



Problems, possibility, change:

Urban visions of more local food

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Urban agriculture = food production within the city's bounds

Ackerman (2011)

“Habits of being” = how we relate with each other / the world

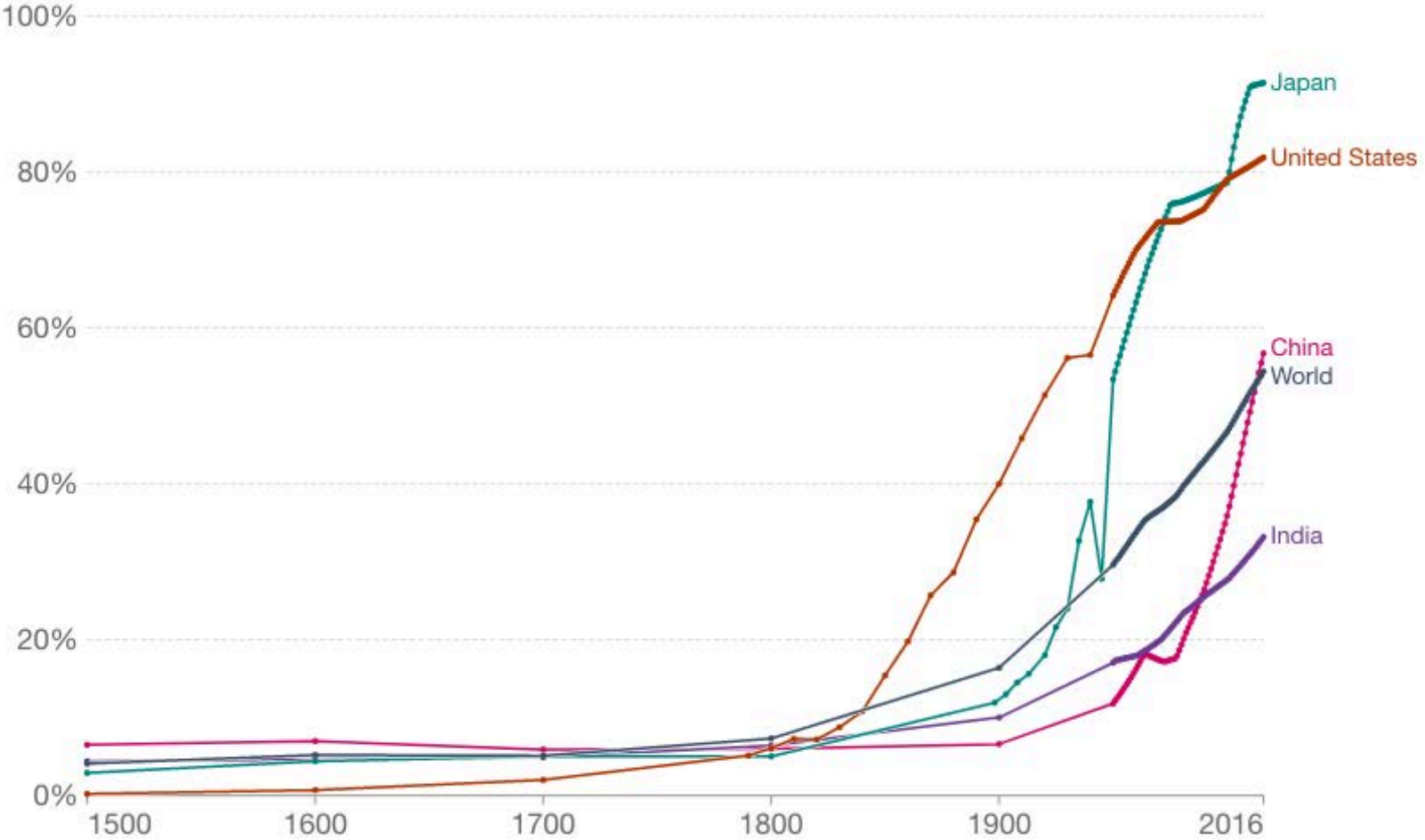
Shotwell (2016)

My email 😊 - dkel042@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Since industrialisation began, cities have hugely increased in size..

Urbanization over the past 500 years, 1500 to 2016

Share of the total population living in urban areas.



