

From Corporate Settler Food Regimes to Sustainable Urban Food Systems: Food as a Right of Citizenship and the Democratisation of Food Systems

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A Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies
York University
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

July 31, 2023

Abstract

This Major Paper combines an approach from the disciplines of urban planning, political economy, environmental studies and health studies to deconstruct the role of the settler state and economic institutions in Canada in the contemporary urban food system. It examines the inequalities of power and property in the corporate settler food regime to explain the relationship between processes such as colonialism, capitalism, and urbanisation in how food is produced, distributed, consumed and disposed in the city.

Part One explores the idea of the food-city nexus, and the application of food systems as a strategic lever to enhance related urban systems, such as housing and transportation in the city. Part Two demonstrates the ways in which the ongoing settler colonial project in the region now-known as Canada is at the heart of the dominant food system in urban space, with examples of the ways in which early colonial violence dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their territory, and destroyed their social and cultural food practices. Part Three argues that the commodification of food and the control of food distribution in cities by market entities is irrational, constricts food access, and is detrimental to the health of consumers, the livelihood of farmers and farmworkers, and the future of the natural environment. Part Four offers sustainable urban food systems as a framework for a way forward; it argues that the alternative to the dominant settler colonial and capitalist food system is to adopt the view of food citizenship and food as commons in the city. Here, we offer six guiding values that are essential to an urban food system where food citizenship is adopted by urban residents, and food is governed as commons: localness, universality, sustainable resource management, culture and social connectedness, food as an essential public service, and citizen-centred policy and engagement.

This research has been written with the aim to present academic research in urban food systems planning to public non-academic audiences in a way that feels universal and relevant. The objective is to equip general audiences with ideas, terminology and concepts about the

processes and actors in the settler corporate food regime so that they are able to develop a critical understanding of their impact on, and their interaction with, the urban food system. As this information is often hidden behind a price tag at the local supermarket, it may seem distant to urban food consumers. The value of presenting this research to public audiences, rather than to only the academy, is to bring reflexivity into everyday ordinary food practice. This process leads to a careful consideration of the impact of one's choices and actions on the health and wellbeing of the individual, the collective and the natural ecological environment for present and future generations.

Foreword

This Major Paper has been submitted to the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change at York University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies - Planning program. It is an extension of the theories, concepts and themes outlined in my Plan of Study, as well as a culmination of the coursework and experiential learning opportunities that I engaged in during the MES Planning program.

My area of concentration is titled Food Planning for Healthy Communities. Though my Plan of Study has evolved in my time in the MES program, my interest in planning for sustainable, healthy and diverse communities has remained constant. My time in the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change at York University has greatly influenced the direction that my research has taken; that is, in exploring the ways in which food systems can be used to create transformative urban change. This Major Paper provides space to critically engage with the three learning components outlined in my Plan of Study:

(1) urban planning in the city (both as a technical discipline and as community practice) — understand how urban built and social environments influence the ways in which citizens access, prepare, consume and dispose of food, and how social policy and community planning create the programs, projects and processes that determine the production and distribution of food in the city;

(2) social determinants of health — explore how the built environment influences non-medical social and economic factors, such as race, social class and education, that contribute to health status, and how participatory community-based health can allow individuals to take control of their own well-being;

(3) food justice — learn about food justice and related frameworks, and understand the role that they can play in creating an equitable, just and sustainable food system that centres eaters, their health and their quality of life; farmers and farmworkers, their labour and

livelihoods; and the land and everything that it encompasses (soil, water, air, mountains, biodiversity, natural habitats, etc.).

Dedication

For Ammi, Baba, Sarah, Faaiz, Dostum. Thank you for everything.

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Introduction

Every single day, without pause or fail, millions of urban residents in Canada and around the world rely on a global industrial food system to make sure they have food to eat. For many of us in the city, we only experience and are aware of the latter portion of the process, when we drive to the supermarket, maybe on the weekends, and pick up what we need to prepare for meals during the week (Mendes, 2017). And yet, the process that it takes for us to eat — for food to be grown, processed, packaged, distributed to us in the city, consumed by us, and then managed by municipal waste facilities — is an intensely complex process, with local and international actors. It is one that has significant social, ecological, and economic impact on consumers, food producers, distributors, etc., locally in Canada and for people around the world.

It was only in the past couple decades that the social, ecological, economic impacts of the dominant urban food system were brought into popular discourse. In Canada, a book that prompted people to start thinking in this direction was Dr. Sarah Elton's popular book, *Locavore: From Farmers' Fields to Rooftop Gardens: How Canadians Are Changing the Way We Eat* (Elton, 2010). She tells a compelling story of how she first started thinking about everything that was wrong with the long-distance food system when she looked at the back of a package of cookies her daughter had brought home, and learned that it had been produced in a factory in China by an American company that makes six million of them annually. She had learned that these cookies had started on a conveyor belt, were packaged, then were transported by truck to be loaded onto a cargo hold of a ship that travelled three weeks to get to the port of Vancouver, and then driven by another truck all the way to Toronto, where she lived. In her words, "this cookie had the carbon load of a coal-fired power station". This spurred her to embark on a quest that would help her understand more about the foods that we eat, and where they come from.

The ‘food miles’ that our food accumulates are only one dimension of the ways in which the food system has become central to the climate crisis. Globally, agriculture is the greatest user of freshwater, and also one of its largest polluters; academics and activists alike have demonstrated that there may be surface runoff of pesticides, fertilisers and manure, or nitrogen may leach into groundwater. Eventually, dissolved contaminants from these uses will find their way into lakes, rivers or the ocean, harming marine life and contaminating drinking water (Government of Canada, 2020). In addition, agriculture— specifically the industrial capitalist kind— is blamed for the loss of biodiversity and the destruction of habitat (e.g. creating fields of a monoculture crop). Furthermore, the global food system is responsible for one-third of all global greenhouse gas emissions (Crippa et al., 2021), beginning from its production (e.g. heavy reliance on synthetic pesticides and fertilisers), processing (e.g. plastic packaging), to distribution (e.g. frequent long-distance transportation), consumption (e.g. food waste), and right until disposal (e.g. inefficient waste management). What’s more, the system is so inefficient that 58 percent of all food produced in Canada is lost or wasted even before it makes it to consumers — that is 4.82 million tonnes of food, nearly worth CAD \$21 billion, that is lost or wasted during the processing or manufacturing stage (Gooch et al., 2019).

For many, the realisation that the food system is broken, particularly in the ways in which it is managed and distributed in urban centres, was brought to light during the COVID-19 pandemic, and is still manifesting as we live through the pandemic’s ongoing repercussions. The Canada’s Food Price Report 2023 noted that in 2022, Canada saw the highest rate of food inflation since the 1980s — a 40-year high (Charlebois et al., 2022). According to HungerCount 2022, published by Food Banks Canada, visits to food banks had skyrocketed since 2019, the year right before the pandemic; that is the highest over-year increase in usage since after the 2008 recession. In fact, the rates of people who were employed increased in usage from 12.5 % in 2021 to 14.1 % in 2022 (*HungerCount 2022*, 2022). In 2021, food banks located in larger urban centres of 100,000 people or more were more likely to see significant increases in need.

28 % of food banks in such areas had visits that were more than double compared to 2019 (*HungerCount 2021*, 2021). Moreover, grocery food prices have come under the microscope this year as the leaders of Canada's major grocery food chains have been called out by people, including NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, demanding that the industry be more transparent about what is driving its record-high profits (The Canadian Press, 2023). There is something quite dystopian about Canada's grocery store oligarchy raking in record-high profits while Canadians struggle to afford food.

Food and the City

Cities are the very centre of where transformation to the food system can happen. Cities are already the space that the majority of people (in Canada and around the world) call home, and are rapidly increasing in population. For this reason, there is a critical need to organise and plan cities so that residents are provisioned with food and water in sustainable and equitable ways. The 2015 Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (*Milan Urban Food Policy Pact*, 2015), an international agreement among cities around the world, and signed by the Canadian cities of Halifax, Montreal, Guelph, Toronto and Vancouver, corroborates the connection between cities and food systems change. The Pact declares that as cities are centres of economic, political and cultural innovation, and manage vast public resources, they have a strategic role to play in developing sustainable food systems and promoting healthy diets. Food is multidimensional and multifunctional, and so food interventions will have a close impact on the various economic, social, health and environmental dimensions of urban challenges. As such, the Pact stresses that cities can adopt a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and inter-institutional approach to planning for food systems. In the future, as urban populations grow and strain existing urban infrastructures and amenities, it is necessary to re-examine the ways in which cities are provisioned with food and water. As we will learn shortly, how we produce and distribute food

and water will be central to a wide range of city issues, including “poverty, health and social protection, hygiene and sanitation, land use planning, transport and commerce, energy, education, and disaster preparedness” (*Milan Urban Food Policy Pact*, 2015).

The importance of cities is only expected to grow: currently, 56 % of the world’s population lives in cities and this is expected to double by the year 2050 to become 7 out of every 10 people (*Urban Development: Overview*, 2023). Cities occupy 2 % of the Earth’s terrestrial surface, but are responsible for consuming over 75 % of the earth’s resources, and this number is expected to grow as the populations of cities rise (*Resource Efficiency & Green Economy*, n.d.). In 2021, nearly 73.7 % of Canadians, or nearly three in four, lived in one of Canada’s large urban centres, also known as census metropolitan areas (i.e. with a population of 100,00 or more). Canada continues to urbanise as we welcome record high numbers of immigrants, who mostly choose to settle in these urban centres (Government of Canada, 2022). This level of accelerated urbanisation globally, and locally here in Canada, has a profound social, economic and environment impact. It requires that we take a step back and take a hard look at the way that food is produced for cities, transported to them and within them, distributed in them, and disposed of within our cities. The status quo of how food is provisioned in cities requires a reexamination.

One cannot imagine a city built for the health and well-being of its residents without the presence of a strong urban food system. Planning, both as a technical discipline and as a tool for community organising, focuses on the importance of creating social and built infrastructure, facilities and amenities that allow a path for self-actualisation for their residents. We should aim to build a community that is clean, healthy, affordable, accessible, cohesive, and self-reliant for its energy, food and economic security for all residents (Roseland, 2005). Repeatedly, we are coming to know that the push for economic growth cannot be the way to meet these goals, nor to address the challenges that urban systems face. In these spaces, there is great potential to gather knowledge and innovative resources to meet the challenges that the food system

presents to us. More and more, we are coming to know that cities are not isolated entities, but rather, are connected together on a global scale. As such, they can become catalysts for change beyond the local level (Scharf et al., 2019). Therefore, governing and organising sustainable and equitable food systems in the city has the potential to become a driver for local, national and global change.

Land, and everything it encompasses, is the fundamental foundation of both governing a city, and managing a food system. In the region now known as Canada, land is a critical issue of both the city and food. The settler colonial project, which acts through the legitimisation and normalisation of settler occupation and dispossession of the land of the Indigenous peoples, is both fundamental to the dominant food system, and a condition of ‘city-making’. As we will discuss in the Paper, we will take on an approach of critical implementation that reflects an awareness and understanding of how the settler project continues to project violence in food and cities to this day. The alternative framework that we present is sustainable urban food systems as a way forward to counter the dominance of the settler colonial project and of the commodification of food in the urban food system. This framework is founded on two ideas: food citizenship and food as commons, which we explain in detail in Part Four.

Critical Food Guidance

From a young age, we are given guidance about what to eat and what not to: what foods are safe or not, which foods are healthy for us or not, which foods to save for special occasions, which foods we can have as a treat after having less tasteful foods. While this guidance concerning health and diet is important, it’s also severely constructed by culture, race, class, gender. In extreme cases, food guidance may also have a political agenda. Consider, for example, this comical call in 2011 by far-right anti-Muslim activist Pamela Geller to boycott Butterball, a company that was offering halal turkeys for Thanksgiving. Geller claimed, “Halal turkey, slaughtered according to the rules of Islamic law, is just the opposite of what

Thanksgiving represents: freedom and inclusiveness, neither of which are allowed for under that same Islamic law.” (Serwer, 2011). I might add that if capitalist markets attempt to assimilate Muslims by encouraging them to participate in Thanksgiving, an American holiday that celebrates and gives thanks for a history of Indigenous genocide, it is beyond the purview of my research to confirm Geller’s claim that this contradicts the values of freedom and inclusiveness.

Critical food guidance is a slightly different form of guidance than we may be used to. More than recommending foods based on what is considered healthy-eating for the diet of the individual, critical food guidance takes on the view that food guidance has a greater role to play in expanding public awareness about the complexities and the vulnerabilities of the food system. Along with the social and environmental impacts that we have already outlined, such as food insecurity, water and soil depletion, loss of biodiversity and food waste, we may also include justice for food workers and migrant farm workers, animal welfare, and depletion of fish stocks (Desjardins & Sumner, 2022). Critical food guidance goes beyond the focus on nutritional diets and healthy-eating, and moves into the connections between the food we eat and its impact on the environment, society and the economy. From this, we can form priorities in policy and programming that directly link the health of the individual with the health of the community, the city, and the world around us.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, food guidance in Canada encouraged personal responsibility for health, but even these recommendations were constructed by the national agricultural sectors, because dietary recommendations stemmed from defined food groups sorted into nutrient categories that corresponded with Canada’s commodity groups (Koberinski et al., 2022). Those who grew up in Canada may remember learning about Canada’s Food Guide in school. The 1992 edition, called Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating, recommended that a healthy meal comprised foods from one of each of the four food groups: grain products, vegetables and fruits, milk products and meat and alternatives. At the time, it was considered a monumental shift from previous guides because it embraced a “total diet

approach” to food, in which it recognised that energy needs vary, and had aimed to meet both energy and nutrient requirements. Previous editions were based on a “foundation diet concept” which had only identified minimum requirements, and had allowed for those individuals with higher needs to self-select more food (Government of Canada, 2007). While this sounds like a commendable method to develop a guide, the creators of the Guide also had other influences. They needed to balance recommending a mostly plant-based diet while also respecting the wishes of large commodity group producers, such as the beef industry, as well as avoiding clash with global convenience-food corporations, and also remaining silent on the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, which places restrictions on in advocating for locally-produced food (Desjardins & Sumner, 2022).

Furthermore, the personal responsibility approach emphasises the ‘freedom of choice’ of the individual over their health: for example, the individual is encouraged to eat a strawberry over a candy bar, or drink water over pop. However, the Guide does not critically examine what leads an individual to make the choice in the first place; for example, why are candy and pop sold at schools? What are the consequences of selling highly-processed sugary foods to children? Who profits from this, and what is the impact on public health? In sum, the recommendations of the conventional personal responsibility and food guidance approach carries assumptions about the role of the individual, communities, markets and the state in shaping our food choices (Koberinski et al., 2022).

Critical food guidance shifts the focus from individual health or personal responsibility to a multifaceted approach that aims to link the food we buy, grow and harvest to all the other aspects of life that food interacts with: culture, spirituality, society, the economy, the environment. It shifts the debate to thinking about how collective decisions, policies and institutions play a role in determining food ‘choice’ (Koberinski et al., 2022). Within the food movement itself, it provides a critical analysis of the discourse of “stuffed and starved”, where the simultaneous challenges of obesity and malnutrition are viewed as the default indicators of a

malfunctioning food system. Within this discourse as well, critical food guidance notes that when obesity is cited as a factor for pushing food systems change, it shifts blame away from food systems actors, and further marginalises a group of people who already suffer from stigma instead of addressing the fundamental threat to health that is posed to all populations (Elton, 2021). This is a complete paradigm shift from the way we imagine food guidance to be at present: it moves food guidance beyond questions about which foods are better for one's dietary health, to imagining food as a gateway for being critical about the impact of our food on the health of the individual, the community, the planet and the world.

This Major Paper is an approach to thinking about the ways in which we can interact with food and food systems in the city given the social, historical and political presence of colonisation and commodification. It tries to imagine a way of thinking and being in relation to food that adopts a “humane urbanism” perspective that we can implement through practices of solidarity and radical care (Miraftab, 2023). Ultimately, societal and policy change will be inspired by a paradigm shift in how we understand food and the food system to function. Until we are able to create this shift into new ways of being, we are constrained by the limits of our imagination.

Project Directions

This Major Paper develops an argument that emerged as the result of an extensive literature review on the challenges that food systems face in the city in the presence of ongoing colonisation and active commodification of food systems, and how we can consider an alternative urban food system through frameworks of food citizenship, food as commons, and Indigenous food sovereignty. Initially, this Major Paper was not planned to be a Paper at all, but a series of audio-essays intended to be a public education project, or what is called ‘action research’. The original project was intended to equip people with the language and foundational ideas necessary for them to start asking questions about food in their communities. Until we

have the words and ideas to understand how we can organise better, we are limited by what we know to be normal, the way things have to be. Due to time constraints, the format had to be amended to be a Major Paper. I have written this Paper in a more conversational format to honour my original goal of intending for this research to be public-facing.

In this Paper, I adopt a critical perspective in food systems research as outlined by Koç et al. (2017). To be critical in food systems research, they argue, is to address four dimensions: first, question whether the arguments of a study are based on evidence rather than on biases, and also, question empiricist orientations that only provide a description of a phenomenon without accompanying it with an analysis of why it is happening. Second, question the basic values that lie behind the dominant ideologies and discourses that inform scholarly thinking. Third, question power and power dynamics by making connections between everyday food practice and socio-political structures. Fourth, consider possibilities and solutions that transform the food system and society at large.

Part One: The Food-City Nexus

Section Outline:

In this section, I will cover the following:

1. Introduce the notion of the food-city nexus.
2. Explore “food systems thinking” and demonstrate the depth to which food is enmeshed with other urban systems.
3. Demonstrate the application of food systems thinking in using food as a strategic lever for accomplishing city goals.
4. Outline the characteristics of the city that make it an ideal level to begin food systems change.
5. Identify a gap in planning that has traditionally left out food systems.

Introducing The Food-City Nexus

The term “food-city nexus” was coined in a 2022 field report by Lori Stahlbrand and the late Wayne Roberts, two long time Canadian food policy practitioners and staff leads of the Toronto Food Policy Council (Stahlbrand & Roberts, 2022). In this section, I take the work that Stahlbrand, Roberts and other food policy practitioners, activists and researchers have conducted at the Toronto Food Policy Council, namely in the creation of the Toronto Food Strategy (Toronto Public Health, 2018), and build upon the vital connections that need to be understood between food and the city.

