore the importance of physical space in shaping the overall fair experience. As Ariztía (2017) suggests, specific practices rely on underlying infrastructures. In this case, the fair's physical setup enabled or constrained participant actions. Furthermore, the fair's location itself can stimulate the development of new practices, as proposed by Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012).

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The following section will discuss the research findings in relation to the original research questions: 1) What are the main motivations that lead regular consumers of the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair in Bogotá to attend and buy at the fair?; 2) What are the main barriers

that prevent the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair in Bogotá from attracting new consumers?, and 3) How the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair contributes to the principle of sustainable consumption?

According to the data gathered, solidarity economy, products, health, education, and experience are the primary drivers behind visitors' attendance at the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair. Starting with the continuous support for regional farmers and producers, consumers considered that buying the agroecological goods from farmers and producers -even if some of these products are more costly than in other kinds of market- they are supporting rural communities, and emerging projects, all of which, in a way or other, contributes to improving the quality of life of these small scale producers.

Product quality was another key factor influencing consumer choices. Many of the fair's most popular items were also widely consumed products. The fair offered a diverse range of products, although some consumers expressed a preference for more traditional options. Additionally, innovative products like quinoa-based items were highly valued. These factors often led consumers to prioritise the fair over traditional retail options.

The health advantages connected to agroecological products also served as a driving force for consumers. The fair featured a variety of chemical-free products, including food and personal hygiene products. It's important to note that the category of health aligns with other studies as a motivation for attending the fair. Learning about the origins of products, environmental effects, and agroecological production methods was another driving force. While some had prior knowledge, the fair offered opportunities to expand their understanding.

Connections between producers and consumers were possible by the fair's engaging social environment. Due to this, it became a location for both pleasure and exploration and was incorporated into the daily lives of the participants.

Responding to the follow-up question, the perception of high prices acts as a barrier to participation in the fair. Many consumers, including students, limit their purchase of agroecological products due to costs. Although some consumers recognize the benefits of these products and are willing to pay more, the widespread perception of high prices discourages many others.

Another challenge faced was the physical location of the fair. While this location was convenient for many, as most attendees were students, professors, or locals affiliated with the university, it is important to note that this convenience was largely due to their proximity. Consumers themselves noted that, without these academic or professional ties, the fair would not be as accessible. Additionally, the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair is specifically designed for individuals living near the university. The other physical space issue is the limited external access to the fair, as the university's administrative processes are confusing. Parking was also a concern, as external visitors and even some vendors struggled to find spaces to park or unload their products.

A trend towards conscious consumerism can be seen in the increasing knowledge among consumers of agroecological production processes, particularly the significance of supporting farmers and the stories behind the products. This knowledge was frequently spread to friends and family, which aided in the development of increasingly common sustainable consumption habits.

It is noteworthy, however, that the majority of those interviewed had prior knowledge, mainly from their education in relevant subjects or from their work as agroecological producers. Other studies have found a lack of knowledge in agroecological production among consumers of the UNIMINUTO agroecological fair. Therefore, future studies should employ larger and more varied samples to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to enhance the current understanding of university agroecological fairs through the lens of social practice theory. It seeks to illustrate how these spaces not only promote sustainable consumption but also offer insights from various perspectives, particularly social practices. The thesis highlights the richness and diversity of practices within these fairs and explores the emergence of new practices. The study also emphasises the importance of continued support for such initiatives to sustain the development of new consumption patterns, and suggests exploring the impact of potential future disruptions, such as the closure of university fairs, as a direction for future research.

Word Count: 14.904

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9.Appendix

Annex I: Informed Consent Form for Semi-Structured Interview (Spanish Version)

LUNDS UNIVERSITET

Consentimiento para participar en una Tesis de Investigación en la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales

Estoy de acuerdo en participar en una tesis de investigación basada en un estudio de caso de la feria agroecológica de la Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios. Esta investigación busca identificar las funciones que cumplen estos espacios para los consumidores de Bogotá, así como las posibles barreras que enfrenta.

Este proyecto de tesis es un requisito para obtener un Máster en Desarrollo Internacional y Gestión en la Universidad de Lund. Por lo tanto, se trata de un proyecto estudiantil que solo recopilará datos personales básicos.

