Healthy Food Access in Social Economy Business Models: Case Studies in Toronto's Good Food Sector

by

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Abstract

This paper explores the socioeconomic dimensions of food access in social economy business models in Toronto's food sector. Specifically, it focuses on community food organizations and small food businesses that deliver programming to increase access to healthy food. The research spans co-operative, non-profit, and social enterprise/social purpose business models in the social economy sector.

This research was undertaken with case studies of three food access programs or services: the Good Food Program at FoodShare Toronto; Fresh City Farms; and the Co-op Cred Program, a partnership between Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC), the West End Food Co-op (WEFC), Greenest City and three other non-profit community organizations. Each program exists under a different social economy business model. The case studies build upon two theoretical propositions about healthy food access and the social economy. These propositions are based in literature on the following topics: first, that access to healthy food is a greater barrier for people in a lower socioeconomic position (SEP) (McGill et al., 2015), and second, that different social economy business models have unique inherent values, and varying dependencies on and relationships to the market (Quarter and Mook, 2010). The third proposition is based on the first two, and it is tested by the results of my case studies. I explore how each business model's unique characteristics and differential relationship to the market influences the degree to which food access programs take socioeconomic concerns into account; specifically, the SEP of customers and program participants.

The case studies included semi-structured interviews with key staff members from each program or service, in addition to document analysis of organizational grey literature.

My analysis uses frameworks from McGill et al. (2015) and Nelson and Landman (2015) in order to assess each program or service's delivery of food access programming, and the degree to which each takes socioeconomic considerations into account.

The results of my research demonstrated that the Good Food Program considers people with a low socioeconomic position (SEP) in the greatest number of ways, but the Co-op Cred Program addresses this demographic in the most substantial way, through fully subsidized access to food, and a consideration of the systemic challenges and effects of poverty. Fresh City Farms does not address the socioeconomic aspect of healthy food access. However, the Co-op Cred Program has the least potential as a scalable model while the Good Food Program is best positioned to deliver this type of programming in a scalable manner.

The relationship between the socioeconomic consideration of food access programming and each program's business model was significant. The values and market position of each model (co-operative/non-profit partnership, non-profit and social purpose business) were reflected in the program's consideration of individuals and communities with a low SEP. Both the co-operative/non-profit partnership and non-profit models service low SEP populations, though to different degrees. The social purpose business does not service these populations but was pointedly aware of this fact and their inability to do so based on their business model.

Foreword

This paper was developed through my Plan of Study, which explored social economy business models in the food sector. My research came to focus on food access in particular, and the socioeconomic dimensions of this problem. I integrated two of my major Areas of Concentration into this work: Social Economy Organizations and Community Food Organizations & Small Food Businesses, through which, this research paper is a culmination of five significant Learning Objectives within my Plan of Study.

I have explored this topic because of my personal interest and experience in the food sector, and my belief that food is a vital part of human life, which through greatly increased and just access has the potential to create progressive social change. The work being done in this sector needs significant improvement but has great potential as an essential component of social justice work, community engagement and individual empowerment.

Given that access to healthy food is a current and pressing issue that is rife for transformation (MacRae 2011; Skogstad, 2012), it appeared important to understand how and to what extent civil society actors are contributing to solutions, and what the opportunities and limitations are for different business models in the social economy.

In the course of my research, I became professionally involved with one of my case study programs, and thus more acutely aware of the challenges associated with food access programming, especially for organizations that operate within models that are alternative or opposed to the dominant for-profit model, such as co-operatives. I hope that this research will contribute to an ongoing conversation about how to increase widespread access to healthy food, while considering the organizational challenges and economic realities that can impede this work.

I am very thankful for the support and guidance of my Supervisor Rod MacRae, whose attentive and constructive feedback helped me realize this work. I would also like to thank my friend Ann Eyerman for her time and talent in proofreading my paper, as well as my family, friends, and peers in the MES program for their encouragement and open ears.

Last, but certainly not least, I would not have been able to gain such insight and perspective on my case studies without the gracious participation of my interviewees, Mandy Bergman, Moorthi Senaratne and Ran Goel. Thank you!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This paper explores the socioeconomic dimensions of food access in social economy business models in Toronto's food sector. I am exploring this topic because of my personal interest and experience in the sector, and my belief that food is a vital part of human life, which through greatly increased and just access has the potential to create progressive social change. The work being done in this sector needs significant improvement but has great potential as an essential component of social justice work, community engagement and individual empowerment.

Specifically, I focus on community food organizations and small food businesses that deliver programming to increase access to healthy food. I understand social economy business models as organizations that have a structure designed to improve or enable their capacity for social change, and that exist within the social economy. Quarter, Mook and Armstrong (2009) describe the social economy as containing organizations that have social objectives central to their mission and produce some economic value, simply through their services and the purchases they make, or through more explicit economic objectives. For the purpose of this research, *business model* refers to both for-profit and non-profit business models. My focus spans co-operative, non-profit, and social enterprise/social purpose business models in the social economy sector.

Because organizations are an important subset of our social structure (Hodgson, 2007), I am interested in exploring how they are structured, their relationship to the market, and how this influences their consideration of the socioeconomic realities of their customers and/or program participants. I am undertaking this research primarily through a multiple case study approach of three food access programs or services, each within a different social economy business model. The case studies build upon two theoretical propositions about healthy food access and the social economy. These propositions are based in literature on the topics; first, that access to healthy food is a greater barrier for people in a lower socioeconomic position (SEP) (McGill et al., 2015), and second, that different social economy business models have unique inherent values, and varying dependencies on and relationships to the market (Quarter and Mook, 2010). The third proposition is based on the first two, and it is tested by the results of my case studies. I explore how each business model's unique characteristics and differential relationship to the market influences the degree to which food access programs take socioeconomic concerns into account; specifically, the SEP of customers and program participants.

Given that access to healthy food is a current and pressing issue that is rife for transformation (MacRae 2011; Skogstad, 2012), it appears important to understand how and to what extent civil society actors are contributing to solutions, and what the opportunities and limitations are for different business models in the social economy.

Within the analysis, I will consider the following questions:

1) Are certain social economy business models more conducive to addressing healthy food access for low income individuals and communities?
2) What is the demographic focus of these organizations – ie., are they focused on low income individuals, or do they rely on more affluent populations to maintain their business model?
3) More broadly, given the dominant political and economic framework, what social economy models have the best chance of being successful?

1.2 Research Methods and Objectives

To respond to my research question, I used a multiple case studies approach. A literature review introduces and contextualizes current perspectives and debate. The case studies include document analysis and semi-structured interviews that aim to address the *how* and *why* of the research question, in order to expand and generalize upon the theories put forward by the literature (Yin, 2003).

The literature review focuses on each component of my research question; in total, it is tailored to comment on and help answer my research question. The literature focuses on the following components:

1) Food access from an international, national and local context (emphasis on the local Toronto context)

2) Business models of social economy organizations (co-operatives, social enterprise/social purpose business and non-profits)

This literature review seeks to analyze and present relevant aspects of each topic, including what is not known about each, any areas of controversy in the literature, and provide theoretical backing for the research question. Component 1) involves a survey of different critical perspectives on the topic of food access, and component 2) is a literature review of the different theories that inform and have informed organizational structure and business models. The literature review includes journal articles, academic books and grey literature.

My case studies are hypothesis-testing case studies, which are done when the results found within the literature review either prove or disprove hypotheses related to similar research (Levy, 2008). The case studies focus on programs or services that provide enhanced access to healthy food. I used a multiple case studies approach of an embedded nature, since I am exploring the organizations' business model *and* their relationship to the food access programming that they deliver (therefore a subunit of analysis within a broader unit of analysis) (Yin, 2003). Each program is delivered by an organization with a different social economy business model, including a non-profit and co-operative partnership; a social purpose business; and a non-profit organization. The case studies are the Good Food Program at FoodShare Toronto; Fresh City Farms; and the Co-op Cred Program, which is a partnership between Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC), the West End Food Co-op (WEFC), Greenest City and three other community organizations. The case studies were selected based on the criteria that they each represent a different social economy business model, are located in Toronto and are doing work to improve access to healthy food. I identified and contacted potential interviewees to request participation in my research and developed semi-structured interview questions for my interviewees (see Appendix). The interviews were conducted in person at the interviewees' organizations. The document analysis of the case studies included organizational grey literature.

The case studies were designed based on my research question, which seeks to explore how each program addresses the socioeconomic concerns of food access, and how this is affected by their business model. To define *food access* and determine how each program integrates it into their business model, I used indicators found within the framework *Evaluating Community Food Hubs: A Practical Guide* (Nelson and Landman, 2015). This guide includes a number of sample outcomes to define food access, which I modified to be relevant to the research. To obtain a basis for understanding how each program or service addresses healthy food access, I framed the following outcomes as questions during my semi-structured interviews:

1) Increased awareness of healthy, local food and its benefits

2) Increased purchases of healthy, local food

3) Increased food skills and literacy

4) Increased number of outlets supplying healthy local foods

5) Increased diversity of healthy, local foods available

6) Increased diversity of healthy, local food customers

7) Increased access for marginalized groups (Nelson and Landman, 2015, p.16)

Using Nelson and Landman's (2015) criteria illuminated each program's position on food access, including socioeconomic elements such as "Increased access for marginalized groups" (p.16). Given respondents' answers to these questions, in combination with organizational grey literature, I then applied an additional framework from McGill et al. (2015). This framework specifically considers the socioeconomic concerns of food access, which is detailed in McGill et al.'s (2015) paper, "Are Interventions to Promote Healthy

Eating Equally Effective For All? Systematic Review of Socioeconomic Inequalities in Impact." This study used a bibliographic search of five databases to screen and select studies on different interventions to promote healthy eating (McGill et al., 2015). The intent was to determine the effects of interventions on different sections of the population; essentially, to explore whether certain interventions decrease or widen the gap between the rich and the poor (McGill et al., 2015). This framework relies on the "6 P" criteria, which includes "Price, Place, Product, Prescriptive, Promotion and Person" (McGill et al., 2015, p.4). The different indicators are used to compare and describe how each detracts from, enhances or is neutral in generating socioeconomic inequalities. I used the definitions from McGill et al. (2015) to measure each program's consideration of socioeconomic dimensions:

Price – Fiscal measures such as taxes, subsidies, or economic incentives

Place – Environmental measures in specific settings such as schools, work places (e.g. vending machines) or planning (e.g. location of supermarkets and fast food outlets) or community-based health education

Product – Modification of food products to make them healthier/less harmful e.g. reformulation, additives, or elimination of a specific nutrient

Prescriptive – Restrictions on advertising/marketing through controls or bans, labelling, recommendations or guidelines

Promotion – Mass media public information campaigns

Person – Individual-based information and education (e.g. cooking lessons, tailored nutritional education/ counselling, or nutrition education in the school curriculum) (p.4)

McGill et al.'s (2015) 6 P framework was designed and based on the "4 Ps" framework, which is well-known in the marketing field. In the adapted 6 P version, it is used to understand how healthy food promotion initiatives take socioeconomic status into account. Although McGill et al. (2015) understand and apply the 6 Ps within a regulatory context, it is possible to extend the framework to programs in the sectors outside of government. By this reasoning, I extend the framework to my case studies, which are programs run by different organizations in the social economy. Based on the qualitative description of each intervention type, I made an assessment of what interventions were at work in each of the case study programs. Then, based on the correlation that McGill et al. (2015) find between certain intervention types and whether they benefit, detract from or are neutral towards social inequality, I made assertions about the socioeconomic focus of each of the case study programs or services.