The food-city nexus expounds upon the ways in which food challenges are central to, and are inextricably linked with, a range of urban planning and policy dimensions in the city. Urban planning, urban geography and urban studies have a special identity for its study and its particular attention to links among the numerous systems and functional sectors that make up

the community, and a study of their characteristics and interconnections, such as links between the public and private sector, and its multiple perspectives on community life. Urbanists and municipal planners are interested in the study of the numerous systems that make up a city, such as land use, housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, health, education and energy systems, as well as their individual characteristics and the interconnections within them, and between them and other community systems. These are systems in which planners throughout history have been heavily involved, often with a focus on linkages within them, between them and other community systems (Hodge & Gordon, 2020).

Food Systems Thinking

In order to explore the depth of how food operates in the city, I consider food from a systems perspective. A food system is “the chain of activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management, as well as all the associated regulatory institutions and activities” (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). The processes and infrastructure involved in feeding a population include packaging, transportation, marketing, etc, and the inputs and outputs generated at each step (Steinman, 2019). The Food Policy for Canada, a national food policy that was launched for the very first time in Canada's history by the Federal Government of Canada in 2019, also brings the concept of food systems closer to home. It states that they “include the way food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed, and disposed of, and they have direct impacts on the lives of Canadians” (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2020).

A key characteristic of food systems is that they are interconnected with other systems, and integral to the wellbeing of communities (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2020). They operate within, and are influenced by, social, political, economic and environmental contexts, and involve human labour, research and education to keep them evolving (Steinman, 2019).

MacRae and Donahue call this “food systems thinking”, which “reflects an awareness of how actions by one group in the system affect other groups, as well as affecting the environment, the economy, the fabric of society, and the health of the population, and ultimately consumers” (MacRae & Donahue, 2013). Food systems, therefore, operate within a greater urban system, where other subsystems, such as the housing system or transportation system, directly and indirectly impact how food is produced, distributed, and consumed, and disposed of. In this way, there is a back and forth of influence between systems, where the varied subsystems in the city, such as the transportation system or the housing system, both influence, and are influenced by food systems in the city. As such, the food system is entangled in a web of activities, processes and social relations that are enmeshed with other urban elements and systems in the city.

The Multi-Functionality of the Food-City Nexus

When we apply food systems thinking in the city, we can see how food can be used as a vehicle and a lever for realising and actualising a wide array of city goals and addressing city challenges in areas unrelated to food in a way that few other sectors of the economy can match (Toronto Public Health, 2018). The production, distribution, consumption and disposal of food affects urban life for residents horizontally across numerous dimensions. In the city, food culture and tourism affect travel patterns when people transit to try new food places via private vehicles, public transportation infrastructure, or a middle combination, such as ride-hailing services. The food retailing industry (i.e. grocery stores or supermarkets) and the food service industry, one of the largest sectors of the economy and a major employer in Canada, affects economic development in numerous ways. Then there is food disposal, which equals \$49 billion sent to landfill or compost per year in Canada (*Food Waste - The Issue*, n.d.). This includes 11 million tonnes of avoidable food waste which is 58 % of all food produced for Canadians, amounting to 124.5 billion pounds of greenhouse gases created annually, the same as 28.4 billion cars

(*Second Harvest*, n.d.). How we organise our food system has implications for how waste management systems are organised. Collectively, the food system has social, economic, and environmental considerations and implications that are deeply enmeshed in city systems.

More often than not, the integration of urban food systems can have a positive impact on other urban systems and issues. The example of community kitchens illustrates a more detailed example of how this takes place. Community kitchens are community spaces where people can come together to cook large batches of food for themselves and their families in collaboration with other community participants. Community kitchens can serve the following list of purposes: community kitchens promote public health by increasing food security among participants and the greater community (Engler-Stringer & Berenbaum, 2007); create space for social connectedness and participation; create opportunities to help with the integration of newcomers into the community; increase cooking skills and food literacy; support positive mental health; lower food waste (and reduce the load on municipal waste management systems); alleviate poverty by decreasing the amount spent on food to be redirected into other necessities (e.g. housing and transportation); increase resilience in the form of food literacy and cooking skills in the event of climate disaster; reduce carbon footprint when produce is locally-sourced; and create space for community development and civic engagement. To quote Stahlbrand and Roberts once more, “Food is key to the ‘wealth of relations’ or social-capital formation on which cities depend for cohesion and sociability” (Stahlbrand & Roberts, 2022).

In this way, the multifunctionality of food systems opens food up to the economies of scope. This means that implementing programs and projects in food systems allows for the city to accomplish and achieve other city goals (Stahlbrand & Roberts, 2022). If we take the example of implementing a community garden in a park, we can think of a number of benefits that may result from this project: The community will have space to grow fruits and vegetables; it will reduce “food miles” in transportation costs associated with trucking food from long distances; it will relieve stress and improve physical and mental health; it will beautify the

landscape; plants will absorb rainwater so there will be less runoff; it will improve air and soil quality, increase biodiversity of plants, reduce neighbourhood waste through composting; and positively impact the neighbourhood micro-climate, and much more. In this way, the production of food is only one benefit of the many that comes about from the implementation of one food systems project.

From all of this, we can draw a conclusion that food systems are critical to the health of a well-functioning city. Such a city is one where both the social and built environments have been developed to support the mental and physical health and wellbeing of its citizens. Planning for food, therefore, is not simply a vehicle only for gaining individual dietetic or nutritional health or managing food safety. Rather, the resulting systems that are developed when cities plan for food, benefit all sectors of the city. Similarly, when urban food systems are structurally weak or mismanaged, a conclusion can be drawn that the result is not just individual malnutrition, but also social disorder and ecological damage. Therefore, a sustainable and resilient urban food system does not just achieve one goal within its own sector, but horizontally across a nexus of city challenges and systems.

The intention of food systems planning is not necessarily to introduce a new goal that competes with other existing issues that are increasingly causing more precarious situations for people, but rather, to identify opportunities where food can address and enhance the objectives that the city already has. In this way, we can frame food systems as a matter of the cities doing what they already do in a better way. Rather than needing to ask, “what can a city do for its food system” the question becomes, “What can a more resilient food system do for the city?” (Mendes, 2017).

Radical Food Transformations – Starting in the City

While food systems do directly contribute to improving other urban systems, we must also focus on food for its own sake. The future of the planet depends on, among other things, for us to return to more sustainable, equitable and local forms of producing, distributing, consuming and disposing of food. Unless we radically transform the systems under which our food system is structured, the future of humanity on our planet is in jeopardy. At the same time, malnutrition and food insecurity exist in various forms in all cities around the world, and cities in Canada are no exception. The resulting social and economic costs that begin at the level of the individual are redistributed to the community, the city and the entire nation. For the sake of the health of our ecosystems and the health of the people, we need to make a radical transformation to our global food system.

The city is the ideal place to start with this change. It helps to think about the sheer amount of food that travels into, within and out of every single city on every single day. Carolyn Steel describes it like this:

“When you consider that every day for a city the size of London, enough food for thirty million meals must be produced, imported, sold, cooked, eaten and disposed of again, and that something similar must happen every day for every city on earth, it is remarkable that those of us living in them get to eat at all. Feeding cities takes a gargantuan effort; one that arguably has a greater social and physical impact on our lives and planet than anything else we do. Yet few of us in the West are conscious of the process. Food arrives on our plates as if by magic, and we rarely stop to wonder how it got there.” (Steel, 2013)

As hubs of social, cultural, economic and political innovation and expertise, cities are often spaces where great public resources, investments and infrastructure is managed. They are centres of cultural activity and social change, and are equipped with enormous financial resources and intellectual capabilities. Combine this with the sheer scale of population that resides in cities all around the world — more than half the world’s population, or 4.4 billion people (*Urban Development: Overview*, 2023). Consider also the amount of meals that are

brought into cities to feed this population every single day. Due to the city being a central hub that is equipped with the resources the food system needs, and due to the sheer scale of the population that resides in cities, the city is strategic, not just as a starting space for creating food systems change, but as vital spaces to develop sustainable and resilient food systems, and promote healthy diets.

As previously discussed, food systems are closely to and deeply enmeshed with several other urban systems and challenges faced in the city, namely, transportation, energy, education, and disaster management. As such, the city is a good place to begin food systems change as it allows the food systems approach that we take on to be interdisciplinary, and spans across public, private and civil society institutions. In order to tackle the climate crisis, it is imperative that we start with reforming our cities — the ways in which urban systems are structured, the urban built environment is designed, and the operations and processes that silently work in the background to provide the conveniences and comforts we take for granted in modern urban life. In almost every aspect, city design must be reexamined to ensure that they are structured for the wellbeing for the next seven generations, and seven more after. In this tremendous undertaking, the governance of food requires careful re-examination.

Food - Lack of Representation in Municipal Planning

Cities in general, and in particular, municipal policy departments that may seem less related to food systems, such as housing and transportation, may not necessarily perceive themselves as actors in food systems change. Over two decades ago, Pothukuchi & Kaufman (2000) pointed out that municipalities and urban planning in general have only been lightly involved in food systems. When they do get involved, their work is reactive rather than proactive, and piecemeal rather than comprehensive. They point out that even planning schools

do not always have training for student planners to learn about how food systems operate in the city.

In Canada, there may be legal reasons as to why this is the case. Under the Canadian constitution, food is governed largely by provincial and federal legislation, which leaves municipalities limited jurisdiction over the food system. Consequently, cities may face the consequences of an ill-planned food system on the ground — uneven food access, reduced food infrastructure, etc. — but their ability to propose legislation that addresses these challenges is limited. In addition, municipalities face additional challenges in developing food policy because municipal policy units are often organised departmentally, whereas food requires interdisciplinary collaboration among different policy streams and government sectors, such as public health, social policy, economic development. Yet there is not necessarily a “Department of Food” to manage the nexus of social, political, economic and environmental issues where all these intersections meet. Similarly, policy systems are divided constitutionally and need collaboration from all levels of government to be successful. This requires a normative shift in existing policy frameworks and traditions that construct our understanding of food, not just on the level of the city, but across the board (MacRae, 2011). In particular, we need to address and confront the construction of food as an isolated and siloed system that prioritises food as a marketable commodity, a remnant of a colonialism-imbued understanding of food. These constructions need to be contested and challenged.

The lack of representation of food systems in municipal planning schemes and plans has definitely been changing. Ten years ago, MacRae & Donahue (2013) compiled a report where they analysed more than 64 Canadian municipalities engaged in food policy and practice. These cities brought together diverse players with the mission to create food systems change and use food to progress towards health, social, environmental, and economic objectives. They presented a descriptive overview of examples of what select municipalities were doing at the time, and offered suggestions and recommendations for greater adaptive governance that links

community and city actors with broader levels of government, and uses a systems approach to tackle persistent problems.

In addition to cities themselves, there are several notable organisations around Canada that have been working on food systems issues for decades. The Toronto Food Policy Council has worked extensively with the city of Toronto to create a Toronto Food Charter (City of Toronto, 2000), which had the objective of making Toronto a food secure City where food production capacity would be safeguarded and a variety of healthy food would be available to city residents at a reasonable cost. The Charter is reflected in the Toronto Official Plan with references to the reduction of loss of foodlands for the purpose of urban sprawl and the creation of community gardens (City of Toronto, 2022). Likewise, the Vancouver Food Policy Council has also worked with the City of Vancouver to create a Vancouver Food Charter (City of Vancouver, 2007) and a Vancouver Food Strategy (City of Vancouver, 2013). Furthermore, several planning schools have integrated food systems planning specialisations to their syllabi, including the Food Systems Specialization in the Planning program at the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, through which this Major Paper is being written.

Yet, food systems are not planned with the same consistency or diligence that we plan for other urban systems, such as housing infrastructure. As well, while other elements of the urban commons are largely subsidised, such as public transportation, parks or libraries, food is mostly left for citizens to figure out how to provision it for themselves in the best way possible. The ideal city would be equipped with a robust and comprehensive food systems planning network that facilitates access to food for its citizens, and yet no city in Canada, to the author's knowledge at the time of writing, fits this description.

Part Two: Settler Colonialism and the Food System

Section Outline:

In this section, I will cover the following:

1. Establish the fact that settler colonialism is an ongoing project.
2. Show how early European settlers justified violent occupation of Indigenous territory by claiming notions of *terra nullius* and cultural backwardness.
3. Demonstrate how the settler project sought to destroy Indigenous social and cultural food systems practices with the example of the potlatch ban.
4. Explore how the contemporary food system is bound with the structure of urban space in the settler colonial city.
5. Assert that the settler colonial project is at the heart of the dominant food system in cities, and offer suggestions for how food systems planners and activists can decolonise the food movement.

Settler Colonialism — An Ongoing Project

In this section, we address how settler colonialism is the foundational dimension of the contemporary urban food system in Canada. An analysis of food system governance in Canada would be remiss to ignore the incomplete and ongoing structure of the settler colonial project and its implications for how we grow, distribute and eat food. As many residents of Canada are aware, the government of Canada operates on land that has a violent colonial past; this analysis takes the view popularised by the (late) historian Patrick Wolfe (2006) seminal work on the logic of elimination of the Native, establishing that settler colonialism is an ongoing structure, not a one-time event that took place in the past.

To grow and distribute food, and to govern and manage a city, one needs a monopoly on land. This monopoly is currently in the domain of the settlers who erected a new colonial society on land that they expropriated from Indigenous peoples, where they have ‘come to stay’ with the intention of making a new home. This has been referred to as ‘homemaking’, which categorically differentiates settler colonialism from other forms of colonialism. Settler colonialism “insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain” (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Critically, land, and everything that encompasses it (i.e. soil, water, air, subterranean resources, etc) is the most valuable and contested concern in settler colonialism (ibid).

This section first examines the ways in which settler colonialism is not only about the violence of occupation but is also responsible for the destruction of Indigenous relationships to land, food systems and practices. In the project of occupying these lands, settlers expropriated the land and committed genocide against its native population. The settler colonial project, which acts through the legitimization and normalisation of settler occupation and dispossession of Indigenous lands, is both at the “heart of the dominant food system” (Bohunicky et al., 2021) and the “ongoing condition of city-making” (Simpson & Hugill, 2022). Next, we discuss how the settler project manifests in urban space and food systems, showing how settler violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the original settlers, but reasserted each day of occupation by subsequent generations and new immigrants to this land (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Finally, we assert the importance of guiding food systems governance and food movements with reflexivity and a strong understanding and awareness of the ways in which settler colonialism continues to operate in cities and the food system.

Territorial Occupation and Cultural Denigration

During the so-called Age of Discovery, European exploration and expansion was defined by the Doctrine of Discovery, a legal principle emanating from a series of papal bulls that

originated in the 1400s. The Doctrine, guided by the prevailing Christian-European worldview, decreed that any 'vacant' or 'empty' land could be 'discovered', its capital could be exploited, and its occupants subjugated (Assembly Of First Nations, 2018; Reid, 2010). *Terra nullius* is a critical concept: if the occupants of the land were not Christian, or if they were failing to make use of the land in accordance with European understandings of productive land use (i.e. living in a nomadic fashion), land could be labelled 'vacant' or 'empty', and thus, could be 'discovered'. As such, settlers were permitted by the Doctrine to legally claim jurisdiction over the land in the name of the monarchy (Matties, 2016; Reid, 2010).

This Doctrine demonstrates that the settler question was ultimately about extracting wealth through territorial expropriation, and the elimination of the Indigenous population was imperative to allow territorial expropriation to be successful (Harris, 2004; Wolfe, 2006). It presumed the racial superiority of the European Christian peoples, characterised by a strict binary between savage and civilised. Hardly a white settler questioned this distinction, or its association of the former with Europeans and the latter with the Indigenous population (Harris, 2004). Consequently, the Doctrine justified the dehumanisation of the Indigenous peoples, the denigration of their knowledge systems, and dispossession of their land.

Furthermore, the colonial notion of *terra nullius* is predicated on the forms of labour that are valued in Western Liberal ideology (Locke, 1690). In this case, they are the forms of agrarian labour and cultivation practices that produce a Western agrarian landscape that is common across Europe (Wittman & James, 2022). To the Europeans, 'improvement' meant to cultivate or till the land (Locke, 1690). In fact, some authors have argued that colonisation is an agricultural act and an agricultural idea (Matties, 2016 citing Knobloch, 1996). Even in the present day, Indigenous food systems in Canada are credited with creating many of the domesticated plants on which our food system depends, including beans, corn, potatoes, squash and berries. In fact, many core Indigenous food staples were exported to Europe, and became part of the regional diet (MacRae, 2021a; Mann, 2011).

Contrary to the European view, Indigenous productive activity was alive in cultivated systems in the forests, coastlines, steppes and deserts, even if the settlers could not view the human activity therein as 'agriculture' (Grey & Patel, 2015). Indigenous peoples developed a wide range of complex traditional harvesting strategies and practices over the thousands of years that they had inhabited the land, including hunting, fishing, gathering and cultivating a variety of plants and animals in the fields, forests and waterways. These Indigenous food systems shaped and sustained their distinct cultures, economies and ecosystems (Morrison, 2011).

The blindness of the European worldview to the complexity of Indigenous food systems is exemplified in the case of the rich socio-natural system in Lekwungen territory, also known as Victoria, British Columbia. In 1792, the famous George Vancouver encountered the socio-political–economic–ecological food system that the Lekwungen had been care-taking for hundreds of years. Though he and his fellow explorers and settlers remarked on the beauty and the bounty of the landscape, they were unable to recognise this as, in part, a complex food system that had been produced and modified for thousands of years, because they did not see the European cultural food systems practices that they were familiar with. Their Eurocentric perspective prevented them from recognising that the Indigenous peoples were capable of intervening and being responsible for such a landscape (Simpson & Bagelman, 2018).

Seeing Lekwungen territory, but only perceiving *terra nullius* had critical implications for the future of the region. Due to the presumption of an absence of intervention in the landscape, Vancouver and his fellow settlers believed that they had the right to inhabit and develop the Lekwungen lands, freely and without consequence (Simpson & Bagelman, 2018). Furthermore, these Eurocentric misperceptions formed the legal and discursive foundation for removing the Lekwungen peoples from their lands, and for the subsequent production of the settler colonial city. Vancouver's simplified and selective knowledge of Lekwungen peoples, food systems and lands became codified as scientific knowledge (Simpson & Bagelman, 2018).