Información sobre el tratamiento de datos personales

Se tratarán los siguientes datos personales:
En la tesis de investigación sólo se tratarán datos básicos como el nombre y la edad.

Los datos personales se tratarán de las siguientes formas:
La recolección de datos se realizará mediante grabaciones de audio y/o video. Estas grabaciones de audio y video, así como las transcripciones impresas y digitales se conservarán en un lugar seguro durante los siguientes cinco años siguientes a la publicación de la tesis de investigación, tras lo cual se destruirán los archivos. No se utilizarán nombres ni otros datos de identificación cuando se publique la tesis de investigación o se disemine información sobre la misma.

No compartimos sus datos personales con terceros.

La participación es totalmente voluntaria. La persona ha sido instruida tanta oralmente como por escrito de que la participación en este proceso es completamente opcional, que no está obligada a responder de ninguna manera si

Dirección de visita / postal *Sölvegatan 10 SE-223 62 Lund, Suecia* Teléfono *+46 (0)46 222 86 90, 046-222 00 00* E-mail *lumid@keg.lu.se*

decide no hacerlo y que es libre de abandonar la entrevista en cualquier momento. El entrevistado ha tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas y pedir aclaraciones sobre la entrevista, el proceso y el propósito de la investigación.

La Universidad de Lund, Box 117, 221 00 Lund, Suecia, con número de organización 202100-3211, es la responsable del tratamiento de sus datos. Puede encontrar la política de privacidad de la Universidad de Lund en www.lu.se/integritet

Tiene derecho a recibir información sobre los datos personales que procesamos sobre usted. También tiene derecho a que se corrijan los datos personales inexactos que le conciernan. Si tiene alguna queja sobre el tratamiento de sus datos personales, puede ponerse en contacto con nuestro Delegado de Protección de Datos en dataskyddsombud@lu.se. También tiene derecho a presentar una reclamación ante la autoridad supervisora (Autoridad de Protección de Datos, IMY) si considera que estamos procesando sus datos personales de forma incorrecta.

Acepto participar en una tesis de investigación basada en un estudio de caso de la feria agroecológica de la Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios. Esta investigación busca identificar las funciones que cumplen estos espacios para los consumidores de Bogotá, así como las posibles barreras que enfrenta.

Lugar	Firma
Fecha	Nombre

Annex II: Informed Consent Form for Semi-Structured Interview (English Version)

LUNDS UNIVERSITET

Consent to participate in a Thesis at the Faculty of Social Sciences

I agree to participate in a research thesis on a case study of the agroecological fair of the Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, which aims to identify the functions that these spaces fulfil for consumers in Bogotá as well as the possible barriers they face.

This research thesis is part of a degree requirement for obtaining a Master's degree in International Development and Management at Lund University. Therefore, it is a student project that will collect only basic personal data.

Information on the processing of personal data

The following personal data will be processed:
Only basic data such as name and age will be processed in the research thesis.

Personal data will be processed in the following ways:
Data collection will be carried out through audio and/or video recordings. These audio and video recordings, as well as printed or digital transcripts will be kept at a secure locked location for five years following the publication of this research thesis, after which time all files will be destroyed. While discussing or reporting information, no names or other personally identifiable information will be used.

We do not share your personal data with third parties.

This participation is entirely voluntary. The interviewee has been instructed both orally and in writing that participation in the process is completely optional, that they are not required to respond in any way if they choose not to, and that they are free to leave the interview at any time. The interviewee has had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification about the interview, the process, and the purpose of the research.

Visiting / Postal address *Sölvegatan 10 SE-223 62 Lund, Sweden* Telefon *+46 (0)46 222 86 90, 046-222 00 00* E-mail *lumid@keg.lu.se*

Lund University, Box 117, 221 00 Lund, Sweden, with organisation number 202100-3211 is the controller. You can find Lund University's privacy policy at www.lu.se/integritet

You have the right to receive information about the personal data we process about you. You also have the right to have inaccurate personal data about you corrected. If you have a complaint about our processing of your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer at dataskyddsombud@lu.se. You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority (the Data Protection Authority, IMY) if you believe that we are processing your personal data incorrectly.