McGill et al. (2015) presented the different initiatives as "downstream" and "upstream" (p.2) interventions. The downstream interventions include those that rely on individual behaviour change and are therefore more likely to be taken up by individuals in a higher socioeconomic position (SEP), as opposed to the upstream interventions, which remove barriers such as access to resources or information and lead to more uniform access and greater benefit for those of a lower SEP (McGill et al., 2015). More specifically, there are three groupings of intervention types: 1) those that are likely to reduce inequalities, 2) those that are likely to widen inequalities, and 3) those that do not have a preferential impact on SEP (McGill et al., 2015). Of the 18 relevant price-based interventions that McGill et al. (2015) reviewed, more than half were shown to improve healthy eating patterns in people with a low SEP, thereby reducing inequalities. Two of the interventions resulted in a greater impact for those with a higher SEP, and the remaining six interventions demonstrated no differential benefit for those with a low versus high SEP.

In their discussion, McGill et al. (2015) concluded that the ‘upstream’ intervention of Price was most likely to decrease inequalities amongst those involved in their selected studies. The results for Place interventions were mixed, although none of them were shown to widen inequalities. The results showed that Person interventions were most likely to widen inequalities. The remaining three Ps were not found to be relevant to my case studies but their results were as follows: Promotion intervention results were mixed, and did not show a preference for either reducing or widening inequalities; there were no Prescriptive interventions found; and only one for Product, making these intervention types even less relevant to McGill et al.’s (2015) work, and resultantly, to mine.

After assessing each case study separately, I cross-compared them in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations for future research on this subject. Within this analysis, I drew on information and conclusions of the literature review in order to support and strengthen hypotheses and conclusions. I necessarily considered the tension between the inherent limitations of case studies, which cannot be used to make broad theoretical generalizations, and the broader perspective of the literature review.

After my research is finished and presented, I will share it with participating people and/or organizations. I understand a "good" research process to involve a clear, informed theoretical framework, a basis of trust and understanding with the research participants, and open, accessible lines of communication between the researcher and research participants, so that the research can be shared and (if applicable) used by the participating people or community afterward.

1.3 Theoretical Framework and Positioning

As described in the Research Methods and Objectives section, my analysis is based primarily on two frameworks. The first, *Evaluating Community Food Hubs: A Practical Guide* (Nelson and Landman, 2015), I use in order to perform an initial assessment of each case study organization and its orientation toward healthy food access. The second is the 6 P framework, adapted from McGill et al.'s (2015) paper. Both of these works are connected to the broader theoretical framework that I am working under in this paper.

The premise of Nelson and Landman's (2015) guide is that community food hubs are a viable and growing model for delivering community food programming, and their effectiveness could be improved through more comprehensive and standardized evaluation. This work assumes that community food programming is inherently important. Community food programming may arise and be associated with a spectrum of theoretical positions but broadly, it is interested in themes of food access, food security, food sovereignty, food justice, environmental sustainability, inclusiveness, and socioeconomic equality (Morales, 2011; Wakefield, 2013; Clapp, 2014; Jarosz, 2014). McGill et al. (2015) are specifically interested in socioeconomic inequality as it relates to healthy food. The themes from both Nelson and Landman (2015) and McGill et al. (2015) can be situated within a broader theoretical framework that respects and considers inclusive and socially-progressive ideas and actions.

Thus, my overarching theoretical framework is based on an epistemology that has the capacity to access diverse sources of knowledge that extend beyond the traditional academy, and into the field of different disciplines and communities (Nabudere, 2002). This epistemology is reflected in Nabudere's (2002) interpretation of Gadamer's philosophy, which is that "one's present *horizons* and one's knowledge and experience, are the productive grounds for understanding" (p.4). For myself and my research, I understand this to mean that I will respect a person's or a community's knowledge and perspective for its innate interpretation of the world. I understand divergent and diverse worldviews to be a part of the multiplicity of truths that exist in the world, rather than alternative interpretations that are ultimately measured against the current neo-liberal, Eurocentric, positivist framework that dominates the academy, and many other facets of society.

Strega's (2005) perspective in her piece on poststructural epistemologies and methodologies aligns well with my own worldview and has influenced my decision to work under the theoretical framework of feminist poststructuralism. I understand the three standards that Strega (2005) identified to assess feminist poststructural research as an apt basis for my own research. The points to consider are:

1) Political implications and usefulness for progressive, anti-oppressive politics in marginalized communities

2) Ask not just “about whom?” but “for whom?”
3) Consider and measure the extent to which we have considered our own complicity in systems of dominance and subordination (Strega, 2005).

Based on the research I plan to undertake, and my position as a white, cis-gender presenting woman, this epistemology will help guide an informed praxis which considers the potential limitations of academic research, especially when it involves engaging with or theorizing about marginalized individuals and communities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Background

2.1 Food Access Context

There has been an active discussion surrounding the food system, and the ways that it can and should be improved for some time now (Dahlberg, 2001; Blay-Palmer and Donald, 2006; Sumner 2012; MacRae and Abergel, 2012; Knufer, 2013; MacRae and Donahue, 2013).There are compelling reasons for people to be concerned with the current state of the food system (Koc and Bas, 2012; Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Stiegman, 2012) – whether those are local manifestations like a lack of affordable, accessible and healthy food in low-income communities (Morales, 1999), or occurrences in the past decade, such as the global food crisis of 2008 (Holt-Giménez, 2011).

The reactions to a growing consciousness about the corporate-controlled, environmentally unsustainable, and socially unjust food system are diverse. Alkon and Agyeman (2011) pointed out the market-based approach, whereby consumers are choosing to shop at farmers’ markets, or join community-shared agriculture programs (CSAs) in order to support small scale, local and often organic farmers. Concern about our food system has also led to the proliferation and strengthening of community food work within civil society organizations (CSOs) such as non-profits and grassroots projects (Stiegman, 2012). Koc and

Bas (2012) defined CSOs (in the context of food work) as “[c]ommunity-based non-profit organizations working for the public interest independent of governments and the food industry” (p.174). However, given the increasingly hybrid nature of non-profit organizations and businesses in the social economy (Quarter and Mook, 2010), I argue that certain for-profit businesses can also fall into the category of CSOs, or can at least be discussed in a similar way. Social enterprises, for example, can also be “working for the public interest” (Koc and Bas, 2012, p.174). This semantic discussion is important simply for the ability to understand socially-focused organizations in a cohesive way since there are many overlapping conceptualizations of this sector of society (ie. the third sector, the social economy, or CSOs). In this paper, I use the “social economy” but others have slightly varied understandings of this sphere; for the purpose of this discussion, I understand CSOs to be included in the social economy.

In this field, and within the academy, there is growing concern about the impact that CSOs can have, as it relates to equitable food access (Slocum, 2006; Guthman, 2011; Stiegman, 2012; Desmarais and Wittman 2014). An interesting critique on the role of CSOs in community food work came from Stiegman (2012), who used her own experience to comment on recent food security and sovereignty movements in Canada. She is reluctant to give too much credit to the grassroots strategies and programs that have originated from the movement (Stiegman, 2012). Stiegman (2012) also observed that initiatives such as community food programs and urban farms have tangible impacts but they do not affect the policy level, and sometimes they cannot reach the poorest segments of society because the barriers to any kind of engagement are too great.

Koc et al. (2014) suggested that if food security is to be addressed, it needs public regulation. Whether discussing land use, access or urban agriculture, the authors returned to the idea that the market – and notably the global trade of agricultural products – cannot regulate itself and moreover, contributes to the vast majority of food systems issues (Koc, et al., 2014). In a discussion of food policy failure, MacRae (2011) addressed the fact that there is a lack of, and advocates for, comprehensive food policy. The historic food policy in Canada, especially that defined by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, is almost completely lacking in environmental, health or social aspects of food policy (MacRae, 2011). While this paper does not explicitly address or make recommendations on food policy, it acknowledges the importance of this perspective. Instead, this paper seeks to better understand the role and potential of organizations that exist within the social economy and are addressing food access without a direct influence on broader food policy.

Despite their argument for CSOs to become more involved in and effective at policy advocacy, Koc and Bas (2012) also suggested that CSOs often work in tandem with the policy sphere in an advocacy role, depending on the funding availability and focus of the organization. Koc et al. (2008) went as far as to describe civil society's role in the following way:

> Vital drivers of change and the democratization process; contributing to the transparency and accountability of policy-making; introducing new information, experiences, and perspectives; and contributing to the practical implementation of various initiatives (p.125).

Regardless of these critiques of CSOs and market-based approaches, they are most certainly a part of the entire movement towards – and the discussion surrounding – improved food access and food security.

To contextualize "food access," it is important to understand how it fits within the broader discourse of "food security." The term "food security" became prevalent at the 1975 World Food Conference Report, and is described as, "availability at all times of adequate world supplies of basic food-stuffs... to sustain steady expansion of food consumption...and to offset fluctuations and prices" (Jarosz, 2014, p.170). As an international, neoliberal reaction to the 1974 world food price crisis, Jarosz (2014) is critical of food security's "developmentalist" (p.171) intentions. Clapp (2014) took issue with Jarosz's (2014) position with an argument that food security is an open and relative concept and therefore, "could apply at the individual, local, and regional levels" (p.207). Clapp (2014) also pointed out that the definition is evolving and even the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) definition has been expanded to include the idea of *social* access to food, which might acknowledge that individuals' and communities' access to food can be dependent upon factors such as class, gender and race. The FAO understands food security as a global struggle consisting of four key components: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adequacy (Koc, et al., 2014).

From a more local-level perspective, the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) in the United States used the following definition of *community* food security: "a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally appropriate, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self reliance and social justice" (Morales, 2011, p.154). This definition is a vision of a food access model that does not only address the basic need for sustenance, but does so in a manner that is more sensitive to people's needs and desires, and is perhaps a less isolating and more holistic, structural approach. Regardless of the overarching perspective, both the FAO and CFSC understand food security or community food security to include the component of access; the FAO notes this explicitly and the CFSC implies the idea of access through the phrase "a condition in which all community residents *obtain* [emphasis added] a […] diet" (Morales, 2011, p.154).

The issue of food access is not new to urban centres like Toronto, let alone across Canada. At a broad level, Wakefield, et al. (2013) discussed hunger and food insecurity in our society as a symptom of the inequalities that exist from the capitalist economic system. The first food bank in Canada opened in 1981 in Edmonton, and the demand for these services has not declined since (Wakefield, et al., 2013). It soon became clear that food banks were no longer being used for emergency food relief, but instead were being relied upon for long-term food security (Koc and Bas, 2012). Resultantly, there have been mounting critiques about the way that emergency services such as food banks address the issue of food access and insecurity. Wakefield, et al. (2013) revisited a number of critiques that were put forward by Poppendieck in 1999. These critiques included the fact that food bank models do not consider things like the cultural needs or desires of users, the food is often of inadequate nutritional quality, there is an unstable grant-based donation system, and there is a significant cost to human dignity inherent in this model (Wakefield, et al., 2013). In reaction to these critiques, the model of '*community* food security' has arisen.

While the proposed definition of community food security envisions a situation where all members of the community have access to a specific type of food (culturally appropriate, nutritionally adequate, etc.), it does not explicitly comment on the notion of choice, which is something explored by McEntee (2009) in his discussion of food access and food deserts. Since McEntee (2009) argued that choice is an important component of food security and food access, he distinguished between four different “levels” of access. Level one asks if the person wants to eat a healthy diet; if this is the case but they do not know what food is healthy, the inquiry proceeds to level two, which suggests that the individual does not have adequate information or knowledge about nutrition. The lack of knowledge may be caused by an array of social and cultural contexts, including social acceptability and cooking skill (McEntee, 2009). Then, if an individual wants to buy healthy food but does not have the financial means to do so, this suggests their barrier is financial access. The fourth level addresses the circumstance in which an individual has physical barriers to healthy food access (McEntee, 2009).