In Western Liberal ways of being, land is situated as property or possession. It is signified by a contractual relationship between human beings, as opposed to a relationship between people and the land itself (Wittman & James, 2022). The Enlightenment thinker John Locke propagated the notion that improving the land through agriculture is a God-given duty of all people. In his treatise, Locke proclaims, “God gave the world to men in common” (Locke 1690, ch. 5, sect 34) — this is fair enough, but then is further qualified — “He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational, (and labour was to be his title to it;)” (Locke 1690, ch. 5, sect 34). For Locke and the followers of his ideology, land is viewed in an object-subject relationship; land is primarily a property that can be possessed with the use of personal labour, contract, or war (which conceals deliberate acts of violent colonisation (Locke 1690, ch. 3).

Conversely, Indigenous eco-philosophy and land governance systems view land as a “mutually constituted *relation*” (emphasis in original) that is based on culturally specific cosmologies (Wittman & James, 2022). As Dawn Morrison, the Founder and Chair of the B.C. Food Systems Networking Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty explains, “Indigenous ecophilosophy reinforces the belief that humans do not manage the land, but instead can only manage our behaviours in relation to it”, which are informed by values of “interdependency, respect, reciprocity and responsibility” (Morrison, 2011). To care for ecosystems, Indigenous peoples uphold the sacred responsibilities to their traditional territories, which in turn care for them. Land is a place where “meaning, memory, law, and culture are made and remade through relationships” (Wittman & James, 2022). In this system, relationships hold cultural, ecological, political, and spiritual importance, and permeate all land governance regimes. Not only does this include Indigenous land, but also across the collective, individual, and state-claimed land, as well as within the family, community and state structures (Wittman & James, 2022). Today, this owner-property relationship continues to underpin the usage of property doctrines as a primary tool of anti-Indigenous violence in settler colonial land regimes (Wittman & James, 2022).

In the settler colonial process, the epistemological, ontological, and cosmological relationships to land held by Indigenous peoples are represented as pre-modern and backward — in other words, ‘savage’ (Tuck & Yang, 2012). The characterisation of the native population as ‘barbaric’ or ‘savage’ was advantageous because it further justified land dispossession and repossession:

“A discourse that treated colonial land as waste awaiting development and its inhabitants as backward and lazy, was exceedingly serviceable. It allowed the improvement of a people’s habits and land uses to become a cultural imperative, part of the civilizing mission, and a manifestation of progress. It validated the dispossessions and repossessions intrinsic to settler colonialism—as it had the consolidation of market economies in western Europe—while adding a veneer of altruism.” (Harris, 2004).

To demonstrate this, Edmonds (2010) argues that the “supersessional dynamic of displacement and replacement” was facilitated by the narrative of stadial progress, a notion based on the four stages of human development that places humans on a spectrum, where they start from the age of hunters, then progress to becoming pastoralists, then to agriculturalists, and finally to commerce. This theory conveniently places European society at the highest stage of progress. Stadial theory came to justify and legitimate the entitlement to land and its subsequent capture, as well as accompanying loss of Indigenous life. This thinking can be attributed to Locke as well, who imagined that Indigenous governance systems and relationship to land were on an earlier stage of development as compared to Europe; therefore, ‘unimproved’ land could be dispossessed and repossessed without the consent of the native inhabitants by those who were capable of reclaiming ‘waste’ (Edmonds, 2010 citing Blomley, 2004).

Today, the treaty system is considered to represent a nation-to-nation relationship that was established between the Indigenous peoples and European settlers (Starblanket, 2019). To the contrary, increasing evidence demonstrates that treaties were yet another means of forcibly removing the native population, who were a hindrance in the way of opening land for settlement.

After Confederation in 1867, the newly-formed Government of Canada began to negotiate treaties in order to acquire land for the purposes of expanding development; this had the express aim of dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their lands (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019; *The Numbered Treaties (1871-1921)*, 2020). The treaty-system, neither peaceable nor equal, was used to orchestrate massive land surrenders from Indigenous nations. At present, crown land and private property in Canada are either unceded territory (i.e. never formally surrendered), or land that was “‘acquired’ through unscrupulous practices” (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019). Additionally, the narrative of peaceable and consensual land cession in the treaty-making process has been contradicted by the political relations that Indigenous peoples themselves have called for since their signing (Starblanket, 2019).

To demonstrate, Graphic Journalist Joe Sacco (2020) tells the story of the political contestations that the Dene people living in the Northwest Territories have fought against the Canadian government for the right to their lands in his brilliant work of graphic journalism, *Paying the Land* (2020). He notes that if one reads Treaty 11 (1921) closely, covering a region predominantly inhabited by Dene people, “one can hardly escape the impression that the ‘Indians’ gave away the land they lived on for the promise of an annuity of a few dollars each, some tools, and medals for those persons acting as chiefs.” (p. 61). The Dene he speaks with echo his own sentiments; he is told, “The land doesn’t belong to us. We belong to the land. The white people came in and they wanted to share with us and asked if we could do something for them... But the question of the land was impossible... You don’t sell your dad [and] you don’t sell your mom.” (p. 62).

So why did they then sign Treaty 11? Sacco illustrates that the Treaty came cloaked in verbal assurances, and consequently, many Dene interpreted it as a friendship pact that did not prejudice their relationship to the land in any way. In the Dene culture, oral pledges and stories are the way that knowledge and information are passed down, and these were of greater significance than a legal document in English, which few could understand. Stephen Kakfwi, the

ninth Premier of the Northwest Territories, recounts to Sacco his reaction upon reading Treaty 11 when he came across a copy in his school library at the age of 12. He says, “I remember reading it and being struck by the fact that... the Dene had extinguished all their rights... and given up all their land for \$5 a year, for some bullets and fishnets. I remember thinking, ‘This has got to be the craziest thing I’ve ever heard of... I asked my grandfather about it at one point... He thought it was a foolish question from a young kid. He basically just laughed... Who would even say something like that, let alone think it? Who needs \$5?’” (p. 63).

In the present day, the claim that treaty-making was a peaceable and legitimate affair has been used to extinguish outstanding claims to Indigenous land and have authorised settler expansion and possession. In an example of modern-day “treaty-making”, Crosby (2021) examines “socio-spatial reproduction of settler-colonial urbanism” at Akikodjiwan, an Algonquin sacred site on the Ottawa River. The Akikodjiwan is a contested site because it is also a site of a large private real estate development project. Crosby uses the Access to Information Act to demonstrate how the Canadian government, primarily led by the National Capital Commission, the Crown corporation that is responsible for development and urban planning in Canada’s Capital Region, arranged for the land to be transferred to developers in the midst of long-standing calls by the Algonquin peoples to have their sacred traditional lands returned to their nation.

The Potlatch Ban

In addition to the physical violence that destroyed Indigenous food systems, the settler colonial project is also directly responsible for destroying the immaterial social and cultural traditions that centred food and reciprocity. This form of violence is demonstrated in the Potlatch Ban enacted in 1884, which made it illegal for First Nations across Canada to host potlatch ceremonies.

The word 'potlatch' roughly translates to, "to give", and it is a ceremony held by the various groups of Indigenous peoples who live on the Northwest Coast in Canada and the United States and in parts of the interior Western subarctic (Gadacz, 2006/2019). Traditionally, for First Nations groups such as the Haida, the potlatch is a legal foundation of the community's social structure that also ensured that traditional and cultural knowledge would be transmitted (Davidson & Davidson, 2018). 'Potlach' is a shorthand for a ceremony that involves feasts, spirit dancing, singing (Gadacz, 2006/2019). These ceremonies may be hosted to establish or witness a major event, such as to celebrate a marriage or a birth, to name a child, to honour a departed one, to welcome a new child, or another major community event (Francis, 2013/2015). For the Haida, potlatches were hosted to redistribute wealth, and to establish and maintain social status (Davidson & Davidson, 2018). Loosely, the potlatch referred to "any ceremonial distribution of property among different coast peoples regardless of the specific nature of the event" (Steltzer, 1984 as cited in Davidson & Davidson, 2018)).

In gratitude for attending the ceremony, or in other traditions, in payment for witnessing the ceremony, the attendees often receive gifts, such as valuable firearms, blankets, clothing, carved cedar boxes, canoes, and food items. Sometimes, these gifts have been gathered and stored by chiefs overtime and are saved for such an occasion. As such, the potlatch is not only a ceremony of bonding ties of kin, fostering community solidarity within and between bands and nations, but also a ceremony that serves as a way to redistribute wealth (Davidson & Davidson, 2018; Gadacz, 2006/2019).

In 1884, the Canadian government banned potlatch in an amendment to the Indian Act. The original law read, "Every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the "Potlatch" or the Indian dance known as the "Tamanawas" is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not more than six nor less than two months in a jail or other place of confinement." (Isaac, 2015). Where the Indigenous peoples saw the potlatch as integral to governing community affairs and redistributing wealth

(Siegel, n.d.), the government of Canada saw the potlatch as everything that was wrong with Indigenous culture, everything that kept them backwards and uncivilised. For them, it was anti-Christian, wasteful of personal property, and kept them from wanting to be industrious and work hard at a job (Francis, 2013/2015; Gadacz, 2006/2019). A senior official in Ottawa wrote at the time, “The efforts of the [Indian] Department have been directed to the promotion among the Indians of industry, progress and morality, all of which are greatly hindered by indulgence in the potlatch.” (Siegel, n.d.).

On December 25, 1921, in the village of ‘Mimkwamlis on Village Island, an island near northern Vancouver Island, Namgis Chief Dan Cranmer held the biggest potlatch the northwest coast of British Columbia had ever seen (Siegel, n.d.). In tradition with grand potlatches, Chief Cranmer’s grand potlatch lasted for several days and had almost 300 people in attendance -- enjoying a ceremony of feasting, dancing, singing, and gift-giving (Siegel, n.d.). As it was hosted while the potlatch ban was in effect, this potlatch was held in complete secrecy.

When the local RCMP and Indian Agents learned about Chief Cranmer’s potlatch, they were determined to take action that would end the potlatch entirely. On February 1, 1922, RCMP Sgt. Donald Angermann and Indian Agent William May Halliday arrested 45 people with crimes under the potlatch ban. At first, they were held for days in a school where they had nowhere to sleep but the bare ground. They were offered a chance to avoid jail if the entire community promised to, one, give up potlatching, and two, surrender the traditional paraphernalia used in potlatch. In order to save the accused, most of the community relinquished their traditional regalia, including dancing masks, costumes, robes, rattles, headdresses, family heirlooms and other items. Still, 22 people were given suspended sentences and 20 people were sent to Oakalla Prison Farm in Burnaby for sentences that lasted two to three months. In total, local officials confiscated 750 items, most of which were sold to museum collectors, and primarily ended up in three museums – the (then) National Museum in

Ottawa (now the Canadian Museum of History), the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and the Museum of the American Indian in New York (Griffin, 2016; McRae, n.d.; Siegel, n.d.).

Telling the story of Dan Cranmer's potlatch is not to tell a story of resistance — I could not locate any secondary sources that said that the potlatch was held in resistance, and I do not wish to romanticise a people's history and claim that what they were doing was to resist and rebel against the settler government, when all they could have been doing was just being themselves and practising their culture. Instead, I tell this story to illustrate that at no point did the settler government pack up and go back to Europe. The settler colonial project is still alive and present, and settler violence still lingers behind the shadows.

The Settler Colonial City - Pride of Place

This sub-section attempts to explore (rather than answer) the following powerful question, “what does it mean to implement a local sustainable urban food system led by a settler colonial municipal government?”. This question follows Hunt's (2014) question, “What does it mean for Indigenous knowledge to be moved from spaces of lived Indigenous governance and culture, such as a potlatch ceremony, to a conference session” or, “into an urban planning project led by a settler-colonial municipal government”? (Hunt, 2014, as cited in Tedesco, 2017). The contemporary food system is bound up with settler colonial urbanism. Briefly, I offer insight from the literature on what settler colonial urbanism is, then expound on my interpretation of its interaction with food.

Edmonds (2010) draws upon Philosopher Henri Lefebvre's seminal work, *The Production of Space* (1974/1992) to highlight the ways in which “the unequal distribution of power in social space becomes naturalized and its operations forgotten”. She asks critical questions about urban space: “is a city a work or a product?”; “what or whom does it signify?”; what is the mode of occupation of the territory?; how was it reorganised under administrative

and political urban power and authority? In essence, this conversation boils down to “the production of space by political power,” “for whom, and by whose agency?”.

Urban geographers understand urban space to be a dynamic socially and spatially-influenced product rather than a “motionless thing” (Massey, 1991). “Space” is not a neutral container or milieu where life happens. It is an “interlinkage of geographic form, built environment, symbolic meanings, and routines of life,” rather than a list of ingredients that we can concretely point to and call a “space” (Molotch, 1993). The production of space, then, is a “project” that is shaped by the host of actors who occupy a space, and their respective interests and aims for the space. Accordingly, space is produced and reproduced through human intentions, even as space influences those who produce it. Space is not simply a force of nature or an outcome of spatial geometry, but a result of human production (Molotch, 1993). However, the inputs that form the interlinkages of space privilege certain activities and actors while inhibiting the activities and goals of others — they structure what can be done in a space itself. Social ways of being and built landscapes are only a part of space, but they are filled with tensions about what a space should be and look like. Thus, “people fight not only over a piece of turf, but about the sort of reality that it constitutes” (Molotch, 1993).

Here, I use the analytic frame of the ‘settler colonial city’ to observe the interlinkages that produce urban space in Canadian cities. In Anthony D. King’s (King, 1976) seminal study on colonial urban development, he wrote, cities were “laid out by the rulers and not the ruled”. The settler colonial city is built on Indigenous, often unceded lands, and structured with a desire to possess the land and to accumulate profit from it in perpetuity (Tomiak, 2017). In the process of urbanisation and establishing cities and towns, a distinct activity that is often synonymous to ‘progress’ and ‘development’ in the settler project, settlement is given “material presence” and an “organizational shape,” literally building the settler colonial nation (Porter & Yiftachel, 2019). Thus, the process and materiality of building the settler colonial city and producing space serves

as a “primary mechanism operationalizing the spatial and economic dispossession of colonized peoples” (Porter & Yiftachel, 2019).

The narrative of stadial theory, discussed earlier in this section, allows the settler city to have “pride of place” — it is the apotheosis of progress, commerce and civilisation, absent of Indigenous ways of life (Edmonds, 2010). The dominant discourse of the settler city as the symbol of the “new world”, of liberalism and democracy, of globalisation and international migration conceals its ongoing settler colonial nature. Rather than a symbol of progress and development, the settler city is a symbol of the “profound displacement, erasure and often destruction of Indigenous histories and geographies”, while simultaneously holding a form that keeps this displacement hidden (Porter & Yiftachel, 2019). Under such circumstances, settler cities occupy a paradoxical space in the relationship between the settler colonial project and the Indigenous natives who are colonised. In the occupation of Indigenous lands, settler cities both form a central component of settler society, and “render Indigeneity profoundly out of place” (Porter & Yiftachel, 2019).

There are three forms of dynamic circulation, movements and mobilities that constitute and sustain settler city space, and are central to the production of the settler colonial city: the movement of commodities, capital, and people. In order to preserve settler relations in the city and beyond, and the ongoing production and reproduction of the settler city itself, the circulation of these three must be assiduously managed. This notion challenges the idea that colonisation happens at a geographical or temporal distance from the city (Simpson & Hugill, 2022). Furthermore, settler colonial cities differ from colonial cities, such as Algiers or Calcutta, where colonisers did not intend to stay in three ways: one, strategies of accumulation in settler colonial cities aim to enrich the settler constituency, rather the colonial home metropole; second, the colonial relation is a central and enduring element of life; and three, Indigenous natives are often excluded from, rather than exploited in, core economic activities (Hugill, 2017).

Likewise, the study of settler colonial urbanism draws attention to the ways in which settler colonial dispossession and violence manifest in urban space and life (Dorries et al., 2022). Through this concept, we reject the notion that settler colonial cities are non-Indigenous spaces, or that they are removed from the tensions of settler possession, or Indigenous dispossession. Instead, it repositions cities as “sites for the ongoing reproduction of Indigenous elimination and simultaneous resistance” (Ellis-Young, 2022). Primarily, anti-colonial and decolonial urban analysts make two main arguments: one, settler colonial urbanism is an inherently unstable project, and requires constant and vigilant maintenance; two, settler colonial urbanism is co-constituted by other forms of racial capitalist power located both near and far” (Simpson & Hugill, 2022). In essence, the literature on settler colonial urbanism outlines the role of the production of violence in erasing Indigenous presence, maintaining the ongoing occupation of Indigenous lands and accumulation of wealth and reinforcing a monopoly on settler governance (Coulthard, 2014; Dorries et al., 2019; Toews, 2018; Wolfe, 2006).

In a case study of the City of Kelowna, B.C., Tedesco & Bagelman (2017) demonstrate the ways in which the differential processes of racialisation and urbanisation establish the whiteness of the settler colonial city, and render the Indigenous Syilx communities and temporary migrant farm workers who reside in the city ‘missing’ or ‘out-of-place’ spatially, temporally, and politically, despite their embodied presence. In this analysis, they ask the question, “How does the settler colonial city work to materialise modern political geographies and subjectivities and make other configurations go missing?” In this context, ‘unmissed persons’ are people who are not present to a Western imagination, persons who are invisible to participants of Western politics and its scholars, persons who others who see the world from a singular perspective do not think to look for. This category of missing persons has a clear linkage to the “political geographies of modern settler colonial urbanisation....: an assumption of singular, universal space in which all that is apparent from a dominant perspective is all that is acknowledged as being politically present.” (Tedesco & Bagelman, 2017).

In like manner, Edmonds (2010) demonstrates the ways in which Indigenous peoples have come to be produced and marked in particular categories in the context of the City of Victoria: “‘inconvenient,’ incompatible ‘wanderers,’ as ‘nuisance,’ ‘vagrant,’ and ‘prostitute,’” rather than being “configured as anomalous in urban settler space” (p. 6). She argues that these political categories are born of “racialized municipal codes, policing, and official and unofficial practices of segregation that take us to the heart of the operations of an urbanizing settler colonialism... and are counterpart to...the attempted formation of a specific Anglicized polity through the intertwined imperial colonization and immigration” (p. 6).