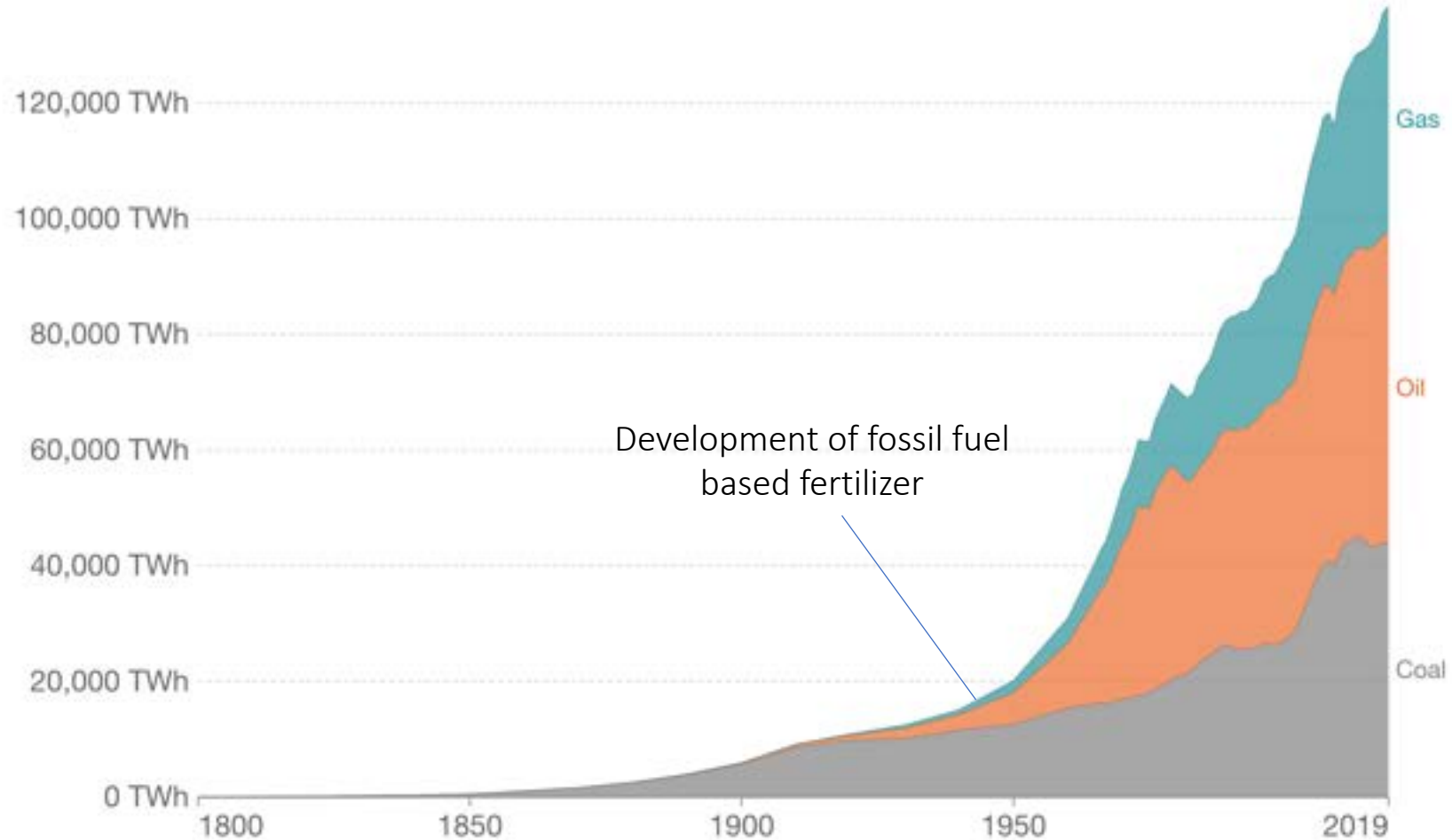
Source: OWID based on UN World Urbanization Prospects 2018 and historical sources (see Sources) OurWorldInData.org/urbanization • CC BY
Note: Urban areas are based on national definitions and may vary by country.

...and we use more and more energy...

Global fossil fuel consumption

Global primary energy consumption by fossil fuel source, measured in terawatt-hours (TWh).

Our World
in Data



Source: Vaclav Smil (2017). Energy Transitions: Global and National Perspective & BP Statistical Review of World Energy
OurWorldInData.org/fossil-fuels/ • CC BY

Food as [partial] cause and response

- Industrialised Food implicated in:
 - Huge emissions
 - Biodiversity loss
 - Fresh water pollution
 - Worker exploitation
 - Corporate profiteering



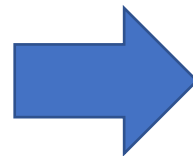
Food as [partial] cause and response

- Industrialised Food implicated in:

- Huge emissions
- Biodiversity loss
- Fresh water pollution
- Worker exploitation
- Corporate profiteering

- Diverse groups working for:

- Increased localization
- Social inclusion
- Economic accountability
- Ecological enrichment



“an ontology of connectedness”

(Rose, 2013, p.2)

Research “in the field”



Inner city – council land



South – urban marae (Māori community group)