Although he adds nuance to the conversation, McEntee (2009) suggested that his understanding of food access *is* compatible with what has come to be the accepted understanding of community food security (such as the Community Food Security Coalition’s definition). McEntee (2009) offered that definitions of community food security have been the most comprehensive in their attempt to account for all of the factors affecting food security. Given this, he suggested that it is not assumed that all people necessarily desire to have a healthy diet, but that they lack the choice and are therefore victims of social disparities (McEntee, 2009). This paper will take a similar perspective on food access; when considering the socioeconomic concerns of food access, it is understood that not all desire access to healthy food, but a lack of choice is the underlying concern. Given that I use Nelson and Landman’s (2015) criteria for healthy food access to inform how my case study organizations approach food access, I adapted the criteria to be used as my definition of the components of healthy food access (in that, access to healthy food, implies the presence of/access to the following):

1. Awareness of healthy, local food and its benefits
2. Purchases of healthy, local food
3. Food skills and literacy
4. Outlets supplying healthy local foods
5. Diversity of healthy, local foods available
6. Diversity of healthy, local food customers
7. Access for marginalized groups

2.2 Introduction to Social Economy Business Models

2.2.1 The social economy

Scholars in this area have discussed varying ways of conceptualizing the social economy, the distinctions between the organizations within it, and what these distinctions mean for who they serve, and who they are reliant on for funding (Quarter and Mook, 2010; Doherty et al., 2014). For example, Quarter and Mook (2010) put forward a framework that includes social economy businesses, civil society organizations, public sector non-profits, with an intersection of community economic development. An earlier definition by Quarter, Mook and Armstrong (2009), described the social economy as organizations that have social objectives that are central to their mission and which also produce some economic value, either simply through their services and the purchases they make, or through more explicit economic objectives. This framework and definition is helpful in placing the case study organizations and theory on co-operatives, non-profits and social enterprise within a larger sector, one which has overarching theories and a position within broader society.

Defourny and Develtere's (1999) article, "The Social Economy: The Worldwide Making of a Third Sector" is an important piece for understanding the history and international context of the social economy. What is understood today as the social economy first emerged in Western society as guilds and associations, with a relationship to the state, and later became increasingly connected to the idea of "free association" (p.5) in Europe, and especially in the United States (Defourney and Develtere, 1999). It was not until the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century that laws gave a legal form to organizations of the social economy, such as co-operatives, mutual societies and non-profit organizations (Defourney and Develtere, 1999). Defourney and Develtere's (1999) history and conceptualization of the social economy – while comprehensive and illuminating – does not include the evolution of or potential for social enterprises or social purpose businesses within the social economy. For this reason, I use the more encompassing definitions from Quarter and Mook (2009; 2010).

Quarter and Mook (2010) described the state and potential of the broader social economy, and suggest there is a tendency for social economy organizations to take on characteristics of the dominant business models. This perspective inherently highlights the social component of these organizational forms, in relationship to the larger economic and societal context. Quarter and Mook's (2010) piece, "An Interactive View of the Social Economy" described the social economy through its relationship with the rest of society. This article suggested that it is limiting to discuss the social economy and only describe its components and merits, without considering how it interacts with other components of society, such as the public and private sectors.

2.2.2 Co-operatives

Co-operatives are democratic, jointly-owned enterprises that are formed because of a common need, and aim to improve the economic and social situation of their members (McGinn, 2010). It is also important to note that co-operative values are not ambiguous, and a set of seven principles have been developed by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), which are meant to guide all co-operatives, worldwide. The principles are:

- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Member economic participation
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, training and information
- Concern for community
- Co-operation among co-operatives (McGinn, 2010, p.24).

The early co-operative movement in England coincided with the industrial revolution and was in direct response to the highly capital-focused market that had arisen, which did not account for workers' wellbeing and interests (Zamagni and Zamagni, 2012). The co-operative model rose out of an opposition to the private enterprise model, which emerged in accordance with capitalist principles. Despite this natural discord with the current economic system, some recognize this difference as a strength. The local, community-based and social focus of the co-operative model can be a great strength that contributes to a long-standing, thriving organization (McGinn, 2010). For example, McGinn (2010) sees that co-operatives offer an alternative and adaptive path, especially when larger market forces such as globalization disrupt local economies.

Since their beginnings in England, and through various incarnations across the globe, the social and political context for co-operatives has changed, both with time and national or local context. Today, globalization, which – most broadly – refers to the expansion of a variety of economic, political, and cultural processes across the globe, and beyond political borders (McGinn, 2010), is threatening the viability of co-operatives and their inherently locally-focused work. Fairbairn and Russell (2014) described how, historically, co-operatives were formed due to a particular local condition, and that even those which expanded often networked with co-operatives in other localities to achieve greater economies of scale.

Many scholars and industry professionals have begun looking at the organizational-level challenges of co-operatives and suggesting solutions, given the broader challenges of the sector (Fairbairn and Russell, 2014; Reed and McMurtry, 2009; Christianson, 2017). Quarter and Mook (2010) note that when social economy organizations such as co-operatives operate in the private market and have to compete with private-sector businesses they often, "take on characteristics of the dominant form" (p.19). In line with this observation, many of the strategies suggested by co-operative scholars and practitioners are about an adaptive and strategic business approach. As part of a webinar about learning from co-operative failures, Christianson (2017) identified areas where co-operatives should be sensitive to failures, including financial reasons (cash flow problems, debt, inadequate financial control systems); markets, competition and location; and leadership and management. Reed and McMurtry's (2009) work on the internationalization of co-operatives expanded on this subject and listed a number of strategies for co-operatives to gain more advantage. The strategies are as follows,

1) Effectively implement lessons for traditional business disciplines (to degree compatible with co-operative principles),

2) Develop own distinct competitive advantages by drawing on strengths of co-operative practice,

3) Develop new innovative structures (which still conform to co-operative principles),

4) Engage in collective action to provide better infrastructural support for co-op development and/or,

5) Work for larger policy changes that will help to minimize the competitive disadvantage that co-operatives suffer (p.44).

Points 1) and 3) both contain the stipulation that the suggested paths should be taken, but only insofar as they are compatible with the co-operative principles. While it could be argued that these are important stipulations which Reed and McMurtry (2009) fairly recognized, it is also difficult not to wonder how far "lessons from traditional business disciplines" (p.44) can go when they are restricted by the co-operative principles.

Fairbairn and Russell (2014) suggested that co-operatives must expand their "networking and connectivity" (p.140) with other organizations and institutions in order adapt and renew themselves in the face of globalization. McGinn (2010) viewed local networks as a strength that co-operatives already possess and suggested this could be used as a marketing tool. Both of these perspectives recognize that at the very least co-operatives have to access and take advantage of their networks. One network that has been repeatedly identified in relation to co-operatives is that of the social economy. As described in the previous section, definitions of the social economy and its components vary but co-operatives, given their socially focused nature, are most often explicitly or implicitly included. To support the idea that co-operatives should take more advantage of the networks that surround them – such as the social economy – Fairbairn (2001) said that it is perhaps more accurate to view co-operatives, "as parts of a web of social ideas and organisations, rather than as isolated and self-contained structures" (p.27). This view of co-operatives situates them as one organizational type among many in the social economy (Fairbairn, 2001). This theory also matches McGinn's (2010) reiteration of Karl Polanyi's argument that the market economy in fact *needs* the social economy. This argument posits that the social economy reacts and develops to meet conditions of society, such as capitalism, and that at a point, a society will begin to resist these economic forces. Given these perspectives, co-operatives and other components of the social economy are viewed as necessary and complimentary to the market system, which arise to address the very problems that are caused *by* the market.

Co-operatives worldwide have been challenged by globalization and some have attempted to remedy these struggles through demutualization. Co-operatives' new challenge may be to understand where they fit into the social economy – whether this be a reassertion of the resistance spirit that is attached to many of the social movements they originated from, or, more along the lines of a hybridization, which attempts to maintain co-operative values while innovating the form. Cheney (2014) suggested co-operatives have an important role in "reimagining and reconfiguring the economy" (p.592) and modelling alternative forms of organizational governance. From another perspective, Carruthers et al. (2009) wrote that the principles of co-operation could be a powerful guide in terms of strategic alignment, management and marketing of the organization, suggesting that co-operatives already hold potentially powerful tools for operating in the current market, they just have to realize how to use them.

2.2.3 Non-profit organizations

The Canada Revenue Agency (2016) defined a non-profit as, “a club, society, or association that's organized and operated solely for: social welfare, civic improvement, pleasure or recreation, any other purpose except profit” (n.p.).

Like co-operatives, non-profits are a part of the social economy and also distinct from profit-seeking corporations (Valentinov and Iliopoulos, 2013). Non-profits are generally exempt from corporate taxes in Ontario (Government of Ontario, 2016) while co-operatives are subject to income tax but under certain circumstances, may be able to operate as a non-profit for tax purposes (Ontario Co-operative Association, 2013). However, the non-profit ethos is also present in co-operatives in that their profits are either redistributed to the co-operative’s growth and operations, or to members, in dividends (Ontario Co-operative Association, 2013). Valentinov and Iliopoulos (2013) echod this idea as they observed a certain “nonprofitness” (p.110) in co-operatives through the common practice by which co-operatives redistribute surplus profits to members, rather than aim to make a return to shareholders.

Non-profits have had their own challenges as entities operating in a capitalist economy. Sectoral boundaries are often blurred, whether that is with the government, or the private sector (Knutsen, 2016). From an American perspective – which I extend to a broader North American perspective – Morris et al. (2007) pointed out the ways that the sector increasingly competes for funding. This effect has been caused by a decline in the welfare state, reductions in government funding and an overall lack of support for the sector (Morris et al., 2007). Morris et al. (2007) also indicated there are increasing demands upon the performance of non-profits, which might suggest the influence and dominance of the for-profit sector.

The trajectory and position of non-profit organizations in the regulatory environment is not entirely dissimilar to that of co-operatives. Quarter and Mook (2010) note that in general, non-profits are influenced by government policy in much the same way that other social economy businesses are, and as a result tend to take on characteristics of the dominant form. Because of their generally more recognized organizational form and role within society, and the tendency for non-profits to begin relationships with the market, the distinctions between non-profits and social enterprise can sometimes be blurred (Sepulveda, 2015). In the U.S., for instance, there is a growing prevalence of non-profits entering into the market, or taking on a social enterprise component (Sepulveda, 2015). This trend has been observed as a reaction to government cutbacks and insecure funding beginning in the 1980s. Non-profits have reacted through increasing marketization, meaning they behave more like a business and are more market-driven and self-sufficient (Sepulveda, 2015). Some have suggested that in order for charities to be effective today, they must explore social enterprise or corporate partnership (Sepulveda, 2015). However, policy actors that view social enterprise as incompatible with certain non-profit values, are uncomfortable with the notion that social enterprise is being positioned as a new necessity and norm for non-profits (Sepulveda, 2015).

Knutsen (2013) nicely summarized the trajectory of non-profit theory in a study of their position in and amongst the public and private sectors. The study spanned three theoretical positions on non-profits: 1) they do not constitute a distinct organizational form and can be understood through theory about public and private organizations; 2) non-profits are distinct from private and public organizations; and 3) non-profits are being influenced by private and public sectors and increasingly exhibit those features (Knutsen, 2013).

Ultimately, based the development of theory over time, and a case study on a Canadian social service non-profit, Knutsen (2013) settled on a combination of theories 2) and 3).

In another distinction, Knutsen (2013) named “ideal nonprofits” (p.986) as those that are only reliant on charitable funding, or run completely on a voluntary basis, and therefore not influenced by their interdependent financial relationships with the public and private sectors. However, because these types of non-profits are a minority and rely more on income from fee-based services, overall there is a distinct value-based nature to non-profits, as well as an increasing influence from private and public sectors (Knutsen, 2013). Put differently, there is a distinct “non-profit way” (p.986), imbued with community-oriented and service values, but the influence of the private and public sector process and financial reliance is a new reality of the sector (Knutsen, 2013). Knutsen (2013) also pointed to the social economy as a possible reconceptualization of the third sector – usually understood to include non-profits – since the social economy is a broader description which encompasses the new hybridity emerging within the non-profit sphere.