The invisibility of the settler colonial project in cities has been challenged by the literature. Academics who have studied the settler colonial city challenge the policies in Canada that are built on the notion that Indigenous ways of being and urban cultural life is incompatible and situate settler colonial cities as environments that simultaneously host thriving Indigenous life, while continuing to be structured through settler relations (Blomley, 2004; Dorries et al., 2019; Tomiak, 2017; Yoon & Daniels, 2021). Settler cities, in their streets, Parliaments and courtrooms, are sites where the settler project materialises, yet they barely register as locations of claimed land in global land rights struggles (Porter & Yiftachel, 2019). Critically, as Edkins (2011) notes, the violences of Empire has not affected North America; this makes the settler project invisible *a second time* to investigation as a political process (Edkins 2011 as cited in Tedesco & Bagelman, 2017).

Yet, Indigenous political presence, place-making resurgence and reterritorialization is a continuous struggle. Léonard et al. (2023) describe urban space as a multi-layered palimpsest, where ongoing processes of displacement and dispossession are confronted by Indigenous resistance, which in turn, brings new displacement, and then new Indigenous disruption. Thus, the palimpsest highlights the many layers of Indigenous presence and place-making that resist the ongoing settler colonial and neoliberal processes in the settler city, such as real estate speculation, gentrification and racial profiling and surveillance (Léonard et al., 2023).

Critics of the settler colonial city as an analytic frame have called for a more nuanced perspective of the ways in which settler urban dynamics relate to race and displacement. The settler colonial framework sets up a binary of ‘settler’ and ‘Indigenous’. This uncomfortably assimilates “the rest of us” (R. D. G. Kelley, 2017) who have come to Canada as a result of displacement in our own homelands, and do not neatly fit into this dichotomy. In settler colonial contexts, especially those that operate as an empire, such as the United States, “dispossessed people are brought onto seized Indigenous land through other colonial projects [and] this tightly wound set of conditions and racialized, globalized relations exponentially complicates what is meant by decolonization, and by solidarity, against settler colonial forces” (Tuck & Yang, 2012). As a result, Day (2016) has called on academics to expound upon “the role that nonwhite migration plays within such a framework or how it intersects with other aspects of white supremacy.” (Day 2016 as cited in (Simpson & Hugill, 2022).

A line of further inquiry in this direction may be to use the analytic frame of racial capitalism to explore how settler colonialism works in conjunction with systems of racialised domination to produce urban space (Simpson & Hugill, 2022). Dorries et al. (2022) argue that by bringing racial capitalism into conversation with settler colonial urbanism, we can better understand how racialisation and racism are central to making urban space, and how the centrality of the settler project intersects with this form of oppression at the root of production of space. Furthermore, McClintock (2018) investigates the ways in which urban agriculture is bound up with the logics of racial capitalism in the settler colonial city.

Food Systems in the Settler Colonial City

The normalisation and legitimization of settler colonialism is at the heart of the dominant food system (Bohunicky et al., 2021; Rotz, 2017). All parts of the food system, from production, transportation, distribution, consumption, and right up to disposal, are constructed in settler city

space. In food systems planning, research and activism, it is crucial to understand the historical and spatial considerations that influence the urban food system in a settler context. If there is no acknowledgement or recognition of settler colonialism as an ongoing process, and how its structure manifests in the food system, the entire system becomes decontextualized. It only perpetuates the erasure of Indigenous genocide and dispossession, and results in intentionally-induced collective amnesia that continues to normalise the settler colonial project.

Recall the example that we considered earlier in this section of the rich socio-natural food system that the Lekwungen peoples had care-taken for hundreds of years, but which early European settlers, including George Vancouver, were unable to recognise as the work of the native peoples (Simpson & Bagelman, 2018). On that territory, the Lekwungen cultivated camas fields; camas was a staple crop and a major source of their sustenance. Settlers were unable to see this as complex food systems production, and the Lekwungen people were dispossessed of their lands, separating them from the camas fields.

In the City of Victoria today, urban development has paved over 95 % of the thousands of acres of the intricate agro-ecological food system of the Lekwungen. One of the few remaining spaces where the camas crop can be found is in Victoria's Beacon Hill Park, or Meegan, a space of cultural importance to the Lekwungen. Due to its significance to both Victoria's municipal government, who manage it as a recreational park, and the Lekwungen, who manage it as a productive food system, this urban space is a site of political contestation. As a result, the socio-ecological configuration of the space simultaneously reflects the Lekwungen socio-ecological system, and the settler socio-ecological formations. The first has been built and managed over hundreds over years, whereas the second has been forcefully imposed on the land through colonisation. As a result, the tensions from both socio-ecological logics inform the everyday practices that govern and reproduce Victoria's ecology (Simpson & Bagelman, 2018).

The conclusion we draw from these histories and politics is that, even before we begin to imagine how the food system could be different, there is a need to first decolonise urban food systems. What does this mean? First and foremost, as food systems planners and activists, we must pay greater attention to, one, the settler colonial structures that shape and interact with the urban food system in the present, and two, the ways in which these same structures risk being reproduced uncritically by the food systems planning discipline. Without paying attention to the ways in which food systems intersect with the appropriation of land and a history of settler agriculture, food systems actors engage in the settler colonial processes of erasure, whether intentionally or not, by “further invisibilising the ways that dispossession occurs.” (Kepkiewicz, 2015). Bohunicky et al., (2021) note that progressive and well-intentioned food movements may reify “capitalism, white supremacy, agro-centrism and private property that are central to the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous Peoples,” and therefore, require “greater accountability to the contradictions inherent in working towards social and ecological justice on stolen land”.

Settlers who are working to “rebuild connections to land and to the food we eat” for the purposes of counteracting the “distancing nature of the industrial food system” need to critically think about the ways in which they “think, write, and talk about our disconnection and reconnection” (Matties, 2016). The food systems subdiscipline is rich with compelling transformations that we can adopt to guarantee a socially and ecologically just food system for community — for example, we can implement urban agriculture projects by repurposing unused urban lots into farming space and thereby increase food security — but these transformations will inevitably take place on unceded or contested land (Matties, 2016). Or, such urban greening initiatives (community gardens, rooftop gardens, etc), may increase property values, thereby gentrifying the community and creating spaces of exclusion (McClintock, 2018). To exemplify how this takes place, Kepkiewicz et al. (2015) problematise the ways in which well-intentioned settler food systems movements attempt to include marginalised groups, but simultaneously reinforce oppressive structures power. In order to meet the goals that food systems planners

and activists set for themselves in reaching ecological sustainability and social justice, settler food systems movements must “confront” settler colonialism through the complete process of “acknowledging, learning, and interrogating as a prerequisite to addressing, dismantling, and decolonizing” (Bohunicky et al., 2021).

Rotz (2017) notes those who live in the social field of conventional agriculture in the food system are marked by white-ness and maleness, two particular forms of power and domination, though they may not experience it as such when there are cultural constraints to reflexivity. In this context, she shows how constructions of indigenous and immigrant “others” are put to work in particular ways for settler land accumulation and labour exploitation respectively. In 2017, an 86 year old retired rancher donated half of his 260 hectare land on the east side of the Fraser River near Alkali Lake, B.C to the B.C. Esk'etemc First Nation as an act of Reconciliation (CBC Radio, 2017). In 2019, his son and daughter-in-law sued him, seeking declaration that they were entitled to ownership of the land, and demanding that the gift of land to Esk'etemc First Nations Band be declared void (*Linde v. Linde*, 2019 BCSC 1586, 2019). The rancher's son and his daughter-in-law won the suit.

Decolonising urban food systems also means to support Indigenous peoples in their efforts to decolonise the material structures of the settler colonial project, and create new urban structures that are rooted in social, racial and ecological justice in the city. These efforts may range on a spectrum of radical ideas that seek to take down the system altogether, to everyday practice that resists the settler project. An example of the former is the position that because it is not possible to dismantle colonial relations within the structures of a settler state, it is impossible to create a decolonised national food policy administered by the federal government in Canada (Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018). On the other hand, an example that exemplifies everyday practice of resistance is the case study of the Lekwungen peoples' active contestation of urban political ecology in the settler city of Victoria, where they work to “create new emergent socioecological

environments that disrupt the smooth imposition of a purely capitalist or settler colonial space.”
(Simpson & Bagelman, 2018).

Part Three: The Commodification of Food and the Corporate Food Regime

Section Outline:

In this section, I will cover the following subsections:

1. Briefly discuss how food access and security are constructed and managed in the city.
2. Demonstrate the ways in which managing food as a commodity is irrational.
3. Outline some of the ecological, social and health externalities of the corporate food system.
4. Show the ways in which 'supermarket supremacy' in the city constricts access and consumer choice.

The Construction of Food Access and Food Security in the City

In 1943, the world witnessed the Bengal Famine, one of the greatest catastrophes of the 20th century. This human-made disaster, transpiring under the colonial rule of the British Raj, was devastating in scale. The Bengal Famine was responsible for an estimated three million deaths, and is now remembered as a "historic tragedy of the colonial past" (Mallik, 2022). The responsibility of the colonial authorities has been severely questioned during this crisis. Researchers have calculated that there was a high chance that there was sufficient food available to feed the population, but was not able to reach the people due to the profit-seeking attitudes of the British administrators (Mallik, 2022; Sen, 1990).

In cities, food access is often framed in terms of food security. Food security is defined by the 1996 World Food Summit as when "all people, at all times, have physical and economic

access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2008). Food security can be identified by its four dimensions, which must be fulfilled simultaneously for food security objectives to be realised:

- (1) Physical availability of food - The level of food production, net trade, etc.; the supply side of food.
- (2) Economic and physical access to food - Dependent on income, markets, food prices.
- (3) Food utilisation - Good care and eating practices, food preparation, diversity of diet, intra-household food distribution.
- (4) Stability - stability of the other three dimensions over time.

Conceptualising food access in the city in terms of food security may be the first, and most obvious, way to think about how to make sure every single person is able to eat nutritious, appetising and culturally appropriate food. The causes of the Bengal Famine were conceptualised in a similar manner: it was assumed that famines take place, that people die for want of food, because there is a general lack of sufficient food to feed the amount of people who need to be fed (Sen, 1980). Naturally, food policymakers have responded to people not being able to fulfil their need to eat by increasing resources that raise food availability.

The discourse about food security, however, is problematic because it bases its analysis on hunger, scarcity and deficiency. Food security begins with the assumption that food access is a matter of people *not being hungry*. This assumption can then be addressed by making sure that there is sufficient availability of food, or that people’s incomes are sufficient to ensure that they can purchase food from market actors. It positions food systems as a means to avoiding starvation, which is “the characteristic of some people not *having* enough food to eat... not the characteristic of there *being* not enough food to eat.” (emphasis in original) (Sen, 1982). In part four, we discuss how planning for food access from a perspective of hunger or insufficiency are ineffective in building food systems based on food citizenship and food as commons.

In an analysis of famines, such as the one in the Bengal province of British India, Nobel Peace Prize Winner Amartya Sen uses the concepts of 'entitlements' and 'endowments'.

'Entitlements' are "the set of different alternative commodity bundles" that an individual is able to acquire through their 'endowment, or their "original bundle of ownership" in a private ownership market economy. If an individual's entitlement does not include a commodity bundle with food, they cannot eat. If there is a change in a person's endowment, such as if they are alienated from land, or if there is loss of labour power due to ill health, or if there is a change in the person's exchange entitlement mapping, such as in the case of loss of employment or rise in food prices, then this person may not be able to acquire a commodity bundle with enough food (Sen, 1990).

This conversation about famines, endowments and entitlements premises the notion that food access and distribution is not a question of food shortage or insufficient incomes, but a conversation about commodities. As such, the conversation cannot begin with food security, which asserts that people should have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food, but does not expose the root causes as to what stands in the way of people reaching this state. Rather, it may be more helpful to begin the conversation with the forces that construct food as a commodity, and the forces that govern the ability of the people to establish command over the commodity of food. Beginning the discourse with a critical examination of these forces can help us establish how a person is able to access food in the city. Sen's analysis is an alternative analysis of famines to the dominant discourse, but it has also been strongly critiqued. Regardless, it helps us acknowledge that food as a commodity is a problematic approach to food governance.

In the city and beyond, food is a vital human need. Not only is this need grounded in human biology and physiology, but it is also integral in society and cultural tradition, interpersonal relationships, mental health and wellbeing, and in creating community and social connectedness. And yet, for most of us who live in cities, we know and understand that if we want to eat, (or need to eat, as every human does), we must purchase it. The urban food

system, as informal as it is, is built on the premise that food is a commodity, and that residents in the city are willing to engage in labour (i.e. work at a job) in order to earn wages (i.e. a salary) that they can exchange for food.

Critically, there are few other means of accessing food in the city: one may grow their own food if one has access to land or space; frequent a non-profit or charity that offers food for free or at a subsidised price; glean food from edible landscapes from public parks or other urban spaces, if available; or access one of the few public food programs that are offered by the government (e.g. school food programs in certain regions). But none of these are understood as the default or normative way of obtaining food in the city. They are not the norm, they are the exception. The norm is that a person works a job to earn money, and uses that money to purchase food.

Food as a Commodity and its Contradictions

In the city, food is distributed primarily based on market logic. Inconveniently, market logic is not the least concerned with ensuring that everyone has a nourishing and healthy diet (MacRae, 2023). In these circumstances, the economic nature of cultivated food is that it is a private good and a near-complete privatised commodity (Vivero-Pol, 2013). That is, in a market economy, such as the one we live in, a commodity is that which is distributed through exchange in the market (Vivero-Pol, 2018), and even more, a commodity is something that is produced with commodified labour power (Holt-Giménez, 2017). The food system has nearly been nearly completely commodified and become subject to the whims of the market, especially as globalisation allows for the widening of food chains (i.e. resulting in the increase of food miles). What does this look like?

A commodity is a special kind of good or service associated with capitalist modes of production, where its exchangeability for some other thing is its only socially relevant dimension

(Koberinski et al., 2022; Vivero-Pol, 2018). The commodification of food is a product of food systems operating under capitalism (Koberinski et al., 2022). As a commodity, the purpose of the production of food is for it to be bought and sold in the market, just like anything else that can be bought and sold, such as clothing, cars, or TVs. And like anything else available in the market, the production and sale of food responds to market demand (which is not the same as need). In this way, if someone has money, they can buy how much food they like, and whatever kinds of food they like. Those who cannot afford to buy food, but still need to eat, either must figure out how to produce it themselves, trade for it, steal it from someone else, rely on charity, or just go hungry (Holt-Giménez, 2017).

The great contradiction in valuing food as a commodity is that the ultimate goal in a capitalist system is to maximise profit, or to accumulate the greatest profit in the least amount of time (Albritton, 2017). This goal will *necessarily* override any competing goals. Consequently, the processes and functions of food are transformed from a vital component of life — a requirement for health, nutrition, culture and life — into a near absolute political and economic commodity and an instrument for speculative investment and profit (Zerbe, 2019). If, and when, capitalism operates in accordance with its own most rational inner principles and structures, it cannot manage agriculture or the food system in rational ways, because its structure will resist any reforms that are required to build a more rational food system (Albritton, 2009). Thus, rational capitalism is fundamentally at odds with a food system based on values of justice, equity and sustainability.

Furthermore, capitalism's orientation towards privileging profit suggests that food does not necessarily need to be produced for the purpose of consumption by humans or other living beings. Food can — and should be, in principle — grown for whatever fetches the highest price. A prime example of this phenomenon is the production of crops for agro-fuel. Agro-fuels are liquid fuels derived from food and oil crops, usually grown in large-scale plantation-style industrial production systems, and are used primarily as transportation fuel (CBAN, 2022).

Mexico witnessed the impact of agro-fuel production on the availability of food in 2007 when the price of corn tortillas, a staple in the Mexican diet, soared up to \$20 USD (up from \$5 USD in the year before). This provoked waves of protests dubbed the “tortilla riots”. Among other factors, a prime cause of the rise in prices was the allocation of a portion of grain towards agro-fuel production (e.g. ethanol), which was intended to be shipped to the United States of America for the purposes of facilitating sustainable automobile transportation (Thomaz & Carvalho, 2011). These events raised powerful arguments about the contradictions in producing food as fuel to sustainably power the cars of the wealthy, while the poor are unable to even afford their staple food items. In 2007, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Jean Ziegler said that “It is a crime against humanity to convert agricultural productive soil into soil which produces food stuff that will be burned into biofuel” (UN News, 2007).

The impending effects of climate change and climate disaster make destruction to the natural environment due to the capital-driven food system even more alarming. Because capital will always choose to give precedence to short-term profits over all other considerations, it means that it will have complete indifference to preserving long-term protection of land and water, which requires that we develop a relationship of stewardship, and is diametrically opposed to the relationship of short-term profit maximisation and immediate gain that concerns corporations. In principle, the goal of short-term profit can drive corporations to complete deforestation, paving of arable land into roads leading to suburbs, completely emptying rivers, lakes and oceans of fish, and polluting land, water and air (Albritton, 2009).

The enormous issue of food waste, which is a significant characteristic of our food system, is a telling symptom that points to both the social and environmental costs of a profit-driven food system. Within the system itself, there are supply chain inefficiencies that result in massive amounts of food waste annually. First, food may be lost on the farm. One reason why this may be are the cosmetic requirements from the retailer that may not make it worth harvesting (retailer requirements are even more strict than the government ones)

(MacRae, 2022). A misshapen tomato or a stubbly carrot will get left at the bottom of the pile at the grocery store. As a result, farmers are required to grow a certain percentage of food more than they know they will sell, because they need to account for the fact that not all the produce will pass the cosmetics requirements. The “imperfect” product has no use, and is destined for waste. Food may also be lost during processing (e.g. due to human errors or machine breakdowns) or during distribution and shipping from farm to retail. For example, a major Canadian retailer revealed that in the late 2000s, it was rejecting 75 truckloads of produce per week at distribution centres across Canada (this does not include what the retail stores rejected from the distribution centres). This amounted to approximately 141,570 tonnes a year (MacRae, 2022). Food may be lost at the retail level (e.g. the appearance of abundance in grocery stores is attractive to consumers, and increases long-term sales, so retailers may over-purchase) or at the food service level (e.g. from spoilage, plate waste). Lastly, food may be wasted at the consumer level (i.e. food that is uneaten and thrown away), though structural dimensions continue to influence waste at this level as well: for example, poor urban planning often positions larger superstores at a distance from neighbourhoods, which results in the phenomenon of the “weekly big shop” (MacRae, 2022).