West - suburban backyards

In NZ, urban ag is marginal

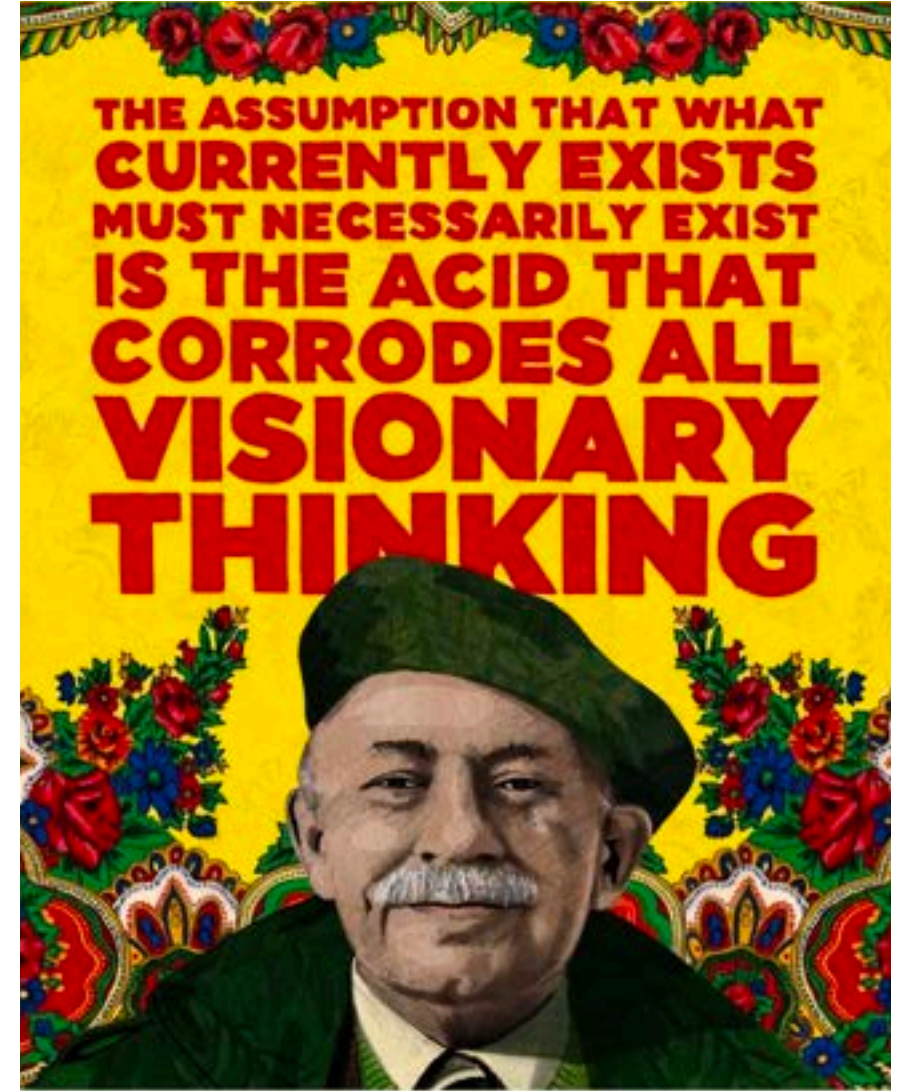
- International research celebrates its positive impacts!
 - Increased social connections (Firth et al., 2011)
 - Economic benefits (Kaufman & Bailkey, 2000)
 - Improved ecosystem services (Taylor & Lovell, 2014)
- But it still struggles in NZ..
 - No regulatory framework (Hanna & Wallace, 2022)
 - Isolated projects (Sharp et al., 2015)
 - Issues with funding, volunteers, tenure (Earle, 2011)



Helping establish an urban farm in central Auckland

Exploring different narratives

- Rappaport (2000): narratives important for individual and social change
 - Describe our collective values
 - Impact behavior, resource allocation etc
- Narratives can support the status quo.... or encourage a different future



Bookchin (1990)

Exploring different narratives

- Rappaport (2000): narratives important for individual and social change
 - Describe our collective values
 - Impact behavior, resource allocation etc
- Narratives can support the status quo.... or encourage a different future
- Interviews with 20 grassroots practitioners
 - Range of different projects
 - Covering: pathways in, benefits, challenges, public perception, "the future of food"



A [brief] “tale of terror”

- Cities as places of consumption only
 - Rural agriculture: efficient, productive, central
 - Urban agriculture: inefficient, unproductive, marginal
- Urban food production elite / hippie hobby at best



A [brief] “tale of terror”

- Cities as places of consumption only
 - Rural agriculture: efficient, productive, central
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- Urban food production elite / hippie hobby at best
- *Result?* The worsening status quo
 - Social inequality and alienation
 - Rising prices and food insecurity
 - Dependence on profiteering supermarkets for environmentally-damaging, toxic food



A [prefigurative] “tale of joy”

- Cities as places of production as well as consumption
 - Food production **highly visible, celebrated and woven throughout**
 - Range of avenues for participation = *explicitly inclusive*



A [prefigurative] “tale of joy”

- Cities as places of production as well as consumption
 - Food production highly visible, celebrated and woven throughout
 - Range of avenues for participation = *explicitly inclusive*
- *Result?* Transforming the status quo
 - Meaningful work
 - Stronger communities
 - Identity and belonging
 - No one left hungry
 - Experimentation & innovation



The shape of a [different] future



- Supermarkets and large farms still exist..
 - But are different as a result of political pressure

- Food production a core part of Auckland's identity
 - Public art + seasonal festivals
 - Community education and outreach
 - Tourism and local economies
 - Diversity and exchange



Getting from here to there

- Existing efforts expanded
 - More participants = more power = more possibility
 - The prefiguration of **many different visions**
 - A thriving urbanity



Distributing free backyard produce



Selling food boxes direct



Public education



Thanks for listening!

Vacant lot to urban farm
[OMG] in ~8 months



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