2.2.4 Social enterprise

I am also exploring the potential of social enterprise as an organizational vehicle for social change. Works such as Wilson’s (2013), “Business models for people, planet (& profits): exploring the phenomena of social business, a market-based approach to social value creation” do not inherently fault the capitalist model of business, but rather seek to innovate it, with more socially-focused models.

There is debate about what falls into the category of “social enterprise” (Teasdale, 2012). I use what Defourny and Nyssens (2010) called the “Earned Income School of Thought” (p.41). This encompasses both the “mission-driven business approach” (p.41), socially-focused for-profit businesses, as well as the "commercial non-profit approach" (p.41), that includes business strategies under the umbrella of a non-profit organization (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010). Of important note is that "social enterprise" is not a legal designation, and for non-descriptive purposes, they simply fall into the category of a private corporation or under the domain of a non-profit organization, if it is a revenue-generating arm of a non-profit (Elson and Hall, 2012). The term has also been used interchangeably with phrases such as "social purpose business" and "social business" (Dart, et al., 2010; Wilson, 2013).

Doherty (2014) suggested that social enterprises span the boundaries between the private, public and non-profit fields as "hybrid organizations" (p.418). They achieve this hybridity through their evolution from voluntary and non-profit organizations. Social enterprise also has a different tradition and conception, depending on the location. In the US, they rest within a market-based approach to social change; in Europe, they fall within the tradition of co-operatives and social action; and in the UK, the definition draws from both traditions (Doherty, 2014).

The growing literature on social enterprise (Hahn, 2016; Soule, 2012; Wilson 2013; Doherty, 2014; Seelos, 2005) suggests that this model is a serious contender in the social economy. Doherty (2014) discussed opportunities for new, or hybrid models which consider environmental and social problems as a reaction to the 2008 financial crisis. Implicit in these works is the suggestion that social and environmental problems cannot be adequately addressed by a traditional, solely profit-driven enterprise that is based on neoclassical economic theory (Stubbs, 2008).

The major critique of social enterprise revolves around the assumed conflict between having both social and financial goals. One outcome of this is described as "mission drift" (p.424), whereby a business strays from its original social purpose in its pursuit of financial obligations (Doherty, 2014). Doherty (2014) suggested that in order to maintain original values and an appropriate balance between profits and social goals, it is essential to maintain a balance between the different internal stakeholder groups such as employees, volunteers or board members. If internal and external governance tensions are properly managed, there is less risk of divergent perspectives or conflict surrounding issues such as mission drift (Doherty, 2014). Conversely, the social enterprise mission can be viewed as a valuable tool for leveraging support, resources and legitimacy (Doherty, 2014). For example, social enterprises operating in “resource-scarce environments” (p.424) might be able to gain below market-rate financing and preferential terms because of their social mission (Doherty, 2014).

Another related critique of the social enterprise is that, because of there are no regulations surrounding what activity it can and cannot engage in, the boundaries of the form are necessarily wide, and there is nothing legal binding a social enterprise to its social values and mission (Elson and Hall, 2012). As noted, they operate in the market just as other for-profit businesses do. Essentially, then, the social enterprise is self- or socially-designated. The advent of social enterprises has also corresponded with and influenced corporate social responsibility (CSR) or corporate sustainability (Wilson, 2013). CSR has become part of mainstream business practice in the form of annual CSR reports, strategies and CSR indices such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices and the United Nations Global Compact; CSR reporting frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative have become commonplace within corporations worldwide (Wilson, 2013).

Another specific form of social enterprise that has arisen in recent years is the Benefit Corporation and the Certified B-Corporation, or B Corp. The two forms are related but different; the Benefit Corporation is a legal incorporation that is available in 30 U.S. states and D.C, while the B-Corp is a certification and is available to companies regardless of corporate structure, state or country of incorporation (B Corporation, n.d.). Given that Benefit Corporation incorporation is only available in the U.S. and this study is based in Canada, I focus on the B Corp certification rather than the incorporation type. B Corp is a certification for businesses looking to signal their commitment to social and environmental responsibility; they still aim to make a profit but a significant portion of their resources and mission are dedicated to these causes (Chen and Kelly, 2014). The certification adds more specific terms and expectations to a social enterprise; it requires that a business meet certain standards and report on specified areas of transparency, accountability and performance (Certified B Corps, n.d.).

Taken in comparison to the GRI, a common reporting framework for corporate sustainability, B Corp certification focuses on increasing sustainability as a business scales up, while the GRI takes a best practice approach (Dumay et al., 2010; Certified B Corps, 2010). Dumay et al. (2010) suggested that the GRI takes a managerialist approach that does not appropriately consider sustainability. The article concluded by questioning the relevance of the GRI for the public and third sector (Dumay et al., 2010). They suggested that organizations within these sectors might instead take what they call an "ecological and eco-justice informed approach" (p.534), which advocates for approaches to sustainability that take the context and unique aspects of an individual organization into account, rather than using a template that is the same for all organizations (as is the case with the GRI framework) (Dumay et al., 2010). Although they make no mention of it, given the critiques, the more flexible and adaptive model of B Corp certification could be viewed as an apt alternative to the GRI approach.

Chapter 3: Case Studies

3.1 Co-op Cred Program

3.1.1 Introduction

The Co-op Cred Program operates in the neighbourhood of South Parkdale in Southwest Toronto. The neighbourhood was designated as one of Toronto's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas in 2014 (City of Toronto, n.d). It is one of the few remaining inner-city neighbourhoods with a high number of marginalized and low income residents (Richer et al. 2010). The City of Toronto defines Neighbourhood Improvement Areas as "specially-selected and designated neighbourhoods in the City of Toronto found to have inequities on several indicators of well-being" (City of Toronto, n.d.). These "inequities" are reflected in a number of the statistics about the neighbourhood. For example, the percentage of the population classified as "low-income" in South Parkdale is 32%, compared to the City average of 19%, and 47% of residents spend more than 30% of their income on shelter costs, compared with the City average of 35% (City of Toronto, 2014). These statistics are far from giving a comprehensive picture, but they are certainly a basis for the numerous community and social service organizations that are working to address the myriad challenges facing the neighbourhood.

The Co-op Cred Program is arguably a community food security approach to address the challenge of poverty and food access in South Parkdale. The program website says that Co-op Cred aims to, "address systemic challenges that prevent many of Parkdale's marginalized residents from both eating healthily and fully participating in the local economy" (Co-op Cred, n.d.). It is further described as,

> [A] neighbourhood effort to re-engage people who face barriers to employment in the neighbourhood of South Parkdale in central Toronto. Through supportive work-learn

> placements, participants have the opportunity to re-engage work, earn credit for work activity and exchange credit earned for the purchase of healthy food. Participants learn or recover important work skills, regain connection with their neighbours, improve their health and recharge their confidence to pursue work and learning directions outside of the program – all while reclaiming their right to healthy food (Co-op Cred, n.d., n.p.).

There are currently seven community organizations involved in the administration and delivery of the program: the Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC), West End Food Co-op (WEFC), Greenest City, Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre (PQWCHC), The Centre for Mindfulness Studies (CMS), Free Geek Toronto (FGT) and Parkdale Neighbourhood Landtrust (PNLT) (Co-op Cred, n.d.). The organizations that established the program are PARC, WEFC, Greenest City and PQWCHC; PARC administers the program and the other organizations help deliver it. Community partners such as WEFC and Greenest City provide placement opportunities for the participants. These participants receive a credit ("cred") equivalent to a living wage for every hour they spend in the placement. They can use their cred to buy groceries at the West End Food Co-op, or the Sorauren Farmers' Market (Co-op Cred, n.d.). Cred is used rather than real currency in order to protect the participants' eligibility for social assistance programs such as Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) (Co-op Cred, n.d.). This was identified as an important aspect of the program since financial payment would count as paid work, and would affect the amount of money Ontario Works or ODSP recipients receive on a monthly basis, which is typically not sufficient to live on in a city such as Toronto (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). The amount of money they could earn from the Co-op Cred Program would not be enough to compensate for the reduction in their payments as a result of being formally employed. The cred is also described as an alternative currency, to promote local markets and community engagement.

The Co-op Cred Program participants live in South Parkdale and are members of PARC. They are known as PARC Ambassadors. PARC is a community centre that runs a variety of programming that focuses on the low income residents in the neighbourhood; their work is rooted in “end[ing] poverty” and “healing and health” with a recognition of the systemic factors that produce poverty (Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre, n.d., n.p.).

The funding for the Co-op Cred Program comes from various sources. The Humber Ride4RealFood is the primary annual fundraiser for the Co-op Cred Program (Co-op Cred, n.d.). Funds are raised by the ride participants and all of the money raised goes towards the cred that is given out through the program. In addition, customers at the WEFC can make in-store donations to the program (Co-op Cred, n.d.). Also, one of WEFC’s produce suppliers, 100km Food, donates a percentage of their monthly sales to the cred program (Co-op Cred, n.d.). Additional funds for developing, co-ordinating and delivering the program come from what the Co-op Cred website calls “progressive foundations” (Co-op Cred, n.d., n.p.): the Toronto Foundation, Metcalf Foundation, Echo Foundation and Catherine Donnelly Foundation (Co-op Cred, n.d.).

The program outcomes are communicated in different ways via the website. They highlight that to date $70 000 worth of fresh food has reached low income households in the community. As well:

> Every participant has benefited from greater access to healthy food through the program, but what each person has accomplished after that is unique and informed by their own experiences. Outcomes are diverse, but key outcomes are health and

recovery, knowledge gain, food literacy, peer support activity, peer leadership, employment, and housing transition (Co-op Cred, n.d., n.p.).

To obtain a broader understanding of the program's impact, I calculated the percentage of the program's target population that is participating. This calculation was based on the number of people within the entire target population (low income people in South Parkdale; 22 251), based on 2011 data and the number of people enrolled in the program (34) (Co-op Cred, n.d.; City of Toronto, 2014). Given this data, 0.5% of the target population is impacted by the Co-op Cred Program.

PARC is a non-profit organization with charity status. The WEFC, however, is a co-operative, and as noted by the Program Coordinator, the next closest partner organization (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). The Co-op Cred Program is based on co-operative values, which are most tangibly enacted through the collaboration with the partner organizations (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). While the administration is done almost exclusively by PARC, there are regular Steering Committee meetings, as well as collaboration on how to best support participants, and through task-sharing that was done in earlier stages of the program's establishment, such as website development (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). There has also been some collaboration around fundraising (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). For example, the WEFC has provided a significant amount of support for the annual fundraising event for the program, and there has been collaboration on grant opportunities (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). In these ways, there are joint influences from both a non-profit and co-operative organizational perspective.

3.1.2 Results

To gain an initial understanding of how the Co-op Cred Program understands healthy food access, I asked if certain outcomes are considered goals of the program, based on Nelson and Landman's (2015) criteria (see Table 1).

Table 1

Healthy Local Food Access Outcomes for the Co-op Cred Program

Question	Answer
1. Increased awareness of healthy, local food and its benefits	Yes.
2. Increased purchases of healthy, local food	Yes
3. Increased food skills and literacy	Yes.
4. Increased number of outlets supplying healthy local foods	No; the West End Food Co-op was already in existence so no new locations were established.
5. Increased diversity of healthy, local foods available	No (see answer above).
6. Increased diversity of healthy, local food customers	Yes.
7. Increased access for marginalized groups	Yes

(Nelson and Landman, 2015; M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018).

Based on this series of outcomes, the Co-op Cred Program identified that it provides five of the seven food access goals that were posed.