Food waste in these complex supply chains is the result of the conceptualisation of food as a commodity, which must travel through a convoluted list of entities and actors before it reaches the consumer. If it is more logical to waste food in order to gain the most profit, the market will logically take those steps to fulfil its objectives. The commodification of the food system explains the roots of the failures of the food system. Market rules can allow enough food, in fact, excess food to be produced, nationally and globally, but they cannot guarantee that everyone on the planet has equitable food access.

Food charity and aid interventions, such as food banks or soup kitchens, are band-aid solutions in a capitalist food system. Such interventions assume that the intervention is temporary, and it is offered to individuals who are unable to cope with the market’s offering of

food, but they are working towards it, and once they get there, they will return to purchasing food from stores. For example, charity options, such as food banks or soup kitchens, are positioned to be successful if their clientele no longer uses their services, because it means that people have gotten back “on their feet”, and they are able to now afford to purchase food on their own. In positioning themselves in this way, they validate the market as the primary platform where food should be accessed. In addition, these solutions are not universal programs, they are exclusive to those who are struggling with food security. As such, the programs also have negative connotations attached, which is in contradiction to the values of the right to access food in a dignified manner. Food charity programs are important and commendable interventions that people need in times of need, but they are not the solution.

That food is both a commodity and a vital human need, as we understand it in our society and market economy, is a source of social and ecological conflict (O'Neill, 2018). Because rational capitalism will *necessarily* choose to interact with food in ways that maximise short-term profit, it is indifferent to the qualities of food that are not oriented towards profit. These are the dimensions of food that Vivero-Pol (2017) outlines in his Food Dimensions Framework:

- (1) food as a public good;
- (2) food as a human right;
- (3) food as a cultural determinant;
- (4) food as a renewable resource;
- (5) food as essential for humans;
- (6) food as a tradable good.

(Koberinski et al., 2022) add two more dimensions:

- (7) food as a sacred good;
- (8) food as medicine (to reflect Indigenous teachings).

Though ‘food as a tradable good’ is but one dimension in the Framework, the absolute dominance of the commodification of food has undervalued all other dimensions that are invaluable to food, but cannot be represented by monetary exchange. For rational capitalism, the search for short-term profit makes it neglect and be apathetic toward human health and quality of life, labour rights and wages, and ecological protection and restoration, unless they can generate a quick profit. On the contrary, if it is more profitable over a shorter period of time to undermine these dimensions, capitalism will do so. The only way in which capitalism may pay attention to human health, labour rights or environmental protection is if state policy demands that it does. A food system organised and structured on the premise that it must give preference to the quantitative return of profit as opposed to qualitative considerations, and that all values are secondary, and must be subsumed to profit wherever they conflict, will undermine human and environmental health (Albritton, 2009). As such, capitalism itself, rather than any other apparatus, such as state policy, is at the root of problems of food provision (Albritton, 2009).

Luckily, food is not inherently or intrinsically a commodity, nor is the dimension of tradeability the natural status of food. On the contrary, the commodification of food is a social construct (Vivero-Pol, 2013) that has come about as a result of a long and contested historical and political process that was accelerated under British imperialism and colonialism, and has reached its heights in the present with the financialization of food (Zerbe, 2019). When we deconstruct the idea of food as a commodity, we come to the natural conclusion that the publicness or privateness of a good is a result of social or political choice (Vivero-Pol, 2013). In fact, upon further reflection, we find that the only component of food that is considered a pure private good is cultivated produce and livestock, which is grown on privately owned land with the help of wage labourers (Vivero-Pol, 2013).

Here, we can imagine a paradigm shift: if the commodification of food is a social, political and economic construct, we now have the freedom to reimagine what food could look like once we move beyond this construction. Consider the following components of the food system,

which are all considered to be shared resources held in common, rather than a commodity or private good: traditional agricultural knowledge developed by small farmers, peasants and indigenous peoples; modern science-based agricultural knowledge that is developed by publicly-funded institutions, such as universities and research centres; diverse cuisines and recipes; knowledge about cooking and baking; uncultivated edible plants and wild animals in the natural environment; food safety regulations; hunger, nutrition and food-related health (Vivero-Pol, 2013).

Interestingly, agriculture only came under capitalist control in Canada and the United States after World War II. This is due to the fact that some general features of agriculture do not fit well with capitalism (Albritton, 2017). Albritton (2017) explains that when managing agriculture, a capitalist needs to concern themselves with more than just raw materials, tools and labour, as they might have to in factory production. In agriculture, a capitalist also has to worry about acquiring fertile land and sufficient water for irrigation. They must pay attention to the fact that a given crop can only be planted and harvested a couple times a year, and that there must be enough workers present at the time of harvest to hand-pick the crop, if required. They must transport and store the crop without letting it spoil, and protect it from unpredictable natural forces, such as the weather, crop diseases, pest infestations. Meanwhile, prices may vary widely, and therefore, cause unexpected loss (or gain).

Food Regime Analysis

Food regime analysis is a useful theory that puts a name to the relationships between capitalism and the global and local food system that we have discussed thus far. First introduced by Harriett Friedmann (1987), then later expanded on by Friedmann & McMichael (1989), food regime analysis prioritises the ways in which “forms of capital accumulation in agriculture constitute global power arrangements, as expressed through patterns of circulation

of food” (McMichael, 2009). This aims to link “international relations of food production and consumption” with the forms of accumulation that broadly distinguish periods of capitalist transformation from 1870 up until the present day (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989).

The basic notion of a food regime is that it is a “rule-governed structure of production and consumption of food on a world scale” (Friedmann, 1987). The goal of studying and analysing food regimes is to “reconstruct a preliminary history of agriculture” in order to highlight its impact on the state system, and accordingly, “offer a critique of the nationalist presuppositions” that permeate the discourse around development and dependency (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989). In simpler terms, food regime theory explores the role that agriculture has taken in the “development of the capitalist world economy and in the trajectory of the state system” (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989). The authors use this starting point in order to, one, characterise late 19th century capitalism as an extensive form that constructed the relations of capitalist production through the growth of wage labour, and second, to characterise mid-20th century capitalism as an intensive form that reconstructed the relations of consumption as part of the process of the accumulation of capitalism (and this had particular consequences for agriculture) (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989). The authors outline three distinct food regimes:

The first global food regime (1870s - 1930s) was key to the creation of a “system of national economies” that were governed by independent states (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989). In this food regime, Europe’s settler colonies funded European industrialisation with the extensive production of cheap food and raw materials, while simultaneously, emerging settler states, notably America in the lead, provided Europe imports of wheat and meat (McMichael, 2009).

The second food regime (1950s - 1970s) was a more complex set of relations of production and consumption. These were rooted in state protection and “the organization of the world economy under US hegemony” (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989). In this regime, surplus food from the United States were re-routed to “its informal empire of postcolonial states,” acting

strategically to influence the Cold War. In this way, food aid both encouraged “selective Third World industrialisation,” and also secured loyalty against communism. At the same time, agribusiness was able to form transnational linkages between national farm sectors, which were subdivided into a “series of specialised agricultures linked by global supply chains”. As a result, a “‘new international division of labour’ in agriculture” had begun to form around “transnational commodity complexes” (McMichael, 2009).

The third food regime (late 1980s - present) is called the corporate food regime and it is still emergent (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). It has deepened the first two processes of the food regime, now incorporating “new regions into animal protein chains”, and consolidating “differentiated supply chains”, which includes what the authors call a ‘supermarket revolution’, which is exclusively for privileged consumers who can afford to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, and which generates “populations of displaced slum-dwellers as small farmers leave the land”. Parts of this also include the emerging presence of the “global food/fuel agricultural complex” (McMichael, 2009). In this context, widening supply chains add food miles to rising food costs, and the mass production of food processes and standardises the food we eat. Concurrently, new movements against the corporate food regime are emerging, such as Food Sovereignty, Slow Food, Community Supported Agriculture, as well as small-scale organic producers who are expanding their “social base on the grounds of democracy, ecology and quality” (McMichael, 2009).

Costs and Externalities — What Corporations Don’t Pay

In *A Foodie’s Guide to Capitalism: Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat*, Eric Holt-Giménez (2017) argues, “capitalism is the silent ingredient in our food” (p. 233). Often, academics and activists maintain that the food system is broken, and that action must be taken to fix it; Holt-Giménez contends that the food system actually functions perfectly, “precisely as a

capitalist food system is supposed to work”. It is a system that keeps costs to a minimum, regardless of consequence, and gives profit precedence over human value. His exposé reveals the contentious terrain of capitalism, including the links between capitalism, agriculture, power and privilege in the food system, gender, race and class, and capitalist crises and solutions (Sumner, 2019).

The costs of the capitalist food system are borne by three main entities, both locally and globally: eaters, with their health and quality of life; farmers and farmworkers, with their land, labour and livelihoods; and the environment, with ecological destruction to natural habitats and biodiversity. The impact to these three dimensions are not quantifiable in a dollar amount, and there are no short-term losses to the system if they are neglected. Instead, these costs are paid in externalities, which are understood as the costs of the food system that are experienced by the aforementioned three entities, but are not reflected in the final price of the food we eat. Food systems activists, writers and researchers have demonstrated the extent to which a rational capitalist food system will value its own profit at the expense of these three entities.

If it is more profitable for capital to use toxic chemical fertilisers that pollute water, or cause soil erosion, or deplete natural resources than it is to farm sustainably, rational capitalism will choose these profit-centred activities. If it is more profitable to pay extremely low wages to farm workers or low food prices to farmers, even though farmer debt and farmer suicide are globally at an all-time high, then capital will choose to do that. If it is more profitable to add high-fructose corn syrup to a wide range of food items and beverages for the purposes of increasing the eater’s appetite and have them returning for more, capital will choose to do it, even as high-fructose corn syrup has been identified as causing diet-related illnesses, such as diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Under such conditions, the cost of a Big Mac is not just CAN \$6.89 (cost in Surrey, BC at time of writing). The unincluded costs of the burger are the health of the eater, the labour of the farmer workers, and the ecological destruction to the planet.

Often, the unaccounted costs of the food system that corporations do not pay — the cost of polluted environments, of poverty and hunger, of unhealthy food — shift to taxpayers. The increased consumption of unhealthy food means that more people will have diet-related health issues, and will therefore seek and receive more services from the public health system. The cost of hunger and poverty means that governments will have to invest more into poverty alleviation and food security programs. The cost of polluted environments means that taxes will be needed to fund more clean up efforts. In this way, corporations benefit and profit at the expense of the taxpayer.

The externalities to the public health care system are critical, and are closely related to the fact that the healthcare system in Canada, and Euro-centric notions of healthcare in general, is premised on cure rather than prevention. Access to healthy diets can significantly reduce the burden on the healthcare system. According to the World Health Organization, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity, osteoporosis, and dental disease are major diet-related illnesses that are caused, in large part, due to unhealthy diets and lifestyles, and some have reached epidemic proportions (World Health Organization, 2003). The “Big Four” diseases in Canada that are the leading cause of preventable death and disability are cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) and lung disease, and a way to dramatically reduce one’s risk to these chronic illnesses is by leading a healthful lifestyle and nourishing diet (Government of Canada, 2011).

The average Canadian consumes too many calories (i.e. too much fat and simple sugars), too few fruits and vegetables and too much salt (MacRae, 2020). A 2019 study calculated the 2018 economic burden of chronic disease that was attributable to not complying with Canadian food recommendations, and found that poor diet results in a significant economic burden (Loewen et al., 2019). The researchers found that failure to meet the eight food recommendations was responsible for an estimated \$15.8 billion per year. From this, \$5.9 billion resulted in direct costs, such as hospitals, physicians, and medicine, and an estimated \$9.9

billion) resulted in indirect costs, such as human capital. They further concluded that the economic burden of Canadians under-consuming healthful foods, an estimated \$12.5 billion, far exceeded the burden of over-consuming harmful foods, an estimated \$3.3 billion (ibid).

Consequently, billions of dollars annually are allocated towards preventable diet-related illness, when health care budgets are stressed, and budgets related to social services are unfunded due to the annual budget allocated towards healthcare (MacRae, 2020). A focus on prevention with healthy lifestyles and nutritious diet, rather than on cure once the illness has been developed, and an integration of food and the health care system, is necessary. All Canadians pay for the food choices or malnutrition of others through the publicly-funded healthcare system, while corporations bear no responsibility for the products they profit from, or from the consequences of poor consumer information with regards to health dimensions. The burden is shifted to the healthcare system and the taxpayer (MacRae, 2020). The costs of a faulty food system to the taxpayer are a critical counter-argument to the idea that if food were a public good (an idea we will discuss in detail in the next section), or if governments were to set stricter guidelines on food production, distribution and access, or give out “free” food, it might cost too much to the taxpayer. At present, it seems that the taxpayer is covering a large portion of the profit that is earned by the corporate food regime. Surely, at an estimated \$15.8 billion per year (Loewen et al., 2019), we can consider that there may be better ways of spending our money.

Intervention in food markets may raise food costs to reflect the actual human and ecological costs, though the externalities of the food system are complicated, and have yet to be properly understood and measured. We may find that replacing rainforests with monoculture palm oil plantations may not be that cheap or even profitable anymore. We may find that, in fact, it costs less for us to build a sustainable food system. There would generally be a greater push to consume less of food items with higher social and environmental costs. Beef consumption, for example, would change; beef production is one of the biggest sources of greenhouse gases,

with the production of 1 kilogram of beef emitting 99.48 kilograms of carbon dioxide (Wilde, 2022).

On a separate note, a different counter-argument may be that if social and ecological damage is assigned a higher price-point, the result may be that the wealthy will continue to eat whatever they want, and while those who cannot afford it, will not. I want to acknowledge this argument and identify this avenue for further study, though I am unable to explore it further as it is beyond the scope of my research. I am aware that others are working on this issue, and have proposed interesting solutions that address this problem, such as implementing a Universal Basic Income and increasing taxation on the wealthy.

Rational capitalism is incompatible and fundamentally at odds with a rational food system whose goal is to ensure that current and future generations have access to nutritious, culturally-appropriate, and appetising food that is grown sustainably using methods where the wellbeing of people and the planet is the main focus. The unaccounted externalities emphasise the irrationality of the capitalist food system; if the cost of externalities outweigh the considerations of human health, farmer and farm worker rights, and ecological destruction, then capitalist food markets can be established to be irrational.

Supermarket Supremacy in the The Urban Food System

The corporate food regime and all its associated shortcomings manifest in the city, where consumers meet and interact with this food system. In the absence of robust government policy and intervention, and in a space where there are no formal or official avenues for food governance, a gap opens up for the market to step in and manage food systems. Large-scale food retailing, which provides the sale of both fresh and packaged food and drink for consumption at home, has become king.

Today, supermarkets have become a ubiquitous feature of shopping for food in the city. Raj Patel calls the supermarket the “highest temple of the modern food system” (Patel, 2008). In fact, the cornucopia of the average urban and suburban supermarket “best illustrates the extraordinary integration of the global agri-food system with extended supply chains,” which formidably ensures that there is year-round provision of fresh fruit and vegetables, irrespective of the season or the distance between where they are produced and where they are consumed (Sage, 2011b). Consequently, the supermarket and large-scale food retailing is where the most power in the food system now rests (Sage, 2011b). For the majority of people who live in cities, supermarkets have simply become a fact of life, a permanent feature of modern living, where now give them little thought, though they have “penetrated into the interstices of everyday life, in some places more than others” (Sage, 2011a) (p 189).

In his book, *Grocery Story: The Promise of Food Co-ops in the Age of Grocery Giants*, Author Jon Steinman (2019) demonstrates the ways in which “corporate food giants” in Canada have cast shadows on the food system through the food retail sector. He guides the reader through present and historical trends to support his argument that these giants have gained dominance in the food system and become “the food system’s control center,” and that as a result, farmers and eaters pay for concentrated food markets. “Every facet of our food supply is driven by the influence of grocery stores,” he argues. “From the pricing of items at a farmers’ market, to the proximity and accessibility of slaughterhouses to livestock producers of the curriculum of grade 7 cooking classes, very little escapes the influence of Big Grocery. The systems, the culture, the perspectives forming the whole of our food experience — all can be traced to historic and modern-day grocery retailing” (p. 2). He contends that the discourse around “fixing” the food system of its ills, in terms of confronting its adverse effects on health, wellness, food access, waste, environment, culture and economies, addresses the *symptoms* of the illness, whereas the root cause of the condition is the grocery retail sector (p. 2).

Canada is home to one of the most concentrated food retail markets in the Western world (MacRae, 2023). According to a 2022 report, Canada's retail market is mature and consolidated with five leading retailers — three of these are traditional grocers, and two are general merchandisers. Together, these five retailers hold 76 % of market share (Delibashi, 2022). This is a fairly high degree of concentration according to the four firm concentration ratio (CR4), which states that if the market share of the four largest firms is greater than 50 %, the market industry is generally highly concentrated (EPA, n.d.). These five retailers are:

- (1) Loblaws / Shoppers Drug Mart (28 %)
- (2) Sobeys / Safeway (20 %)
- (3) Metro / Jean Coutu (11 %)
- (4) Costco (9 %)
- (5) Walmart (8 %)

Access

Transportation planning considerations, and associated physical transportation barriers, are critical in their relevance to food retail access. The availability of personal vehicles, public transit options, or modes of active transportation can construct people's access — or lack of access — to grocery stores or supermarkets. Supermarkets have followed trends in the ubiquity of the personal automobile as the transportation mode of choice for suburban residents. Supermarkets are often built with large parking lots and are located at drivable distances, so that a vehicle is preferred for access. A person who does not drive may pay more for food in time, money or energy if their local grocery store is only accessible with a vehicle. This creates a causal relationship, where consumers are dependent on cars to access supermarkets, and supermarkets also accommodate this dependency by creating and maintaining car infrastructure. Food access is then also directly connected with income stratification, as wealthy

neighbourhoods tend to have greater car ownership than low-income ones (MacRae, 2023). Similarly, citizens with lower mobility, such as seniors or people with disabilities, also face challenges to acquiring a healthful and affordable diet. Interestingly, the automobile itself has also played a role in structuring how we access and consume food, both in that it facilitated the weekly “big shop”, and second, in developing the fast food industry (Sage, 2011a).