I agree to participate in a research thesis on a case study of the agroecological fair of the Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, which aims to identify the functions that these spaces fulfil for consumers in Bogotá as well as the possible barriers they face.

Location	Signature
Date	Name clarification

Annex III: Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Interview

Semi Structured Interviews Guide

Introduction:

- Tell me a bit about yourself: name, age, what you do.

Intermediate Questions:

Initial Perception of the Fair:

- How did you find out about the agroecological fair?
- Why did you start going to the fair?
- How many times have you been to the fair?
- When you shop at the fair, is it for the purpose of...?
- What aspects of the fair do you find most and least interesting?

Specific Questions:

a) **Consumption of Agroecological Products:**

- What led you to decide or what moment made you start buying and consuming agroecological foods and/or other products?

b) **Shopping Habits:**

- What specific products do you usually buy at the fair?
- When buying products like [examples], what do you take into account?
- Could you share with me the most important aspects you consider when shopping at the fair? For example: price, freshness, shape, colour, trust in the seller, local product, organic product, quality. I would appreciate it if you could rank them in order of importance.
- What is the process of buying agroecological products like? For example, do you touch and/or smell the fruits and vegetables?
- How does the variety of products, freshness, and taste compare to other supermarkets you frequent?
- Do you shop alone or with your family/friends?

c) **Prices**:

- How do the prices at this fair compare to your usual supermarket expenses? What factors influence your perception of the quality-price ratio when shopping at the fair?

d) Convenience:

- How convenient is the location of the fair for you in terms of accessibility and transportation? What aspects of the fair's layout, shopping experience, and customer service contribute to its convenience? How does the overall shopping experience at this fair compare to that of other supermarkets?

e) Identifying Barriers:

- Do you think people in Bogotá are aware of the university's agroecological fair? What are the main obstacles people face in accessing or learning about this fair? How can people be better informed about agroecological fairs?

f) Contribution to Food Sovereignty:

- Do you think this fair helps you access locally produced foods? Do you feel that by shopping at this fair you support local farmers?
- Has this fair helped you change/be more conscious of your consumption habits?
- After going to this fair, how often do you think about where the food you consume comes from?
- In your opinion, how does this fair contribute to a more sustainable food system in Bogotá?

Open-ended Questions:

- I leave the space open in case you want to say more about the fair.

Annex IV: Characterisation of Consumers Habits at the UNIMINUTO Agroecological Fair

Participant	Reasons to start consuming agro-ecological products	Most bought products	Purchasing priorities	Purchasing process
C1	Upbringing	Fruits and vegetables, Panela, honey, artisanal foodstuffs	Quality, producer, asking about the production process	Quality, presentation of the product, smelling, tasting
C2	Professional experience	Beauty creams, Panela, Quinoa bars	Talking with the farmers and producers, product presentation, innovation	Talking with producers and farmers
C3	Academic studies, and professional experience	Panela, honey, chocolat	Peasant production, product presentation, prices	Tasting, smelling
C4	Academic studies	Quinoa products, cleaning items, vegetables	Talking with the producer, environmental benefits, health benefits	Tasting, talking with producers and farmers
C5	Peasant origin	Quinoa products, cheese, vegetables, fruits, baked goods	Prices, who are the producers, type or market	Knowing about the origin of production
C6	Reflexibility / curiosity about the origins of the products	Quinoa production, handicrafts, organic infusions	Visual aspect, interest in farmers' history	Visual aspect, tasting, Entrepreneurship support
C7	Interest in chemical-free products	Eggs, honey, soaps, cleaning items	Organic origins, price, proximity	Visual aspect
C8	Academic studies	Quinoa products, marmalades, jewellery	Origin of the product, talking with the producer	Visual aspect, smelling, product presentation
C9	Academic background	Vegetables, fruits, baked goods,	Novelty, prices, support,	Talking with producers,
C10	Peasant origin	Mermalaids, chili sauces, pickled vegetables,	Quality, tasting, product origin,	Tasting