The Coop Cred program is focused on providing greater food access to community members in a low SEP. To explore this observation further, I used McGill et al.'s (2015) 6 P framework to assess how the program is interpreted from a socioeconomic perspective. I use each measure, based on the description given by McGill et al. (2015), to assess whether the program relies on each for delivering its programming or service.

Price: Fiscal measures such as taxes, subsidies, or economic incentives (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

A price mechanism is definitely in place for the Co-op Cred Program. The primary goal of the program is to make it more accessible for low income community members through the exchange of learning and volunteer positions for food credit (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). In this way, the "price" of the food is not a financial one. In dollar terms, the total impact of the program over the six years it has been running is $70 000; this is the dollar amount of food that has been given out through the program (Co-op Cred, n.d.). The price mechanism of the Co-op Cred program most aptly falls into the category of a consumer subsidy.

Place – Environmental measures in specific settings such as schools, work places (e.g. vending machines) or planning (e.g. location of supermarkets and fast food outlets) or community-based health education (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

The Place mechanism is also used by the Co-op Cred Program because it represents an additional means and location for low-income residents to access healthy food in the Parkdale neighbourhood (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018).

Product – Modification of food products to make them healthier/less harmful e.g. reformulation, additives, or elimination of a specific nutrient (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

This mechanism is not relevant to the Co-op Cred Program because it does not involve product development.

Prescriptive – Restrictions on advertising/marketing through controls or bans, labelling, recommendations or guidelines (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

This mechanism is not relevant to the Co-op Cred Program because it is out of the scope of such a community program.

Promotion – Mass media public information campaigns (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

This mechanism is not relevant to the Co-op Cred Program because it is out of the scope of such a community program.

Person – Individual-based information and education (e.g. cooking lessons, tailored nutritional education/ counseling, or nutrition education in the school curriculum) (McGill et al., 2015, p.4)

The Person mechanism is present to some extent in the Co-op Cred Program. Workshops are offered to participants, but they are not always specifically focused on healthy food. For example, participants have taken part in anti-oppression trainings, as well as Food Handlers' Certification workshops (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). The Food Handlers' workshops offer both personal and professional development opportunities around food and kitchen work. Those participants who have kitchen placements also learn hands-on food preparation and cooking skills, but this is not the case for all participants since the placement positions and organizations vary (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018).

To summarize, the Co-op Cred Program includes elements of the intervention strategies Price, Place, and to some extent, Person. By using a Price-based intervention, the program is more likely to reduce inequalities (McGill et al., 2015).. The incorporation of a Place intervention also suggests that the program is positioned to *at least* not widen inequalities; in comparison to McGill et al.'s (2015) work, the Place interventions were either shown to reduce inequalities or not widen them. The Person invention is interesting and somewhat nuanced in regard to the Co-op Cred Program. McGill et al. (2015) describe this intervention as "[i]ndividual-based information and education (e.g. cooking lessons, tailored nutritional education/counselling, or nutrition education in the school curriculum)" (p.4). While the program does include some of these aspects within their placement program (specifically cooking lessons and nutrition information), the participants do not pay for them, and the program as a whole is already targeted towards individuals in a low SEP (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). Therefore, the Person-based interventions used within the Co-op Cred Program do not reflect the way that it is interpreted and framed by McGill et al. (2015).

3.1.3 Discussion of socioeconomic dimensions of food access

The Co-op Cred Program self describes as an initiative to improve healthy food access and integration into the local economy (Co-op Cred, n.d.). As noted, five of the seven healthy food access program outcomes were identified by the Program Coordinator as outcomes that the programs achieves (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). The outcomes include increased awareness, purchases, diversity of customers, access for marginalized groups, and food literacy for healthy, local food (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). The outcome that is most directly related to the socioeconomic dimensions of healthy food access is increased access for marginalized groups, since marginalization occurs at both social and economic levels (Gesthuizen, et al., 2011). The outcome of achieving greater diversity of healthy, local food customers is also related to socioeconomics since low income neighbourhoods have been found to have fewer supermarkets and fruit and vegetable stores, according to studies done in the U.S. (Ball, et al., 2009). As demonstrated by the Co-op Cred Program, efforts to increase the diversity of these customers can entail expanding healthy food access to less-advantaged areas, and therefore increasing the (economic) diversity of “healthy local food customers.”

There are multiple ways that the poorest segments of the population can be disadvantaged; this economic marginalization compounds other factors, including education and illiteracy (White et al., 2009). The Co-op Cred Program’s efforts to address food skills and food literacy means that in addition to addressing access for marginalized communities through their credit-based programming, they also address the compounded effects of healthy food access for economically disadvantaged communities. To summarize, of the five healthy local food access outcomes that the program intends to address, three can be understood to address issues of socioeconomic inequalities.

The Co-op Cred Program’s position on addressing the needs of low-income individuals and communities also came across through the Program Coordinator’s answers to my interview questions. In her description of the program’s goals and outcomes, Bergman said, “we wanted to offer folks an opportunity to learn skills in addition to having access to food” (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). This perspective suggests an understanding of the compounded effects of economic marginalization, which need to be addressed in tandem with food access. Additionally, Bergman noted, “[...] the model was developed in the way that it was because we didn’t want participants to experience clawback on their social assistance or ODSP ” (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018).

As discussed in the Results section, the Price intervention (most likely to reduce inequalities) is at work in the Co-op Cred Program, along with the Place intervention (neutral to inequalities). The Person mechanism is not as relevant to the analysis because the Program’s use of this intervention does not match McGill et al.’s (2015) description. Through an assessment using Nelson and Landman’s (2015) criteria, McGill et al.’s (2015) framework, and supported by organizational literature and the case study interview, it appears that the Co-op Cred Program is well positioned to address and reduce socioeconomic inequalities. However, as I discuss in more detail later, the small scale of the program and its financial model may be significant limiting factors for its scalability.

3.1.4 Relationship between business model and food access programming

Of interest now, is whether causal relationships can be drawn between the type of food access programming and the business model that the programs operates under. In this case, it is a combination of a co-operative model and a non-profit model, since the organizations that operate the program are non-profits and a co-operative.

The definition of a co-operative as a democratic, jointly owned enterprise that aims to improve the economic and social situation of its members (McGinn, 2010) aptly reflects the goals of the Co-op Cred Program in regard to food access, particularly in its attempts to promote social and economic engagement of the participants, and through the exchange of volunteer work for healthy food (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). The program also aligns with a number of the seven principles of co-operation developed by the ICA, including: member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; and concern for community (McGinn, 2010). Given that the co-operative model has developed and been viewed as an alternative to the dominant business model and economic system, this history and spirit may give way to more experimentation with unconventional programming , such as the Co-op Cred Program (Zamagni and Zamagni, 2012; McGinn, 2010).

A less profit-driven ethos has been observed with co-operatives and non-profits (Valentinov and Iliopoulos, 2013). Both are more oriented toward redistributing surplus profits rather than making a return for shareholders, which may allow them to be less beholden to financial gains (Valentinov and Iliopoulos, 2013).

Knutsen (2013) spoke of “ideal nonprofits” (p.986), those that are reliant only on charitable funding, or are run on a completely volunteer basis. These circumstances mean that the organization is not influenced by financial relationships with the public or private sectors, and are able to operate on a more values-based agenda. The current funding model of the Co-op Cred Program, which consists of a large fundraiser and charitable donations, fits within Knutsen’s (2013) conception of an ideal non-profit (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). Fewer relationships with larger market forces allows for programming that addresses more socioeconomic aspects of healthy food access. This phenomenon of the ideal non-profit is reflected in the Program Coordinator’s understanding of the biggest challenge to healthy food access and/or consumption: “[l]et’s say, a living wage. And I think a living wage speaks to all of the other issues,” which she followed with, “So it’s one thing to say living wage, but another – and of course this is much broader – but you know, we have to come away from a capitalist model” (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). To offer a critique of the capitalist system in her professional role as Program Coordinator may reflect an organizational perspective on capitalism or at least knowledge that the critique would be understood or supported by the organization. Bergman also made a point to highlight aspects of the Co-op Cred Program that are alternative to broader economic norms; she said,

> [...] and one of the interesting things about our model is using an alternate model – things like the sharing economy are gaining some traction but you know, it's a much larger piece, right? It's around how do we view community and what do we value as success? How are we measuring success? (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018).

Questions such as those posed by Bergman suggest a certain amount of liberty in program design, less influenced by financial targets or outside funders.

At the same time, the program struggles with financial sustainability. When asked about the biggest challenges facing the program, Bergman replied, "part of it is filling the spaces. But another part of it is money. So how we run it is two-fold. By that I mean me, or whoever is me. So administration of the program. That part has been funded by grants" (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). As previously noted, the other piece of funding is for the credit, entirely funded by The Humber Ride4Real Food. To this point, Bergman said,

> And that's what funds the cred. And it's a tremendous amount of work, for what we get back from it. And we volunteer our time on that – I don't bill my time on that, my colleagues don't bill their time on that. The other thing is, we've had seven rides now and people are kind of tapped out. So who do you tap into? (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018).

Bergman's sentiments indicate a struggle to keep the program running sustainably, and one which is sometimes based on a great deal of volunteer effort. Bergman also discussed other ideas for program funding, such as collecting bottles from restaurants and creating a social enterprise model, but, as she pointed out, "we would need somebody to run that" (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). The grassroots nature and co-operative values of the program appear to support healthy food access programming that targets those in a low SEP but the financial and human resources sustainability of the program are strained. The values associated with their ideal non-profit and alternative programming model are, like many co-operatives historically and in present day, opposed to the dominant model and therefore struggle to compete in a capitalist economy (Zamagni and Zamagni, 2012; Quarter and Mook, 2010).

3.2 Good Food Program, FoodShare

3.2.1 Introduction

FoodShare is a Toronto-wide organization that has been in existence since 1985, and formed amid concern surrounding the growing food crisis (FoodShare, n.d.). It was originally started as a pilot program at the direction of then-Mayor, Art Eggleton. Since then, it has grown to offer a wide variety of programming ranging from student nutrition and urban agriculture, to their Good Food Program which offers a variety of ways for people to increase access to healthy food (FoodShare, n.d.). FoodShare's mission is, "[i]ncreasing knowledge of and access to good, healthy food" (FoodShare, n.d., n.p.). Additionally, under "Values and Beliefs," there is an explicit link to food security: "FoodShare is committed to providing visionary leadership within the food security movement locally, nationally and internationally, collaborating with other social justice movements that share its values" (FoodShare, n.d., n.p.). In addition to focusing on food access within their mission statement and pointing to "visionary leadership within the food security movement," FoodShare also dedicates an entire page on their website to outlining the ways they work for food justice (FoodShare, n.d., n.p.). These definitions signal a multifaceted approach to food access.

FoodShare also uses a "universal programming" model that attempts to "[remove] stigma for those who will benefit most deeply" (FoodShare, n.d., n.p.). In this way, they not only deliver programming to individuals who have a lower SEP, but to all interested participants.

The components of FoodShare's operation most directly tied to food access are encompassed by their Good Food Program, which includes the Good Food Box, Good Food Markets, Mobile Good Food Market, and the Bulk Produce program. The Good Food Box program is a fresh produce delivery service that competes with grocery store prices because of FoodShare's bulk purchasing capacity and programming subsidized by grants (FoodShare, n.d.; M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). The Good Food Markets bring fresh produce to communities that might lack accessible grocery stores, and where sales might be too low for a farmers' market to be sustainable (FoodShare, n.d.). FoodShare supports the development of these markets but encourages ongoing management by community leaders and/or organizations (FoodShare, n.d.). Mobile Good Food Markets are similar, in that they provide fresh produce but, as the name suggests, they travel to communities that could benefit from greater access to healthy produce and are operated out of retrofitted Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) accessibility vehicles and so they can easily move from one place to the next with reduced overhead (FoodShare, n.d.; M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). The Bulk Produce program delivers bulk fresh produce to schools and community organizations at an affordable price, due to their bulk purchasing from the Ontario Food Terminal (FoodShare, n.d.). The programs are funded through a combination of private and public funding, including the City of Toronto and United Way (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018).