The placement of grocery stores is a private business decision, and the municipality is only able to nudge this decision within certain frames, such as municipal zoning regulation. Otherwise, the market effectively decides the most appropriate location for grocery stores. However, because the market makes this decision based on profit-oriented rationales, the dominant retail system tends to favour medium- to high-income neighbourhoods and communities, often poorly serving low-income and racialised communities, and residents of inner-city neighbourhoods of low socioeconomic status (Larsen & Gilliland, 2008). For example, a 2022 research study demonstrated that 79 % of the residents in the city of Vancouver, one of the most expensive cities in Canada, had access to a grocery store within a 15 minute walk or cycle, but identified that there were some clear inequities: there was lower access across neighbourhoods and populations that had higher proportions of children, older adults, visible minorities, and lower employment and postsecondary education attainment rates (Hosford et al., 2022).

In Canada, certain regions across the country struggle with food access more than others. Vancouver is one of the most amenity-dense cities in Canada, and as such, it makes sense that 79 % of the population has easy access to a grocery store. However, the researchers of the aforementioned study suspect that if this study were replicated even across neighbouring cities in Metro Vancouver, far fewer areas would have access to a grocery store by walking or cycling (Hosford et al., 2022). In northern Canadian communities, food insecurity rates are much higher than anywhere else in the country, as food is imported from the south, and then sold in stores for extremely high prices. In addition, in other parts of the country, such as Newfoundland

and Labrador, many communities do not have a conventional grocery store in close proximity. For those who do, there is dissatisfaction with the quality, variety and prices of food available (MacRae, 2023). Furthermore, access to culturally-appropriate is also a key challenge in Canada. Urban centres where there is a high level of diversity, and where ethnic grocery stores offer different cultural foods, this is less of an issue. However, in small- and medium-sized towns or rural areas in Canada, the available diets offer predominantly European cuisine (MacRae, 2023; Toronto Food Policy Council, 1996). Lastly, when access to food is constructed by the market, it gives more space to people who have been privileged by settler colonialism (as discussed in the previous section), or people whose social determinants of health align with positive health outcomes.

Leaving food access to be determined by the market, such as in the case of the placement of a grocery store, is a contradictory policy choice. The market will inevitably place stores where it is profitable to do so. This may result in food swamps (i.e. geographical regions where there are high concentrations of retail outlets that sell food with lower nutritional quality, such as high amounts of processed food) or food deserts (i.e. regions where residents may have restricted or nonexistent access to affordable and nutritional food options due to the absence of grocery stores at a convenient travel distance). In addition, trusting that smaller independent grocery stores (e.g. mom and pop shops) owned by a local resident or family will remain local to the community is also not guaranteed. For example, Choices Markets was an independent grocery chain owned and run by a family of two brothers in the Vancouver region for 27 years. In 2017, it was sold to Buy-Low Foods LP, which is one of Western Canada's largest chains. It is a division of Jim Pattison Group — Jim Pattison is one of Canada's top few billionaires. The 'About Us' page on Choices Markets' website still reads, "Choices Markets is a local, BC owned and operated retailer of natural, organic and specialty foods... proud to be celebrating 30 years as a local, grassroots grocer committed to our customers, communities and planet." (Choices Market, 2023).

Planning can employ all the right strategies and projects: municipalities can plan for a complete community mixed use housing and with active transportation networks, facilitate social connection in public space so that people are able to cook together in an enjoyable environment, provide opportunities for economic development so people are financially secure and can purchase food. However, at the end of the day, if food access is controlled by the market, grocery stores will only be in locations that are profitable, and they will only sell food items that are profitable. Therefore, it is beyond the control of the municipality to be able to enable the right to food in the city. Planning cannot ensure complete access if ultimately, the provision of food is in the domain of the market.

Health and Consumer Choice

In the Introduction of this Major Paper, we spoke about food guidance, a tool that is ingrained into our conscience from a young age. When we choose something to eat, we may instinctively feel positive or negative, depending on where the choice lies in our food compass. However, when the variety of foods available to us is determined by profit-oriented market forces, our food compass is limited in the guidance it can offer us.

Researchers and activists have written extensively about the curation of food available in grocery stores, both in terms of produce and packaged foods. They have exposed the tendency of the market to give precedence to factors such as durability, storage life, and ease of shipping over factors related to nutritional value or taste, and as a result, these factors have shaped the choice of consumers over time. Consider, for example, that iceberg lettuce is the lettuce variety of choice for most consumers for this same reason (Friedmann, 2017). Raj Patel (2008) explains it well in his popular book *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System*:

Try, for example, shopping for apples. At supermarkets in North America and Europe, the choice is restricted to half a dozen varieties: Fuji, Braeburn, Granny Smith,

Golden Delicious and perhaps a couple of others. Why these? Because they're pretty: we like the polished and unblemished skin. Because their taste is one that's largely unobjectionable to the majority. But also because they can stand transportation over long distances. Their skin won't tear or blemish if they're knocked about in the miles from orchard to aisle. They take well to the waxing technologies and compounds that make this transportation possible and keep the apples pretty on the shelves. They are easy to harvest. They respond well to pesticides and industrial production. These are reasons why we won't find Calville Blanc, Black Oxford, Zabergau Reinette, Kandil Sinap or the ancient and venerable Rambo on the shelves. Our choices are not entirely our own because, even in a supermarket, the menu is crafted not by our choices, nor by the seasons, nor where we find ourselves, nor by the full range of apples available, nor by the full spectrum of available nutrition and tastes, but by the power of food corporations.

In my opinion, this is the most petty reason that we could have devised in order to determine the kinds of tastes that we, collectively as a society, want to develop. My preference for a certain variety of berry or root vegetable is not due to what my tastebuds objectively think tastes better, or what is better for my health. They are, instead, determined by whether they withstood the test of capital using them to produce a profit. My parents and their friends who have grown up in Pakistan often speak about how the fruits are sweeter, or how the vegetables are more flavourful, or how the meat is tastier there. When I was younger, I would dismiss these claims, refusing to believe that food could taste better just because it was grown in a certain place. Maybe a part of their reminiscing comes from the universal feeling that food always tastes better when one is home among loved ones. But I am also starting to understand that maybe meat does, in fact, taste better when it has not been factory-farmed, reared in small spaces, injected with hormones to make it grow faster or larger in certain parts of the body that are more profitable (e.g. breast in chicken). I am starting to understand to maybe tomatoes do taste juicier when the varieties available in the store have not been chosen for their transportability or durability, when they have not been picked just before they are ripe so that they can ripen in the truck on the way to the retail outlet or as they sit in huge barrels at my local grocery store. Maybe produce does taste better when it is picked and grown in season, and when it is only available seasonally, instead of all year round.

Consumers are made to understand that we have unlimited freedom because we can buy literally as much as we want, and whatever we want. There is always the illusion of plenty, and food never seems to run out — no matter how often you go to the grocery store, and no matter how many customers visit per day, there is always an unlimited amount of food sitting in shelves and barrels, and you are never in want. And if you cannot find something today, come back tomorrow, and there will be more. Regardless of the season, it is yours to enjoy. Not only does this supposed “freedom” come at a huge ecological and social cost, as we have covered and will continue to do so further, it is also an enormous lie. It is only the freedom to choose from a limited selection that has been curated based on, not what is nutritious, or not what tastes good, but the pettiest reason of them all: if it can sit in a truck a long time or look pretty on a shelf. It is not freedom at all if the vast multitudes of choice we are offered are but an illusion.

Furthermore, the majority of food we consume is processed from primary foods into constituent elements that is sold in a wide range of prepared processed food and drinks, rather than fresh produce or meat in its raw or simply-cooked state. In fact, the vast majority of food items that we may find on supermarket shelves are, in fact, the product of a manufacturing industry that converts primary raw material that arable and animal agriculture has produced, and transforms them into a variety of branded ‘final foods’ (Sage, 2011a) (p. 157). Fractionation is one of the processes used to accomplish this, where primary foods are broken down into their constituent organic compounds, such as proteins, sugars, starches and alcohols, which can then be chemically modified and utilised as building blocks to construct a variety of complex foods (p. 163). The Oreo cookie is an infamous example of this industry: the ‘cream’ in the middle is suitable for lactose-intolerant eaters and vegans because it is not cream at all, but a mixture of hydrogenated vegetable oil, high fructose corn syrup, soy lecithin, and vanillin (each of these come with their own health concerns) (Clingingsmith, 2022). Of course, this has a direct impact on the health of eaters in the city, where commodity foods, cheap and unsustainably-produced, contribute to under-nutrition (i.e. in the form of micronutrient deficiency

or malnutrition), or over-nutrition (i.e. in the form of an excess of negative caloric intake) so that corporate actors can profit (Zerbe, 2019).

Food activist and writer Michael Moss (2013) has further argued that the multitude of highly processed foods that line our supermarket shelves have been sinisterly engineered with salt, sugar and fat, along with the concomitant elements of desire and dopamine, in order to addict eaters in a race to the bottom line. In a recent book, Moss (2021) has linked research in studies of addiction with the food industry to demonstrate the ways in which food giants have used our hard-wired human tendencies, such as using speed to attack the parts of the brain that are connected to survival, to addict us, sometimes more than substances like tobacco. Millions of dollars are spent annually on advertising, especially geared towards children, to make this food attractive to the eater and have them crave it. Addictive foods with salt, sugar and fat do not even need to be physically present for the cravings of addiction to be triggered; cues are enough, even if they appear for milliseconds and only register in our subconscious minds. These cues are everywhere, from a smell, to a picture on a billboard, to a corner where you once enjoyed a slice of cake; cues especially make people who are struggling with food addiction vulnerable. Moss makes a powerful case in arguing that food giants use our cognitive vulnerabilities against us to exploit our addictions, and may even be compromising our free will.

This is another instance of our society choosing the most petty goals for our food and attention. At any point in time, thousands of the smartest minds around the world spend eight hours a day during the course of their entire careers that span decades trying to figure out how to addict people to foods containing salt, sugar and fat. Some of the world's most intelligent and talented chemists, psychologists, and other experts are spending millions of hours and billions of dollars in trying to hook people to their food so they can rake in more billions. This industry is able to employ billions in resources — and all that eaters have in their defence is their willpower, and perhaps, like me, a memory that fruit and vegetables taste sweeter, and meat is more flavourful, in places where this industry has not yet fully developed. I do not intend to make a

case about assigning morality to food (i.e. fresh produce is good for you, fried food is bad for you), but rather, to demonstrate that it can be argued that there is an element of force in this industry.

This is correlated with convenience. The reliance on convenience in food has changed and standardised patterns of consumption, and has cumulatively redefined what people take for granted (Shove, 2003) (p. 169). For example, with the development of the supermarket model and the frozen food industry in the 1970s, people were able to buy frozen food items, such as pizzas, burgers, frozen vegetables, etc., in bulk, and cook at their convenience (p. 177). The resulting expectations of convenience grew, and have since driven consumption patterns. They have also decreased the space and time needed to produce and prepare food. If one tries to grow their own food, or talks to a farmer, one becomes aware of the amount of time and labour that are required in this process. But the conventional food system, with its emphasis on convenience, has as a striking feature: its ability to make labour invisible; for the majority of people, “food is not grown or brought to the supermarkets: it appears.” (Pettenati et al., 2018).

The dominant view of the food system has been to provide safe, high-quality food at a reasonable cost; this general approach is sometimes referred to Canada’s ‘cheap food’ policy (MacRae, 2011). This is also part of the consumerism mode of accumulation, where workers spend less on food in order to spend more on factory commodities. In Canada, prior to the development of the national food policy in 2019 (and perhaps still), food policy was structured to respond to the challenges that existed when the policies were being formed. They were for a time when people were nutrient-poor, or when there was a greater need to respond to fraud in the food industry (Friedmann, 2017; MacRae, 2011). This view has been perpetuated in Canada’s temporary farm labour migration schemes, such as the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). The SAWP allows employers to hire temporary foreign workers with a temporary work visa that ranges from a period of six weeks to eight months. Workers come from Mexico or participating Caribbean countries (Grenada, Jamaica, etc.) to work on primary

agriculture farms that produce items in specific commodity sectors (i.e. fruits and vegetables, dairy, grains, apiary products, nursery-grown trees, etc.) (Government of Canada, 2023). The work permits that are issued through the Temporary Foreign Workers Program are specific to the employer that the permit was issued for. This gives them tremendous power. The employer can arrange for the worker's repatriation at any time if there is 'sufficient' reason.

Proponents of migrant farm labour regimes, such as the SAWP, have insisted that food security in Canada is hinged upon the space of regional and international competition of Canada's agriculture industry, and as such, the only way that this industry can remain competitive is through the process of hiring "unfree non-citizen workers" (Weiler et al., 2017). Proponents insist that if migrant farm worker wages were to be improved, it would undercut farmers' profit, reduce the amount of local food available for Canadians, and require that we import food from abroad (Weiler et al., 2017). Such discourse that threatens Canadians with food insecurity in exchange for migrant workers' rights is one of the arguments that maintains and justifies the existence of the SAWP.

However, critics have clearly identified that 'temporary' labour migration schemes undermine livelihoods for both farmers and farm-workers, and normalise 'unfree' labour migration (Weiler et al., 2017). In addition, though these schemes are justified to promote and perpetuate policies of cheap food, there is an absence of data that quantifies how much food grown by migrant farm-workers actually contributes to food that is produced domestically, especially as the SAWP program is based on recruiting workers for export-oriented commodities (Weiler et al., 2017). Lastly, the imaginary of Canada as a land of agricultural abundance, and of the agricultural industry as exceptional, both neglects to recognise Canada's settler-colonial structural violence, as well as the presence of significant food insecurity within our borders (Weiler et al., 2017).

Finally, to put Canadian food security against the rights of migrant farm workers is a false moral choice — especially as it supports neither, but rather, primarily promotes the agribusiness

profits (Weiler et al., 2017). The claim that Canada's food security depends on maintaining the status quo for the migrant workers also constructs the imaginary of who deserves to be food secure. Numerous reports have demonstrated, in fact, that the migrant farm workers who produce our food are themselves highly food insecure. Furthermore, many are reported to be living in wildly inadequate conditions that can often be extremely unsanitary and overcrowded. In an account of one migrant farm worker, he is only allowed to go out two to three hours every two days, and only on shopping days to get food; for him, it feels like a prison (M. Kelley et al., 2020).

In addition, “cheap” food that has an emphasis on cheap calories, which are often inexpensive and tasty sources of dietary energy (i.e. refined grains, added sugars and fats) has its negatives in relation to quality of life (Vivero-Pol, 2017). As Ellen Ruppell Shell (2009) says in her book, *Cheap: The High Cost of Discount Culture*, “cheap is a two-sided coin”. She demonstrates that exchanging quality for cheapness is a common phenomenon in low-price supermarkets, such as Walmart, Target, dollar stores, etc., where quality may be lower, but prices are inexpensive; but she argues that this is not necessarily a good thing. The author recounts the thoughts of 16th century British merchant Thomas Gresham who explained how bad money drives out good:

“The example he used was watered milk. If customers know the milk is watered, there is no problem; they pay less for it and get precisely what they bargained for. Customers who prefer their milk without water can choose to pay a higher price. No one is cheated, no one is fooled. But when dishonest brokers add water to the milk and sell it for less without telling customers they’ve watered it, the unwitting public believes it is getting a great deal. If enough dishonest merchants water their milk, more and more customers will forget what normal milk tastes like and buy only the cheaper—watered down— variety. Eventually, honest brokers are forced to water their milk, too, or get pushed out of business. Whole milk becomes no longer available, and eventually the price of watered milk goes up. Good money and good milk are driven out.”

Shell observes that after years of experiencing watery milk, we have grown accustomed to the taste, or at least developed a tolerance to it — and low quality foods, in general, have

become the norm. She notes, “we pay less for these products than we would for their quality counterparts, but not so much less that we are getting a really good deal. As good stuff drives out bad, the market for quality goods shrinks, making the good stuff all the more costly.” I think about the milk I enjoy, but I enjoy it only because it is the only type of milk I have ever had. Here, too, my parents claim that in Pakistan, milk tastes richer, creamier, and frothier. For my limited tastebuds, the milk tastes fine, as it always does.

In conclusion, as food, water and air are the three main biological requirements that human beings need to live. For the most part, though sometimes with contention and conflict, water and air are generally understood to be in the domain of the commons. That is, they are understood to be a public good. Food, on the other hand, is the only thing that has become a commodity. Food always has been bought and sold, and in fact, it would be wrong to argue that attaching any kind of monetary value to food cannot be done, or that it is immoral to sell food. Rather, the contradiction that we have pointed out here is that food need not be a commodity that people need to purchase in order to stay alive. The long-term goal, then, is to create a food system that is beyond the domain of private capital and competitive markets (Albritton, 2009). In the medium term, however, Instead of doing away with markets and corporations altogether, there should be a way to make them democratically accountable (Albritton, 2009). For this, let us continue to the next section.

Part Four: Sustainable Urban Food Systems - Alternative to Corporate Settler Food Regime

Section Outline:

In this section, I will cover the following:

- Define and discuss the concept of the sustainable urban food system.
- Outline the principles of food citizenship and food as commons as central to the sustainable urban food system.
- Identify six guiding values essential to an urban food system where food citizenship is adopted by citizens and food is governed as commons.
- Demonstrate how food can function as a right of citizenship and create democratised food systems in the city.
- Outline how food and food systems may be managed as commons in the city. Show how land governance in urban food systems may be managed alongside concepts of Indigenous food sovereignty.
- Outline how food as commons may be sustained and built within the framework of urban commons.

Sustainable Urban Food Systems

In part one, we outlined the ways in which urban systems in the city, such as transportation, waste management and economic development, influence and are influenced by food systems. In part two, we highlighted the structure of the city through the analytic frame of the settler colonial city, and argued that settler colonialism is, in fact, deeply embedded in the

urban food system. In part three, we argued against the commodification of food systems, and demonstrated the ways in which a capitalist-controlled and governed food system will inevitably lead to health, labour and environmental inequity.