The outcomes for the Good Food Program are communicated through numbers and testimonials. Each sub-program reports numbers that represent its impact; most consistently, each sub-program reports on the weight of fresh produce that was distributed to communities and participants. In 2016, the Good Food Box program delivered over 560,000 lbs of fresh fruit and vegetables; the Bulk Produce program delivered over 1,100,000 lbs to schools and agencies; Good Food Markets provided over 260,000 lbs to communities; and Mobile Good Food Markets delivered over 72,000 lbs (FoodShare, n.d.). A testimonial from the Mobile Good Food Market program reads, "You have to love a fruit and veggie market that comes to you #MakingFoodAccessibleForAll." (FoodShare, n.d., n.p.). To obtain a broader understanding of the Good Food Program's impact, I calculated the percentage of the program's target population that is participating. This calculation was based on number of people within the entire target population (population of Toronto; 2.731 million), based on 2016 census data; and an estimate of the number of people serviced by the program (54,000) (Government of Canada, 2017). Exact data on the number of people affected by the Good Food Program is difficult to estimate, something that was echoed in a 2017 FoodShare report (Cummings, et al., 2017). However, I made an imprecise estimate based on the total number of "people reached" (FoodShare, n.d., n.p.) by the entire organization (272,776 in 2016) and an assumption that all of the 20 program areas listed on their website serve roughly the same number of people (FoodShare, n.d.). Given that the Good Food Program encompasses four of their listed program areas, I arrived at the rough estimate of 54,000 participants in the Good

Food Program. Given these calculations, about 2% of the target population is impacted by the Good Food Program.

FoodShare is a registered non-profit organization, however, they do generate revenue from certain areas of their operation, including the Good Food Program (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). For example, the Bulk Produce program is viewed more as a social enterprise, which helps support other components of the Good Food Program (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). This model falls within Defourny and Nyssens (2010) definition which includes business strategies under the umbrella of non-profit.

3.2.2 Results

Nelson and Landman's (2015) criteria for healthy food access was also used to gain an initial understanding of how the Good Food Program views healthy food access. I asked if these healthy local food outcomes are considered goals of the programs (see Table 2).

Table 2

Healthy Local Food Access Outcomes for the Good Food Program

Question	Answer
1. Increased awareness of healthy, local food and its benefits	Yes
2. Increased purchases of healthy, local food	Yes; however, FoodShare prioritizes diversity of food before local food, since we live in a culturally diverse city.

3. Increased food skills and literacy	Yes
4. Increased number of outlets supplying healthy local foods	Yes. FoodShare has partnered with local farmers trying to find distribution channels for diverse crops, including specialty eggplants and callaloo.
5. Increased diversity of healthy, local foods available	Yes
6. Increased diversity of healthy, local food customers	Yes
7. Increased access for marginalized groups	Yes

(Nelson and Landman, 2015; M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018)

Based on this series of outcomes, the Good Food Program identified that it provides all seven food access goals posed.

As with the Co-op Cred Program, each of McGill et al.'s (2015) 6 P indicators are used below to assess FoodShare's Good Food Program.

Price: Fiscal measures such as taxes, subsidies, or economic incentives (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

A Price mechanism is in place for the Good Food Program. As a non-profit organization that has the capacity to purchase in bulk directly from the Ontario Food Terminal, FoodShare is able to pass these savings on to the customers and program participants (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Like the Co-op

Cred program, the price mechanism of the Good Food Program most aptly falls into the category of a subsidy.

Place – Environmental measures in specific settings such as schools, work places (e.g. vending machines) or planning (e.g. location of supermarkets and fast food outlets) or community-based health education (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

The Place mechanism is definitely in place for the Good Food Program, since all of the sub-programs have the goal of increasing access to healthy food by distributing it more easily to more people, and to a greater number of underserved areas in the city (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018).

Product – Modification of food products to make them healthier/less harmful e.g. reformulation, additives, or elimination of a specific nutrient (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

This mechanism is not relevant to the Good Food Program because it does not involve product development.

Prescriptive – Restrictions on advertising/marketing through controls or bans, labelling, recommendations or guidelines (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

This mechanism is not relevant to the Good Food Program because it is out of the scope of such a community program.

Promotion – Mass media public information campaigns (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

This mechanism is not relevant to the Good Food Program because it is out of the scope of such a community program.

Person – Individual-based information and education (e.g. cooking lessons, tailored nutritional education/ counselling, or nutrition education in the school curriculum) (McGill et al., 2015, p.4)

There are some aspects of the Person mechanism within the Good Food Program. This includes providing nutrition information and cooking tips in the Good Food Boxes and through training and education about the benefits of the Good Food Markets and Mobile Markets by the Market Coordinators (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). There is a more substantial educational component within the Student Nutrition Program, another of FoodShare's programs (FoodShare, n.d.). Similiar to the Co-op Cred Program, these services do not come with a fee.

Using the 6 P framework (McGill et al., 2015), the Good Food Program uses the Price intervention, which is most likely to reduce inequalities. The incorporation of a Place intervention also suggests that the program is positioned to *at least* not widen inequalities; in McGill et al.'s (2015) work, the Place interventions were either shown to reduce inequalities or not widen them. Similar to the Co-op Cred Program, the Person invention is weak. McGill et al. (2015) describe this intervention as "[i]ndividual-based information and education (e.g. cooking lessons, tailored nutritional education/ counselling, or nutrition education in the school curriculum)" (p.4). While the program does include some of these aspects (specifically nutrition education), the communities and participants do not pay for them, and the program as a whole aims to be more financially accessible for individuals in a low SEP (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Therefore, it appears that the Person-based interventions used within the Good Food Program do not reflect the way that it is interpreted and framed by McGill et al. (2015). Relative to the scale of the Good Food Program, its ability to address communities of a low SEP – albeit with some compromise – is significant. This important qualification will be expanded upon in the following discussion and the paper's conclusion.

3.2.3 Discussion of socioeconomic dimensions of food access

The Results section demonstrated that the Program Manager understands that the program achieves all seven of Nelson and Landman's (2015) outcomes for access to healthy food (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). These outcomes include increased awareness of, purchases of, number of outlets, diversity, diversity of customers, access for marginalized groups, and food skills and literacy, in regard to healthy, local food (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Like the Co-op Cred program, a similar observation is that the program positions to address access for marginalized groups, which can be most closely related to the socioeconomic aspects of food access (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018; Gesthuizen, et al., 2011). The Good Food Program also addresses the other components of food access which can be related to socioeconomics, including food skills and food literacy and increased diversity of customers. The outcome of achieving greater diversity of healthy, local food customers is also related to socioeconomics since low income neighbourhoods have been found to have fewer supermarkets and fruit and vegetable stores, according to studies done in the U.S. (Ball et al., 2009). Efforts to increase the diversity of these customers may entail expanding healthy food access to less-advantaged areas, and therefore increasing the (economic) diversity of 'healthy local food customers.' There are multiple ways that the poorest segments of the population can be disadvantaged; this economic marginalization compounds other factors, including education and illiteracy (White et al., 2009). The Good Food Program's efforts to address food skills and food literacy means that in addition to addressing access for marginalized communities through subsidized programming, it also addresses the compounded effects of healthy food access for economically disadvantaged communities. Participants with a low SEP can therefore benefit from all the components of food access that the program addresses due to FoodShare's Universal Programming Model (FoodShare, n.d.). The same low-cost programming is available for all income levels so as to avoid stigmatization (FoodShare, n.d.). However, unlike the Co-op Cred Program, because there is still a financial cost for the food, participants and communities with the lowest SEP are still excluded from accessing the food.

My interview with the Program Manager further illustrated the ways that food access is understood by the program, and by FoodShare as an organization at large. When asked about the primary goal of the program, Senaratne said that they "don't want to be just a band-aid but want to provide a long-term solution to the problem, so that means addressing poverty in different ways" (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Some of these solutions include employment opportunities that develop people's skills, which extends beyond the food distribution side of the program (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). In these ways, the program addresses the economic aspect of food access through job creation, rather than providing food for free, or at highly subsidized prices. This perspective was reinforced by Senartne's answer to the question of the biggest challenge to healthy food access; he spoke of the interrelated challenges of food access, including financial access: "[l]et's say I am a limited income person. The cost of living in a big city has a big effect because [it] is so high and most of your money goes toward rent and the rest goes toward food" (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Aside from economic access to healthy food, Senaratne also pointed out the related issue of education, as well as physical and geographical access (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018).

As discussed in the Results section, the Price intervention (most likely to reduce inequalities) is at work in the Good Food Program, along with the Place intervention (neutral to inequalities). The Person mechanism is not as relevant to the analysis because the

Program's use of this intervention does not match McGill et al.'s (2015) description. Through an assessment using Nelson and Landman's (2015) criteria, McGill et al.'s (2015) framework, and supported by organizational literature and the case study interview, it appears that the Good Food Program is well positioned to address and reduce socioeconomic inequalities.

3.2.4 Relationship between business model and food access program delivery

The Good Food Program is operated by FoodShare, a non-profit organization; yet, components of the program are viewed as a social enterprise. The Bulk Produce program, for example, generates revenue for the Good Food Program as a whole (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Under the Earned Income School of Thought, this component of the program would fall under the "commercial non-profit approach" because it is under the umbrella of a non-profit (Defourney and Nyssens, 2010, p.41). Because the majority of the program operates within a non-profit framework, and the profit motive is in check due to the legal requirement of a non-profit incorporation, I consider the program more of a non-profit model. However, this distinction should not be ignored because it suggests what many scholars in the field have namely, an increasing tendency and expectation for non-profits to take on characteristics of the dominant, for-profit form (Quarter and Mook, 2010; Knutsen, 2013; Sepulveda, 2015).

This trend is also relevant to the Good Food Program's food access programming. The reliance and incorporation of a social enterprise component corroborates both the need to charge for programming to operate a financially sustainable operation, and to demonstrate conventionally responsible business practice to funders. Reflecting on their position as a non-profit organization, Senaratne said, "[a]s a non-profit, this means we don't charge a delivery fee, but it means we have to rely on grants and volunteers which can be challenging sometimes" (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). More specifically, Senaratne outlined funding issues including the struggle to secure longer term funding, donors who cannot be relied upon indefinitely, and changing funding criteria (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). These thoughts reflect challenges that are common for non-profits, including grant-based and inconsistent funding (Morris et al., 2007). Senaratne also strongly echoed literature on non-profits that describes the increasing competition with for-profit business (Sepulveda, 2015). For example, he said, "There are more for-profit food box programs now. They do value-added product [...] so we do see some impact on that. We lost some of our organic boxes because those customers wanted more value-added product" (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Other finance-related challenges that Senaratne reflected on included the impact of online grocery shopping, which would be challenging for a non-profit because of the technological investment involved as well as the huge buying power that large grocery stores have, and the greater affordability that results (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018).

3.3 Fresh City Farms

3.3.1 Introduction

Fresh City Farms is a Toronto-based fresh produce and grocery delivery service (Fresh City, n.d.). Their website describes the service as "Organic produce and meals. Delivered." (Fresh City, n.d., n.p.). Ran Goel, Fresh City Farms' founder, elaborated on this description by stating that they achieve their mission by, "empowering everyone to make better food choices, through creating new ways of connecting makers and eaters" (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). However, in addition to the delivery service, there are two other components to the organization. Fresh City Farms operates two growing spaces (a two-acre urban farm and greenhouse at Downsview Park and a greenhouse near

Highway 427 in Toronto), where their seasonal produce is grown (Fresh City, n.d., R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). They are also expanding into brick-and-mortar stores in order to offer their products at a physical location (Fresh City, n.d., R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). Fresh City also runs a Member Farmer program, which supports urban farmers by connecting them with land and resources (Fresh City, n.d.). Fresh City sees an important role for themselves in terms of making healthy food more accessible, and particularly local, organic and Fairtrade food (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). However, they make a distinction between food access, as it relates to the physical ease of access, and food security and financial access to food (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). Goel noted that given the business model, they do not address these aspects of food access (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018).

The delivery service can be looked at as the front end business, which most directly relates to food access. It works by customers making orders of organic grocery products online, and getting them delivered to their homes. Fresh City's primary demographics were described as highly educated women between the ages of 25 - 50 (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). Goel noted that while income is a factor, they do not have many customers from the wealthiest areas of the city, but instead from areas where residents typically hold more environmental and social values (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). In this way, he sees a demographic in which a certain level of income is relevant but values are perhaps a more significant factor (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018).

The outcomes of Fresh City Farms' services are communicated through customers' feedback and quotes on the website. As a business, they do not have to be as focused on tracking and communicating program outcomes since they are not a non-profit seeking grant funding. Comments from customers include, "Have been using their fresh produce service for awhile now and it only gets better! The quality of everything is excellent and they follow up and resolve issues promptly" (Fresh City Farms, n.d., n.p.) and, "I am on week 2 of daily dinners and both my husband and I are sold. The portions are great, delivery is great (as are their bags/ice packs) and the customer service is incredible" (Fresh City Farms, n.d., n.p.). Their impact in terms of number of customers or "members" (Fresh City Farms, n.d., n.p.) is quite small overall; the service area is "Across the GTA!" (Fresh City Farms, n.d., n.p.) and they have over 5000 subscribers. Given that the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) is calculated to be 6,417,516, suggests that Fresh City is serving only 0.001% of their potential target population.

As a for-profit business, Fresh City Farms' operations are supported completely by their sales revenue (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). They are also a certified B-Corp, but Goel does not view them as a social enterprise; he stated that he would have identified in this way five or six years ago but because of the conception of social enterprises as the revenue-generating branch of non-profits, this is a confusing designation for Fresh City (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). Instead, Goel suggested that they are a "social purpose" or "values driven" business (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). This is an interesting distinction because given many definitions of social enterprise, including the definition used in this paper, Fresh City Farms falls within the category of "social enterprise" but they do not ascribe to this label.

3.3.2 Results

Nelson and Landman's (2015) criteria for healthy food access was also used to gain an initial understanding of how Fresh City Farms views healthy food access. I asked if these healthy local food outcomes are considered goals of the programs (see Table 3).

Table 3

Healthy Local Food Access Outcomes for Fresh City Farms

Question	Answer
1. Increased awareness of healthy, local food and its benefits	Yes
2. Increased purchases of healthy, local food	Yes
3. Increased food skills and literacy	Yes
4. Increased number of outlets supplying healthy local foods	Yes
5. Increased diversity of healthy, local foods available	No. In terms of world crops, there is not a lot available in local and organic yet.
6. Increased diversity of healthy, local food customers	Yes. We are trying to address this through increased diversity of prepared food options. Currently the average customer is white and Canadian-born.
7. Increased access for marginalized groups	No

(Nelson and Landman, 2015; R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018)

Based on the of outcomes in Table 3, Fresh City's Founder identified that they provide five out of the seven food access goals that were posed.

I also used the 6 P framework to analyze Fresh City Farms' relationship to food access, through the lens of how the service uses different interventions and whether these interventions are neutral to, widen, or decrease the SEP of participants and/or customers (McGill et al., 2015).

Price: Fiscal measures such as taxes, subsidies, or economic incentives (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

A Price mechanism is not in place for Fresh City Farms' service. The increased access to healthy foods that they provide is based on geographical convenience, rather than increasing financial access (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018).

Place – Environmental measures in specific settings such as schools, work places (e.g. vending machines) or planning (e.g. location of supermarkets and fast food outlets) or community-based health education (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

The Place mechanism is the most prominent intervention used by Fresh City Farms to increase access to healthy food. By delivering this food directly to customers, they are enabling more frequent, consistent and easy access (Fresh City, n.d.).

Product – Modification of food products to make them healthier/less harmful e.g. reformulation, additives, or elimination of a specific nutrient (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

This mechanism is not relevant to Fresh City Farms because they are not involved in product development.

Prescriptive – Restrictions on advertising/marketing through controls or bans, labelling, recommendations or guidelines (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

This mechanism is not relevant to Fresh City Farms because it is out of the scope of this business.

Promotion – Mass media public information campaigns (McGill et al., 2015, p.4).

This mechanism is not relevant to Fresh City Farms because it is out of the scope of this business.

Person – Individual-based information and education (e.g. cooking lessons, tailored nutritional education/ counselling, or nutrition education in the school curriculum) (McGill et al., 2015, p.4)

There are some aspects of the Person mechanism at work at Fresh City Farms. Although workshop provision is not a core aspect of the business, they have offered them for a number of years, of which some have been specifically nutrition-focused, run by their in-house nutritionist (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). At one time, Fresh City also ran a pilot of nutrition consulting, but did not continue with it because there was not enough demand (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018).

In summary, based on the 6 P framework (McGill et al., 2015), Fresh City Farms relies on interventions that were shown to be neutral in their impact on inequality between different SEPs (Place), and also incorporates aspects of Person-based interventions, which of all of the indicators analyzed by McGill et al. (2015), demonstrated the most incidence of widening inequalities. Of note, they do not include a Price-based intervention, the type which has the most instance of decreasing inequalities throughout the interventions studied by McGill et al. (2015).

3.3.3 Discussion of the socioeconomic dimensions of food access

The results of Fresh City Farms' interview revealed that the CEO and Founder understands that they address five out of the seven healthy food outcomes, based on Nelson and Landman's (2015) criteria (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). The criteria included increased awareness of, purchases of, number of outlets, and diversity of customers, and food skills and literacy in regard to healthy, local food (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). As noted in the analyses of the Co-op Cred Program and Good Food Program, the outcomes of increasing food skills and literacy as well as the diversity of customers, can be related to socioeconomics insofar as there has been an observed relationship between improving food skills and literacy and improved food choices in communities with a low SEP; and there is a correlation between the diversity of customers or participants and the likelihood of a program serving communities with a low SEP (Ball, et al., 2009; White et al., 2009). However, in the case of Fresh City Farms, these indicators are negated by the fact that the program explicitly does not market to individuals and communities with a low SEP (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). As opposed to the Good Food Program and Co-op Cred Program, outcomes such as increased food skills and literacy and diversity of customers do not strengthen the relationship to a socioeconomic focus, but rather, they are precluded by the fact that they do not address the outcome of "increased access for marginalized groups" (Nelson and Landman, 2015, p.16). Fresh City Farms' mission is explicitly about geographical, or physical, food access, which Goel expanded on: "until we showed up and other companies (like Mama Earth Organics), it would be pretty tough for the average person to get access to someplace where there is a lot of attention payed to local, organic and fairtrade sourcing – also Oceanwise" (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). Goel also made a point of explicitly acknowledging the financial accessibility of their products and service: "[i]n terms of addressing food insecurity – no. We're certainly priced - not because we want to be but because of a business matter. We're not delivering to the most vulnerable parts of Toronto's population" (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). To build upon his perspective on food access, Goel also said that he does not think there is a food access issue, but rather, an income and wealth access issue (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). This perspective is not incompatible with the other organizations' perspectives on food access, but there is a clear recognition that they do not address the most vulnerable communities and their status as a business that necessitates this position. In terms of their pricing, Goel said that in comparison to grocery stores, prices are either the same, or less than the grocery store's organic equivalent; their bananas are an exception because they carry strictly Fairtrade bananas, which tend to be more expensive (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018).

When asked about his perspective on the biggest challenge to healthy food access and consumption, Goel mentioned three areas of concern: food policy, income and wealth distribution, and the culture around food (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018).

As discussed in the Results section, the Place intervention (neutral to inequalities) and the Person intervention (most likely to widen inequalities) are at work in Fresh City Farms' service. Through an assessment using Nelson and Landman's (2015) criteria, McGill et al.'s (2015) framework, and supported by organizational literature and the case study interview, it appears that Fresh City Farms is not well positioned to address and reduce socioeconomic inequalities.

3.3.4 Relationship between business model and food access service delivery

From a categorical perspective, and based on Defourny and Nyssen's (2010) Earned Income School of Thought on social enterprise, Fresh City Farms fits into the "mission-driven business approach" (p.41), given Goel's description of the business as "a social purpose business – or a values or mission-driven B-Corp" (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). However, Goel made a clear distinction between this type of categorization and being a social enterprise; although he acknowledged that there are different conceptualizations of the term, Fresh City does not ascribe to it due to their perception of how the organizational form is understood under that name (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). In his differentiation, Goel described what Defourny and Nyssen (2010) call the "commercial non-profit approach" (p.41). Because Fresh City Farms is not a non-profit, they do not want to be confused with one, or to meet expectations that may result from that confusion (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). On their B Corp certification, Goel said it "wasn't foundational" and that it was "just a way to signal that [...] Fresh City is a values-driven company" (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018).

When asked about the challenges of delivering their service as a values-driven B-Corp, Goel said that there are frequently debates surrounding this issue (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). He described a challenge regarding their reusable packaging (mason jars) and the expenses that are involved in purchasing and cleaning them; to summarize the issue, he said, "It's sometimes tough from a business perspective to make that decision and say, 'yeah, reusable is great, but why don't we just go with this compostable clamshell?'" (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). Goel also suggested that it is sometimes challenging to know what the best decision is, because they do not have the capacity to do the assessments that are required to make a completely informed decision (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). Goel's comments are reflected in the broader conflict of social enterprise as described by Doherty et al. (2014); social enterprise has an inherent conflict between its social and financial goals and it is more aligned with a market-based approach to social change.

On reflection about the larger challenges of the company, Goel said that the major challenge is “getting to a larger scale” (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). To expand on this, Goel said,

> For us to be able to do what we’ve chosen to do, which is delivery, farm, and prepared foods, we need a certain scale to be able to support the overhead. So, the biggest challenge is fairly quickly in the next couple years [to] get to sufficient scale (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018).

This description also reflects financial challenges, but it is unclear why or how they exist for the business.

3.4 Comparison Between Case Studies

The Results and Discussion revealed some interesting similarities and differences across the case study programs and services. Nelson and Landman’s (2015) healthy food access criteria placed each organization in terms of their orientations toward food access, and particularly the different components and interpretations of “access.” Using the McGill et al. (2015) framework as metric for understanding the potential impact of the case study programs on SEP gave insight into how each is positioned to provide increased access to healthy food. A qualitative assessment of organizational literature and case study interviews gave more relevant context to the qualitative assessment of the frameworks.

When comparing the three case studies using the outlined frameworks, it appeared that the Good Food Program scored the highest in terms of socioeconomic considerations of food access. Of Nelson and Landman’s (2015) seven healthy, local food access criteria, they fulfilled all, of which three suggest consideration and inclusion of communities and individuals with a low SEP. In comparison, the Co-op Cred Program fulfilled five of the criteria, of which two took individuals and communities with a low SEP into account. Fresh City Farms also fulfilled five of the criteria but none of their criteria took low SEP individuals and communities into consideration. Additionally, in regard to McGill et al's (2015) 6 P framework, the Good Food Program's integration of Price and Place mechanisms also demonstrated use of mechanisms that have been shown to decrease inequalities, and one that has been shown to be neutral towards inequalities, respectively. The Co-op Cred Program showed the same use mechanisms in regard to the 6 P framework. Fresh City Farms' service includes mechanisms that are shown to be neutral toward inequalities (Place) and one that has been shown to be the most likely to widen inequalities (Person).