In this section, we conclude with alternative frameworks that can lead us to a way forward. We argue that the alternative to the dominant settler colonial and capitalist food system is to adopt the view of food citizenship and food as commons. In combination, these two frameworks create a sustainable urban food system. (Food citizenship + food as commons = sustainable urban food systems.) As a 'progressive' and 'radical' food movement (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011), sustainable urban food systems are what our cities need to reimagine our food system.

Here, I highlight six guiding values that are essential to an urban food system in which food citizenship is adopted by citizens, and where food is governed as commons. These are the key principles upon which we can build urban food policy and projects, and are a categorically different set of principles than those that currently dominate the urban food system. These values highlight dimensions of an alternative food system where equity, sustainability and justice are at the centre.

The six values of a sustainable urban food system (food citizenship + food as commons) are:

1. Localness

Sustainable urban food systems require 'localness'; though the idea of 'eating local' and reducing one's food miles have become widely accepted in popular food movements, 'localness' is not limited to reducing the distance between an individual and their food. Instead, the term 'localness' encompasses an entire redefinition of the way in which we approach food: Fonte & Cucco (2018) put it this way: "Localness articulates different dimensions of proximity: geographical, social, cultural and ecological. It is associated with space and short distance, but also with place, regions and territories: small-scale farms, multi-functional agriculture, quality food, rural livelihoods and sustainable community agriculture". Instead of promoting a consumer

strategy of ‘buying local’, localness encourages the eater to reevaluate and reconsider one’s relationship to food altogether. Localness, then, is about reviving a food system that is built upon a relationship that is small-scale, ecologically-oriented, and place-based; in other words, the absolute opposite of large-scale corporations peddling junk food (Severson, 2009). It is important to emphasise that local food is embedded in place, but place-embedded is not a strict synonym to localness. The relationship between ‘localness’ and ‘sustainability’ can be problematised due to the challenge that the environmental impact of the food system is not solely dependent on the ‘food miles’ that our food travels from field to fork (Fonte & Cucco, 2018). It is, rather, dependent on the aggregate of the food system, starting from how it is produced, to how it is prepared, to how its waste is managed.

2. Universality in access and participation

As discussed briefly in Part Three, projects and programs that seek to tackle the challenges of the food system are often positioned to address absence and scarcity; they are framed in a way where they are intended to ‘help’ people who are ‘suffering’ from ‘hunger’ and ‘poverty’, people who are ‘the most vulnerable in our population’, or who might be ‘living on a low-income’. This wording is common to see in organisations who work to tackle food insecurity, especially in charity initiatives, such as food banks and soup kitchens. In framing their goals in this way, such organisations implicitly cater to a very specific group: the participants of these services and movements will be people who consider themselves, or are considered by others, to be poor or ‘vulnerable’. As well, anti-hunger advocacy operates through the framework of food as a commodity, and does not significantly challenge the structures of capital; to ensure access, it empowers individuals as consumers rather than citizens (Welsh & MacRae, 1998). Though projects, programs and spaces in the food movement that seek to tackle poverty alleviation for individuals who are low-income or food insecure are noble and commendable,

they also may be inadvertently harmful to the goal of creating a sustainable urban food system. Framing is everything.

Food citizenship and food as commons frame the food system as a universal public space where every single person, in spite of their food security status, is encouraged to participate. Universality lays the foundations in creating a food system based on dignity, human rights, and self-actualisation. If our main argument is that sustainable urban food systems are spaces where people can depend on having a right to access food with dignity, and spaces where food builds cultural and social connection, and forges a path to self-actualisation, then in this scenario, there is no choice *but* for food systems to be universal.

3. Sustainable and efficient resource use and management

As discussed throughout this Major Paper, the contemporary food system is a key driver of climate change. There remain major challenges in managing natural resources when producing, distributing, preparing and disposing of food. A key principle of a sustainable urban food system is to ecologically manage resources efficiently, namely energy, water, land, soil, nutrients, genetic resources, forest, fish, biodiversity, wildlife. In addition, the production, distribution and disposal requires that there is no waste and no pollution (MacRae, 2011).

4. Culture, tradition and social connectedness

Throughout this Major Paper, we have also discussed the intimate connections between food and cultural traditions, identity, and social and community interaction. These are important dimensions of our communal relationship with food. As such, a sustainable urban food system centres food-related celebrations and traditions both with the family and in public space, encourages the availability of cultural produce, preparation of traditional dishes, and more. Foraging, where a person may search for food in one's surroundings, is one such economic practice that is often associated with pre-capitalist cultures. It is a way of intimately learning

about, interacting with and appreciating the plants and foods in one's landscape. Many groups forage as a way to single out a plant, learn about its properties, tastes, uses, its growth patterns, and how to cook and eat it.

5. Food as an essential public service, and connections to other related public services, such as public health and education (MacRae, 2011)

As doctors and public health officials often argue, a healthy relationship with food can be the most important thing in alleviating the burdens faced by the healthcare system. Canada has a strong precedent for public service in health and education, but food is poorly linked to these services as the food system is primarily organised around private business. Orienting food towards these related public services will require that we re-orient the public healthcare system towards thinking about prevention through healthy diet, rather than cure. In the public education system, we can integrate food systems by incorporating learning about growing and preparing food (i.e. school gardens, school kitchens), and by implementing a universal school food program.

6. Citizen-centred policy and engagement

Lastly, the sixth principle of sustainable urban food systems is to guarantee a right to participation for those citizens who want to be involved in managing and making decisions about the food system. In this process, there is a joint product: first is the creation of a food systems governance model, and second is the “transformation of the people, their growth as human beings, which occurs as a result of their involvement in this process” (Harnecker, 2017, p. 16).

Food as a Right of Citizenship and Democratisation of Food Systems

Food citizenship is “the practice of engaging in food-related [behaviours] that support, rather than threaten, the development of a democratic, socially and economically just, and environmentally sustainable food system” (Wilkins, 2005). The food citizen maintains active participation in the governance of food, and in collective action that promotes food practices coherent with the values, orientations and cognitive frameworks of a just, equitable and sustainable food system (Gómez-Benito & Lozano, 2014). The individual exercises food citizenship by developing a critical understanding of their own impact on, and interaction with, the food system; an example of this is by becoming well-informed on the intricate conditions and processes of the food system that compromise social, labour and environmental equity and justice. Food citizenship entails reciprocity; it means that first, every citizen has a right to be well-fed with sufficient, healthful, appetising and culturally-appropriate food, and second, every citizen simultaneously has the responsibility to make sure that others in the city are enjoying the same right. To bring this into practice, reflexivity is required; it is characterised by a careful consideration of the impact of one’s choices and actions on the health, wellbeing and preservation of oneself, the collective citizenry and the natural ecological environment. It is a complex and holistic account of the implications of one’s decisions for present and future generations.

Food citizenship transforms food and farming from the mere buying and selling of food as a commodity in two ways: first, food citizenship incorporates the food provisioning into the wider social, cultural, environmental and political meanings of food (Renting et al., 2012), thus actively reshapes the relations that exist in every stage of the food system, and paves the path to political awakening through food (Welsh & MacRae, 1998). Second, food citizenship places

food and eating at the centre of social, cultural and traditional expression of the individual, the family and the community, thereby nurturing authentic relationships. It celebrates food as a transformative practice through which the potential to generate active citizenship (as compared to trivialised notions of citizenship limited to voting and occasional volunteer work) is activated (Welsh & MacRae, 1998).

‘Food democracy’ is a related idea in this conversation. At its core, it stresses the notion that people must actively participate in the food system rather than remain passive spectators. From this, citizens can mobilise and use their power in order to “determine agro-food policies and practices locally, regionally, nationally, and globally” (Hassanein, 2003). This understanding goes beyond the concept of food in terms of individual rights (i.e. food as a human right) and moves into the domain of citizenship. The foundation of food democracy is that first, all members of the food system have an equal opportunity to shape the food system, and second, they have the knowledge base needed to understand how to operate the system through alternative ways (Hassanein, 2003).

Importantly, these ideas bring into relief the distinction between the notion of the consumer and the citizen. The consumer may not know, or find interesting, the story of how the food they push down the aisle of their shopping cart in their big-box superstore was produced, processed, or transported. They may not make any effort to ever discover where their food was grown, by whom, what inputs were used, or the ultimate cost. The concept of the consumer at the end of the food chain acknowledges a person’s interests and power in terms of their ability to buy, or choose not to buy, food products and services, but is limited to this function alone (Welsh & MacRae, 1998). Citizens, on the other hand, have rights and responsibilities that go beyond consuming the goods and services produced by the food system; their role is to make choices based on a complex and holistic understanding of the implications of one’s own decisions on oneself and one’s community, both for present and future generations. Notably, consumerism maximises “individual self-interest through commodity choice”. This system

assumes that individual self-optimisation will result in greater societal wellbeing (MacRae, 2021b). Citizenship, on the other hand, prioritises the collective good and assumes responsibility of ensuring the wellbeing of others, both human and non-human (Johnston, 2008; MacRae, 2021b).

In this context, I understand the notion of the ‘citizen’ in its elementary meaning of the term: a citizen as an inhabitant of a town or city. In particular, it is *not* understood in terms of holding the status of citizenship in a nation-state. The word ‘citizen’ is derived from the Middle English *citizein* and early French *citiein*, meaning "resident of a town" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). From this understanding, a person holds citizenship in a city regardless of their legal status in the eyes of the nation-state, no matter if they are a “native” or naturalised citizen, a refugee, a temporary resident (e.g. on a study or work permit, on a visitor visa, etc.), or any other category of status. If an individual lives in a particular city and makes it their home, they are a citizen, and therefore, are entitled to the rights and privileges of citizenship. The wide application of this definition posits that anyone who is a citizen has a right to food.

Consequently, it becomes collective responsibility for the entities who govern the city, both the collective citizenry and the nation-state (through its arm, the municipality), to make sure that each citizen has the right to food citizenship. This approach is wholly universal and inclusive — every single person needs to be able to eat, and every single person needs to make sure that others are eating. In addition, this loose definition allows for some leeway, in that we are able to remove some level of power, even if it may remain figurative, from the settler colonial nation-state, and assert that its categories of citizenship are antithetical to the cause we are advocating for (i.e. food as a right of citizenship). In this way, it provides space for us to voice our dissent against the enmeshment of the settler colonial project in the food system, and for individuals who do not subscribe to the notion of the settler state to participate in the food system.

Furthermore, conceptualising the ‘citizen’ as a resident of the city, rather than imagining it to be a category of status under the nation-state, builds on the ideas of the ‘right to the city’ articulated by Henri Lefebvre in his book *Le Droit à la ville* (1968), later translated to *The Right to the City* (Lefebvre, 1968/1996). Lefebvre presents a radical vision for the city, where citizens manage, govern and create urban space beyond the control of market forces (i.e. capitalism and commodification). This idea creates a new urban politics that centres the citizen, and maintains that urban life, space and governance are more than a commodity. David Harvey (2008) expounds upon Lefebvre’s original idea in this way:

“The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.” (p. 23)

Food citizenship encompasses the United Nations concept of ‘right to food’ or ‘food as a human right’, but it expresses ideas that surpass its limitations. The right to food is “the right to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access — either directly or by means of financial purchases— to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the [individual] belongs, and which ensure a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear.” (*About the Right to Food and Human Rights: Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food*, n.d.; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010). Similar to the critiques of the concept of food security that we have already identified, the ‘right to food’ is the least radical approach because it frames an absolute human need as a mandatory entitlement (De Schutter et al., 2018). Nor does it question the contemporary framework of the commodification of food. Guaranteeing food as a human right may support consumers in access by increasing their purchasing power, such as providing social protection (e.g. decent wages), but this does not

challenge the dominant paradigm under which the food system operates. As such, ‘the right to food’ approach can co-exist with capitalist markets (De Schutter et al., 2018).

In similar fashion, food citizenship also surpasses the limitations of food security. In addition to the critiques that we have already identified in Part Three, the language about food security is disabling because it ignores the “defining power relations” in the food system (Wiebe & Wipf, 2011). When the emphasis is on maintaining sufficient quantities of food, the focus remains on increasing food production and food imports, which in turn, emphasises and justifies high-input and intensive production methods, and discounts who owns, controls and profits from these methods (Wiebe & Wipf, 2011).

Food citizenship and food democracy require that we move beyond ‘consumer citizenship’ or ‘ethical consumerism’, an idea that encourages consumers to only buy products that are sourced, produced and distributed in ways that align with certain standards of social justice and environmental sustainability. This form of consumer activism is based on the “imagination of the marketplace as a ‘democracy of goods’”; the logic goes that choices of consumers act as ‘dollar votes’ which inevitably decide which products or companies stay in business, and which do not (Schwarzkopf, 2011). As such, the consumer can influence the marketplace in becoming equitable by making the personal choice to only purchase products that are socially- or sustainably-sound. Proponents of this logic argue that, theoretically, if consumers buy products that are advertised as more ecologically friendly or socially just, the market share of these products will increase and therefore become more affordable and available to the general population (MacRae, 2021b).

However, the reality is that consumers purchase what they are *persuaded* to want. This is especially because in ethical consumerism, advertising is presented as ‘information’ (Schwarzkopf, 2011). Under such circumstances, consumers do not have a clear understanding of the impacts of their food on long-term human health, environmental sustainability, or the rights and livelihoods of labour. As they are at the very end of the “food chain”, consumers do

not have sufficient information about the hidden politics of their products to be able to make informed political choices (Gjerris et al., 2016; Jacobsen & Dulsrud, 2007; MacRae, 2021b). To the contrary, food consumers are influenced to behave according to a passive purchasing paradigm where the price of the product (i.e. is it cheap?) and personal convenience (i.e. can I pop it in the microwave?) are prioritised. In this model, food producers disappear, and the environmental and social challenges and costs are overlooked (Tittarelli et al., 2022). This phenomenon is further exacerbated in urban settings, where there is complete separation between eaters and the production of their food.

Furthermore, the notion of “voting with your wallet” is deeply connected to issues of social inequity and income; many individuals do not have the financial capability to purchase items for the purpose of promoting greater public goals, even if they may want to do so. In fact, they may even purchase a product while they are aware that its processes of production may have negatively impacted society and the environment. If it is not in their capacity to ‘consume ethically’, or boycott certain products or corporations, a person cannot be made to feel that they are responsible for the harm that corporations cause to people and the planet. Choosing to purchase or boycott certain consumer goods is a personal decision, and as demonstrated, can be tied to an individual’s level of privilege (Idris, 2018).

What may get in the way of food citizenship? According to Welsh & MacRae (1998), it might be (1) corporate control over the food chain; (2) providing consumers with limited information on products; (3) manipulation of the supermarket environment and; (4) the emphasis on processed and convenience foods. According to Wilkins (2005), other identified barriers may be (1) federal agricultural policy and influences on policy-making, including providing agricultural subsidies for cheap food commodities, which “provide the starting materials for numerous inventions of the food industry, which then fill supermarket shelves, drain the wallets of the poor, and pad our midriffs”; (2) federal, provincial, local institutional policies; and (3) the culture of

professional nutrition organisations that neglect to evaluate foods both on nutritional grounds and by the extent to which they uphold the values of a sustainable food system .

Food and Food Systems as Commons

The second dimension of sustainable urban food systems is to construct food and the food system as commons. Commons are specific resources that are owned “in common”, or shared in a community, benefit all or most members of that community, and satisfy a need that is unmet by markets or institutions (Vivero-Pol et al., 2018). Commons can refer to material or non-material goods, but are often characterised by the fact that they are fundamental to the wellbeing of society, and are co-created and co-maintained by a community in accordance with co-developed rules (Vivero-Pol, 2018). In economics and politics, commons are often identified as ‘public goods’, though this does not automatically imply that they are openly accessible to all (Vivero-Pol et al., 2018). The following resources are included in this category of ‘commons’ and ‘public goods’ because they are fundamental to the idea that life is not for sale: water, pollination, soil fertility and sunlight (Vivero-Pol et al., 2018).

In food governance, the approach to food as commons has been around even before the idea of the commons was first introduced (in a text) by American political scientist Elinor Ostrom (1990) in her work, *Governing the commons: the evolution of institutions for collective action*. In fact, it is a historical anomaly to treat food as a pure commodity. Across time and geography, food has shaped civilizations and socio-economic transformations. Due to its importance in culture, religion, and survival, food was allocated according to need, rather than on the basis of the ability to pay, and its production and distribution were governed as collective activities, performed together in common, rather than individually, or within one’s nuclear family (Vivero-Pol et al., 2018).

When all the different dimensions of food are equally valued, rather than marketability obscuring the non-monetary ones, it corresponds to food as commons. This notion is associated with four assumptions: (1) food is universal, no matter a person's age, gender or culture; (2) the different dimensions of food shape our relationship to food and food-producing systems, and valuing food through all the different dimensions of food leads to human agency and the ability to take a political stance in the food system (an important factor in separating the food consumer from the food citizen); (3) societies have valued the various dimensions of food differently historically and across geography and; (4) the dimensions of food connect multiple elements and drivers that interplay in the food system, such as biodiversity and poverty (Vivero-Pol, 2017).

The food commons are comprised of four elements (Vivero-Pol, 2018): (1) natural and non-material resources, such as foodstuff, cooking recipes, and traditional agricultural knowledge; (2) the local, national or international communities who share resources; (3) the practices of commoning used by people to produce, distribute, and eat food and; (4) the “moral narrative” that guides the main purpose of the food system. Centering these goals, rather than the goal of profit maximisation, requires a paradigm shift from the contemporary global industrial food system into a worldview that values and centres shared models of social organising for the purposes of producing and consuming food, non-monetary allocation and sharing practices, and the wellbeing of our communities. The dimensions of the commons is about “caring, collectiveness, equity, responsibility and stewardship” (Vivero-Pol, 2018).

At the core of food as commons is the politics, geography and economy of care — care is the orientation and developmental process, as opposed to the end product (Chang, 2018).¹ What does this look like? Often, it manifests as taking responsibility for our local communities, food-related resources, and events in our surroundings. Caring practices may often be difficult,

¹ Carol Gilligan (1993) and Joan C. Tronto (2013) & (1994) have pioneered the ethics of care approach. See their works in bibliography.

and may not necessarily be self-evident ways to behave or conduct ourselves. In fact, care may take ongoing learning and motivation (Chang, 2018). Fundamentally, care is about ordinary people, who lead ordinary lives, to come together and cooperate in governing a shared resource. Centering care reminds us that developing and maintaining food as commons is a learning process that helps us build our individual and collective capacity to practise caring, and associated values, through commoning (Chang, 2018).