The integration of a qualitative assessment of each program or service's attention to socioeconomic dimensions of food access revealed a few important qualifiers. Although the Good Food Program appeared to have the highest integration of socioeconomic considerations, their use of a Price mechanism for food is somewhat low, because their food still comes at a cost similar to grocery store prices (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Yet, their use of the Place mechanism is very strong due to the program's multi-faceted approach to food access; for example, their Good Food Markets and Mobile Good Food Markets, which bring fresh produce to neighbourhoods with low access to fresh and healthy foods (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). In the case of the Co-op Cred Program, their use of the Price mechanism is very strong, given that the cost of food for the program is entirely subsidized (Co-op Cred, n.d.).

Across all three programs, the type of food access programming that they delivered reflected the business model that each is working under. The Co-op Cred Program's position as an ideal non-profit with co-operative values translated to less adherence to a market-based business model and resultantly, more room to consider alternative programming that deeply integrates participants in a low SEP (Knutsen, 2013). In the case of the Good Food Program, their non-profit status, with social enterprise components suggests a greater reliance on and responsibility to market forces, such as competition with for-profit businesses and more strict funding parameters. This position might explain the decision to address food access through the lens of income and wealth inequality via job creation, rather than strictly through food prices, which more directly affect their profits. Fresh City Farms' approach to food access also reflects their social purpose business model; although they have social and environmental considerations, this is not reflected in their pricing, and resultantly, their financial accessibility. Pointedly, their CEO and Founder noted that Fresh City's business model cannot address socioeconomic issues (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018).

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This paper has investigated how the three case studies address the socioeconomic dimensions of healthy food access, and the impact of their business models. The Co-op Cred Program and Good Food Program both consider and address the needs of communities and participants with a low SEP. Given the results of the case studies, it can be concluded that the Good Food Program considers people with a low SEP in the greatest number of ways, but the Co-op Cred Program addresses this demographic in the most substantial way, through fully subsidized access to food, and a consideration of the systemic challenges and effects of poverty. Fresh City Farms does not address the socioeconomic aspect of healthy food access.

The relationship between the socioeconomic dimensions of food access programming and each program's business model was significant. The values and market position of each model (co-operative/non-profit partnership, non-profit and social purpose business) were reflected in the program's consideration of individuals and communities with a low SEP. Both the co-operative/non-profit partnership and non-profit models service low SEP populations – though to different degrees. The social purpose business does not service these populations but was pointedly aware of this fact and their inability to do so based on their business model.

After concluding this analysis, I realized that there are a number of other considerations that could be taken into account, though beyond the scope of this study. Given that these are relevant and potentially impactful, I discuss them within these concluding remarks as areas for future inquiry.

The case studies' overall organizational and financial sustainability, as well as scalability, should also be considered because these dimensions ultimately determine these organizations' ability to continue to deliver their programming or service. The Co-op Cred Program struggles with sustainable long-term funding, as well as sufficient organizational support to successfully implement their annual fundraiser (M. Bergman, personal communication, February 12, 2018). Given these challenges, it is unclear how scaleable this model is. They are currently serving about 0.5% of their target population, but given their reliance on preferred progressive funders and the community-based annual fundraiser, it may be difficult to easily scale this model. Unless there is a change to the Co-op Cred Program structure and funding model, it will be difficult to serve a greater percentage of its target population.

The Good Food Program also struggles with sustained funding, but as a more established community organization, they may not be as at-risk as the Co-op Cred Program. A more significant challenge that was identified by the Program Manager was competition with for-profit business. The Good Food Box is at risk of becoming redundant if it cannot compete with their technological and capacity-related advantages (M. Senaratne, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Compared to the Co-op Cred Program and Fresh City Farms, the Good Food Program serves the greatest percentage of its target population (approximately 2%). This may be a result of their longer organizational history, and evidently, their ability to be financially and organizationally sustainable.

As noted, Fresh City Farms currently serves only about 0.001% of their target population; but, they are well aware of this challenge and the CEO and Founder identified their biggest challenge as “just getting to a larger scale” (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). The current financial situation of Fresh City was not presented in detail, other than the note about scalability; as a private business, it is likely that this information is more sensitive, especially for a growing organization. However, Goel had a significant amount of awareness about where their business was currently positioned, in terms of customer demographics, their position as a “good food” organization, as well as their status as a social purpose business and B-Corp (R. Goel, personal communication, February 7, 2018). This awareness is obviously necessary for a business, but it is an interesting contrast to the other two organizations which were not as focused on their overall position in the market, but on their internal work.

A similar analysis may be implemented in future research but requires some adjustment to McGill et al.’s (2015) 6 P Framework. Given that the “P’s” of Promotion, Prescriptive and Product were not relevant to an analysis on community food organizations and business, I recommend that the framework be amended to a 3 P Framework which includes the Price, Place and Person interventions only. The Promotion, Prescriptive and Product categories were more relevant to the original application in a regulatory setting. The work of social economy organizations would not generally include large scale public promotion campaigns, policies, or modification of a food product.

To assess each program's understanding of their food access work, I used one section of Nelson and Landman's (2015) work on food hub evaluation, which addressed the spectrum of food access concerns quite comprehensively. However, upon a final assessment of the results, I recommend adding an eighth outcome to address how each organization regards the importance of employment within a healthy food access model. The outcome could read: "Increased access to meaningful employment opportunities." This consideration would more comprehensively measure the socioeconomic impact of the entire business model, including employment. For example, what is the positive impact on the people who are employed by the program, and does the program undertake any additional measures to achieve progressive and meaningful employment? As noted previously, the Good Food Program works to address poverty through a wider spectrum, which includes progressive employment.

Future research on this topic is also recommended given the limited number of cases that were used in this analysis. The results of the case studies reflected theories in the literature about the values and behaviour of different social economy organizations, but it is unclear whether these patterns would continue to be present in a broader analysis. Another area to consider is the impact of management on program or service delivery, in addition to the business model, which was the focus of this analysis. It has been suggested, especially in the context of co-operative organizations, that the skill and direction of an organization's management can have a significant impact on the quality of program delivery (Reed and McMurtry, 2009; Christianson, 2017).

It is my hope that the research I have undertaken will contribute to the dialogue to improve work in the good food sector, especially as it speaks to the local context in Toronto, Ontario. Specifically, I hope that it can advance the dialogue on food access at the organizational level. The unique application of my frameworks can be used to inform discussion and future research on the potential for change, as well as the challenges and dilemmas of food access work in the social economy sector.

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Appendix

Questions for Mandy Bergman, Progam Coordinator for Co-op Cred Program

1. The website gives a pretty comprehensive overview of the program, but could you describe the goals and outcomes of the Co-op Cred Program in your own words?
2. Do you think the program is contributing to greater access to healthy food in Toronto (or, perhaps more specifically, in Parkdale)?
3. How many participants are currently involved in the program?
    a. Is there currently more demand for the program than can be accommodated due to funding constraints?
    b. How are placements determined for each participant?
    c. How and where is the program advertised (ie. to participants)?
4. Can you describe the diversity of the participants in the program? Do you think they generally reflect the diversity of South Parkdale?
5. How do you envision this program could or should be scaled to achieve greater food access in the city?
6. What do you view as the biggest challenge to healthy food access and/or consumption?
7. What is the biggest challenge facing the program?
8. This is partnership between many organizations. However, the website notes that the program is based on co-operative values, and WEFC is one of the primary organizational partners. Can you expand on if and how the co-operative values are important to the program?
9. Do you see any particular challenges associated with delivering this type of programming using a collaborative partnership model?
10. Are the following outcomes considered goals of the program? They relate to "Access to & Demand for Healthy Local Food" (adapted from Evaluating Community Food Hubs: A Practical Guide)

- ❏ increased awareness of healthy, local food and its benefits
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased purchases of healthy, local food
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased food skills and literacy
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased number of outlets supplying healthy local foods
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased diversity of healthy, local foods available

        - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
    - ❏ increased diversity of healthy, local food customers
        - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
    - ❏ increased access for marginalized groups YES
        - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?

11. Would you say there is an educational component to the Co-op Cred Program (specifically around healthy food)?
    a. I know some of the placements take place at WEFC and involve food preparation, but is there any specific 'healthy eating' education for all participants?
12. How exactly is the program funded?

<u>Questions for Moorthi Senaratne, Manager of Good Food Program at FoodShare:</u>

1. What is the primary goal of the Good Food Program?
2. What initiatives does the Good Food Program encompass (Good Food Box, Bulk School and Community Food Program, Good Food Markets, Mobile Good Food Markets?)
3. Do you think the program contributes to greater access to healthy food in Toronto?
    a. In what way?
4. How exactly is the program subsidized?
5. Do you have numbers about how many people are currently benefiting from or involved in the Good Food Program (eg. recipients of the boxes, schools, market customers, etc.)? Is this info available somewhere?
    a. Do you have any sense of the demographics of those using the program?
6. How does the cost of produce differ from discount grocery store prices?
    a. Does this vary across each program - eg. Good Food Box vs. Good Food Markets?
7. What do you view as the biggest challenge to healthy food access and/or consumption?
8. Do you think that, being a non-profit organization, FoodShare has a particular advantage in delivering this type of programming? (as compared to a business delivering this program)
9. Do you see any particular challenges associated with delivering this type of programming as a non-profit organization?
10. Is the Good Food Program the only revenue-generating arm of FoodShare?

a. Is it considered a social enterprise? Or it is just a way to balance the overall budget of the organization?

11. Are the following outcomes considered goals of the program? They relate to “Access to & Demand for Healthy Local Food” (adapted from Evaluating Community Food Hubs: A Practical Guide)

- ❏ increased awareness of healthy, local food and its benefits
  - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased purchases of healthy, local food
  - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased food skills and literacy
  - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased number of outlets supplying healthy local foods
  - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased diversity of healthy, local foods available
  - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased diversity of healthy, local food customers
  - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased access for marginalized groups
  - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?

12. Would you say there is an educational component to the Good Food Program (ie. pamphlets in the Good Food Boxes)?

13. What is the biggest challenge facing the program?

<u>Questions for Ran Goel, Founder and CEO at Fresh City Farms</u>

1. In your own words, what is Fresh City Farms’ mission?

2. Do you distinguish between any services offered by Fresh City Farms, or do you consider the primary service to be the delivery of fresh, healthy food?

a. I noticed there are “recipe kits” and you have a nutritionist on staff; do you do any consulting, or does she primarily do things like develop standard recipes kits?

3. Do you think the program is contributing to greater access to healthy food in Toronto? And how so? (ie. Do you think generally think about Fresh City’s work in terms of food access?)

4. What do you view as the biggest challenge to healthy food access and/or consumption?

5. Are you able to disclose how many people are currently enrolled in the service?

a. Do you have any sense of the demographics of your customers?

6. I know Fresh City is a B-Corp. Do you consider yourself within the broader category of a social enterprise?

7. Given that, do you think that, being a social enterprise, Fresh City has a particular advantage in delivering this type of programming? (rephrased, based on answer to last question)

8. Do you see any particular challenges associated with delivering this type of service as a [values driven company]?

9. Is the business funded purely through revenue generated by sales?

10. Are the following outcomes considered goals of the program? They relate to "Access to & Demand for Healthy Local Food" (adapted from Evaluating Community Food Hubs: A Practical Guide)

- ❏ increased awareness of healthy, local food and its benefits
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased purchases of healthy, local food
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased food skills and literacy
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased number of outlets supplying healthy local foods
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased diversity of healthy, local foods available
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased diversity of healthy, local food customers
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?
- ❏ increased access for marginalized groups
    - ❏ how are you achieving or working towards this?

11. What is the biggest challenge facing the program?

12. How does the cost of produce differ from grocery store prices?

13. Would you say there is an educational component to the work of Fresh City Farms?

14. Do you have workshops? How are they structured?