Food as commons greatly emphasises redefining relationships and developing relationship-building; in the process of commoning, food is both the outcome and the generator of dynamic socio-spatial relationships, which are hidden behind the final price and the act of consumption in the contemporary food system (Pettenati et al., 2018). These relationships are redefined in the two spaces that the people occupy besides state and the market: the spaces of families and communities. These are spaces that they seek to democratise through inventing their own rules of governance (De Schutter et al., 2018). In other words, treating food as commons implies a radical social and ecological transformation of all the relationships that perform and engage with the food system, rather turning food into an entity that is exploited according to a few arbitrary rules that a community has chosen for itself (De Schutter et al., 2018; Pettenati et al., 2018).

Pettenati et al. (2018) suggest that it is more helpful to conceptualise the entire food system as commons. Throughout this Major Paper, we have extensively outlined the ways in which cultivated food for consumption is only one element in a much more complex and comprehensive food system. As such, food for consumption cannot be commons if the rest of the food system and food networks are still organised around colonialism and commodification. If the remaining relationships that make the food system possible are assembled to support the commodification and colonisation of nature (e.g. land, seeds, etc), health and labour, the food itself cannot become commons (Pettenati et al., 2018). Pettenati and his interlocutors call this the 'fetishism of the 'de-commodity'. They argue that we cannot be satisfied with such a nominal

achievement, and must push our imaginations beyond these limitations. Food as commons cannot be satisfied with only addressing some of the ecological and social consistencies of the food system. Consequently, to engage with food as commons means to decolonise and decommodify water, soil, land, labour, and everything else.

Pettenati et al. (2018) argue that there are four strategies that can help us move our food systems to food as commons. One, we must first engage with the ideological scaffolding that maintains the contemporary food regime. For example, we cannot accept the provision of universal food access in the name of commons if it is rooted in loss of biodiversity and dependence on fossil fuels in capital-intensive farming, exploitative labour practices, and maintenance of unhealthy diets. These conditions are incompatible with the principles that food as commons advocates for. Second, there must be a careful consideration of the ways distribution patterns “affect space where they take place, how they redefine the identity and lives of the people who are involved, and how they impact the environment,” which is transformed into a “logistic corridor” that makes (some) food available to (some) consumers, and absorbs most of the externalities. Third, to engage with food as commons, we must engage with consumption as a practice. This includes considering the spaces, modalities and times where food is consumed, the cultural implications of food, “the act of cooking as a social, cultural and democratic moment”, and the quality and dignity of food-related labour. Fourth, food systems as commons must reorient the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food in a way that ensures that no food is lost or wasted. This is different from food rescue or food redirection programs that redirect food that no one else has bought and may be otherwise thrown out to people living in food insecurity. These food waste interventions merely reallocate the excesses, instead of tackling the root cause of food waste. Further, it legitimates food as a commodity that can be “produced in abundance and wasted with little or no economic cost for the responsible”. Further, rather than hiding surplus food and waste through charity, it should be exposed as unacceptable (Pettenati et al., 2018).

Land Governance and Indigenous (Food) Sovereignty

The conversation about commoning the entire food system raises an important linkage with our previous discussion about the enmeshment of settler colonialism in the dominant food system. Ultimately, it is impossible to be ‘sovereign’ over one’s food or food system if one does not have the sufficient land base to support such a system (Koberinski et al., 2022). Land as a concept, as a resource, and as territory is “heavily contested through processes of colonization, enclosure, commodification, and financialization” (Wittman & James, 2022). This is due to the fact that governance in land and natural resources is intimately tied to questions of power and privilege. This demands the questions, “who governs land? Who benefits, and who is excluded?” (Wittman & James, 2022). These questions, in turn, also presuppose assumptions about land that can further be contested: “What is land, what purpose(s) does it serve, and for whom?” (Wittman & James, 2022).

Kepkiewicz et al. (2015) argue that while it is noble and noteworthy for activists and academics to fight for food justice, there has been a lack of attention to settler control of land (ie. for food production) and to the persisting violence against Indigenous food systems. They argue that to build more equitable food systems, white, middle-class settler activists in particular must move beyond mere notions of inclusion, and think more critically and carefully about “the structures that create privilege and disadvantage in our society, and that damage our relationships with the land and each other”. It is especially important, they argue, to place food justice in the context of the ongoing processes of colonialism and recognise that “no justice can happen on stolen land”. Part of this, of course, is to engage with settler colonialism as an ongoing structure that continues to shape the lives of everyone who dwells here (Kepkiewicz et al., 2015).

Food sovereignty, a complementary movement to food as commons, is a movement that interacts closely with questions about land. It is broadly defined as “the right of nations and

peoples to control their own food systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures and environments” (Wiebe & Wipf, 2011) (p. 4). Like food as commons, food sovereignty is based on the premise that sustainable and equitable food systems are a function of community control over the food system (p. 5), and as such, local, regional and national food strategies are the means to that goal.

To challenge land ownership, it is imperative we critically analyse and interrogate the ways in which land ownership “serves to entrench both capitalist agriculture and settler colonialism” (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019). This is because the issues of land governance, or who gets access to land, which specific parcels, and who gives them this right, is implicated in the food system (Wittman & James, 2022). However, as Kepkiewicz & Dale (2019) observe, the issues of land ownership are often left unchallenged by settlers in the food sovereignty discourse; if they were to be addressed, they would directly call current property regimes into question. There is a critical need for this interrogation, because if we are to investigate customary and contemporary food commons in Canada, we will find that they are based in the social, political and historical context of Canada’s relationships with Indigenous nations, both historically and at present (Koberinski et al., 2022). As a result, Koberinski et al. (2022) even argue that food as commons in Canada will always have unstable legal foundations, because it is complicated by the unstable “legal foundations for nationhood and a Treaty-making legacy from the British Empire” (Koberinski et al., 2022).

Historically and in the present, settler governments have treated diverse Indigenous food-related traditions with contempt and have perceived them to be detrimental to colonial notions of progress and development (Levkoe et al., 2019). As a result, colonisation has had a destructive impact on Indigenous diets, mutating them from a diet that consists of primarily local and traditional foods, to now, mainly processed foods (Koberinski et al., 2022). The culprits of this significant shift are primarily physical estrangement from the land and social estrangement from cultural and traditional practice and knowledge; the pressures of assimilation upon

Indigenous social, economic and food systems; and the ecological contamination of the natural environments that support traditional food system practices (Koberinski et al., 2022). In present times, Indigenous communities are witnessing widespread food insecurity and diet-related illness in epidemic levels on Indigenous reserves. This is due to, in part, limited access to local medical services, and in part, the disruption of traditional harvesting and cultivation opportunities (Koberinski et al., 2022).

Consequently, activists in Canada have articulated the challenges to the settler food system and capitalist agriculture through the framework of Indigenous food sovereignty, a movement that emphasises Indigenous presence and struggle in Indigenous food systems under ongoing settler colonialism (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019). According to Morrison (2011), Indigenous food sovereignty describes, rather than defines, “the present day strategies that enable and support the ability of Indigenous communities to sustain traditional hunting, fishing, gathering, farming and distribution practices,” and are based on responsibilities to “uphold our distinct cultures and relationships to the land and food systems”. In addition, Indigenous food sovereignty “provides a framework for exploring, transforming and rebuilding the industrial food system towards a more just and ecological model for all” (p. 98), and offers an alternative to the “the limitations of the linear production paradigm that has mechanized the spirit and soul out of the land and food system as a whole” (Morrison, 2020). Indigenous food sovereignty is based within Indigenous food systems, which the Indigenous Food Systems Network describes as “the vast myriad of rivers, watersheds, land-forms, vegetation and climatic zones [that] have worked together for thousands of years to shape and form Indigenous land and food systems” (Levkoe et al., 2019) They include “all of the land, air, water, soil and culturally important plant, animal, and fungi species that have sustained Indigenous peoples over thousands of years” (Levkoe et al., 2019). There are four guiding principles of Indigenous food sovereignty according to Morrison (2008):

(1) Sacredness: Food is a sacred gift from the Creator; Indigenous peoples have a responsibility to maintain and nurture healthy relationships with land, plants and animals;

(2) Self-determination: The ability of Indigenous peoples to make decisions about sufficient amounts of safe, healthy and culturally-appropriate food, and the freedom to be independent of the corporate industrial food system (grocery stores or food production and distribution controlled by market economy).

(3) Participatory action: Day to day participation in traditional food harvesting and practices to maintain Indigenous food systems that is practised at individual, family and communal levels.

(4) Policy: The capacity for Indigenous peoples to influence municipal, provincial, national and international policies that impact and relate to Indigenous land and traditional food systems.

Kepkiewicz (2015) argues that non-Indigenous (white, middle-class settler) food activists can resist settler colonialism in the food system by engaging more closely with the narratives that Indigenous food activists and Indigenous food studies scholars provide, and then learn from these narratives by connecting food with land, sovereignty and self-determination. She observes that settler food activists and academics have yet to unpack what this means in practice, and how it might alter our understanding of *land* in the food system. She demonstrates the work we have left to do in this direction by identifying the following trend in the food movement: in an attempt to bring consumers closer to their food and understand complexity of the food system, food activists often highlight the importance for participants in the alternative food movements, who are largely white middle-class settlers, to connect with land where food is grown. In doing so, they inadvertently glorify these participants as ‘returning’ to the land because they demonstrate an increased interest and desire to grow local sustainable food. In addition, in conversations about land access for farming food, especially for new farmers, there is little thought given to the ways in which “land redistribution has the potential to reproduce settler

claims to Indigenous land and its resources” (Kepkiewicz et al., 2015). Without attention to, and intervention in, the ways in which the food system “intersects with the appropriation of land and a history of settler agriculture”, food movement activists intentionally or unintentionally “engage in colonial processes of erasure by further invisibilising the ways that dispossession occurs” (Kepkiewicz, 2015).

This thread of argument highlights the importance of confronting one’s own privilege in the food movement, and in the greater food system, so that we can use this awareness to push for structural change. When we reflect and act on the ways that food movements may reproduce the structures of colonialism, activists and academics can change the narrative and create space for alternative practice (Kepkiewicz, 2015).

Food as Urban Commons

The urban commons are a particular manifestation of commons. The urban commons re-situates the residents of the city as the key actors, rather than markets, technologies or governments — in other words, “the city as a commons is a claim on the city by the people” (Shareable, 2018). Urban food commons, in particular, refer to any “shared immaterial or material resource in urban spaces that is food-related, which is co-owned and/or co-governed by its users and/or communities according to their own rules and norms” (Scharf et al., 2019). The community is responsible for sustaining, building and using the urban food commons in the process of growing, distributing, storing, gathering, or knowledge-generating (Scharf et al., 2019). Similar to this concept is the idea of ‘food assets’; this term refers to “tangible and intangible resources, facilities, services, spaces and places, that offer food for harvesting, sale, celebration, sharing and enjoyment”, and are “part of the infrastructure that enables our food systems” (de la Salle, 2023). Urban food commons are, in particular, characterised by bottom-up

processes that strengthen citizen identity, participation, self-organisation and social resilience (Scharf et al., 2019).

Importantly, and what is clear in these definitions, is that the urban food commons are not merely a resource that is used by citizens, but a *combination* of and a *relationship between* three elements: firstly, the resource itself (i.e. food systems), secondly, the community that uses it and manages it (i.e. its eaters, producers, etc.), and thirdly, the rules, values and norms that they negotiate regarding the use and management of the resource (i.e. collective decision-making) (Dellenbaugh & Schwegmann, 2017). In other words, the urban commons, and urban food commons in particular, is made up of three parts: the food system, food eaters and producers, and governance. The governance of the food system may also be understood as “commoning”, a concept discussed earlier. ‘Commoning’ is the key element which ultimately makes food commons different from other ways of governing or organising food systems. Rather than food commons being just a good, commons are conceptualised as “the social form of (tangible and/or intangible) matter” that its users can determine in the process of commoning. That, commons are created by commoning (Euler, 2018).

A major aspect of the urban food commons is the self-organisation of citizens. The commons, beginning with the act of commoning, is where a community negotiates rules and values among themselves about the best ways to collectively use and manage food systems (Dellenbaugh & Schwegmann, 2017). This is an empowering phenomenon in and of itself. Though the structures of commoning may change over time and place, the general rule is that the group of people negotiates their rules according to their best interests, and it is managed in community (Dellenbaugh & Schwegmann, 2017). In principle, commoning practices are “voluntary and inclusively self-organized activities” (Euler, 2018). In keeping this conceptualisation of commoning abstract, we are able to leave commoning to resemble whatever way of self-organising the participants serves the participants best. The goal of

abstraction is to establish the core of commoning practice with its common characteristics or dimension, without being so specific that it becomes concrete (Euler, 2018).

Chilean political scientist and intellectual Marta Harnecker (2017) proposes that in order to create a sustainable, humanist and solidarity-based society that is “directed towards satisfying people’s genuine needs equitably, and not the artificial wants created by capitalism in its irrational drive to obtain more profits,” we need to achieve ‘protagonism’. She defines this as the space where “ordinary people participate in and become masters of their own communities” (p. 15). To achieve the objectives of protagonism, she proposes that we need to employ ‘decentralised participatory planning’ (DPP), a concept that is quite similar to commoning. DPP, like commoning, is more than just an instrument that is used for achieving citizen participation in managing public affairs (p. 16). Instead, she argues that,

When people become involved in the planning process, they no longer feel like beggars demanding solutions from the state. They become creators of their own destiny, and the destiny of their human beings; it gives them dignity, increases their self-esteem and broadens their knowledge on political, cultural, social, economic and environmental issues (p. 16).

Commoning in cities is a particular phenomenon, because urban populations may fluctuate more than other groups, with citizens choosing to move, or new citizens moving in, and bringing new ideas and suggestions to the structure or model of governance. As such, there is a greater need to establish frameworks that generate trust and cooperation in the process of creating rules for governance. As a result, urban commons can be said to have more dynamic user groups, making commoning projects in cities also more dynamic (Dellenbaugh & Schwegmann, 2017).

Interestingly, the urban commons can be contextualised in Canada when we draw parallels with existing urban commons. On a national level, food can be compared and contextualised with the universal healthcare system, another universal public good that people in Canada enjoy. Similarly, a national food policy in Canada would create a system where

everyone contributes so everyone can eat (Sumner, 2011). Other urban commons may include the following: the public education system, municipal building regulations, public libraries, provision of water and electricity, public roads and bridges, social safety protections, municipal by-laws, municipal waste and sewage systems, parks, schools, public squares, and more (Sumner, 2011). These are all common resources that are shared by citizens, and managed collectively in some manner.

Conclusion

While I have offered many suggestions for alternatives to the dominant settler corporate food regime in this Major Paper, I do not necessarily claim to have the answers. I recognise that there are many tensions in my work, and I continue to struggle with them, even as I offer possible courses for future progress. At the same time, I feel that it is important to encourage debate over how food and food systems are arranged in systems of domination, and to challenge these structures by building the terminology and the concepts necessary to create change.

In Canada, the social and political landscape is ripe for creating a food system based on commons. Martorell & Andrée (2018), in a collaboration with Food Secure Canada, map the food policy landscape in Canada, and include a review of national territorial and provincial food systems policies. They argue that Canada already has a strong starting point in creating a food system based on commons. This is because, first, Canada has a decentralised system of governance, with the ten provinces and three northern territories, in addition to Indigenous independent governments. These public entities have jurisdiction in key policy-making areas related to food, including social policy, healthcare and education. Second, Canada has a growing food movement with a strong history of community organising and forms of resistance to the dominant food system, including Indigenous resistance to colonial interference in Indigenous food systems.

Canada's first-ever national food policy was announced with the election of the Liberal party to the federal government in 2015, and public consultations took place in 2017. The policy aims to "help Canada build a healthier and more sustainable food system", and is based on six priority outcomes: vibrant communities, increased food system connections, improved food-related health outcomes, strong Indigenous food systems, sustainable food practices; and inclusive economic growth (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2020). This is a good start, but

activists and academics have already identified gaps in what has been promised: the development and vision statement of the policy implies that the specific objective of the policy is to improve food security, and this will depend primarily on improving household incomes and/or lowering food prices (Deaton & Scholz, 2022). As well, there is no mention of the right to food, or food workers and migrant agricultural workers, of food citizenship, or of food as commons, and the proposed budget of \$134 million is fairly modest when set against the ambitious goals of the policy (Food Secure Canada, 2019).

This Major Paper argues for the democratisation of food systems and the right of the people to food as a right to citizenship in the city in response to the corporate settler food regime. Drawing from the disciplines of urban planning/studies and from critical food studies, we demonstrate that cities are spaces where the food system can be transformed into one that is based on equity, sustainability and justice. As a multifunctional and multidimensional tool, food can be used as a lever in the city for actualising healthy and vibrant communities, addressing urban challenges, and creating a positive impact on integrated urban systems. But it comes with its own challenges. In the region now known as Canada, urban food systems must contend with the ongoing reality of settler colonialism at the heart of the dominant food system, and as the ongoing condition of city-making. The settler colonial project is reasserted every day of occupation in its manifestation in urban space and food systems. This requires that we lead food movements and systems governance with reflexivity and care for the ways that urban food systems can inadvertently promote the settler project. In addition, the commodification of food in the city places the maximisation of profit as its ultimate goal, overriding the non-monetary dimensions of food systems that manage food in more rational ways. The social, economic and cultural construction of food as a commodity brings enormous profits to corporations, and shifts the burden of the corporate food regime to eaters, with their health and quality of life, farmers and farmworkers, with their land, labour and livelihoods, and the environment, with ecological destruction to natural habitats and biodiversity. The alternative to the settler corporate food

regime is to create sustainable urban food systems that are based in the frameworks of food citizenship and food as commons. There are six guiding values that are essential to an urban food system where food citizenship is adopted by citizens and food is governed as commons: localness, universality, sustainable resource management, culture and social connectedness, food as an essential public service, and citizen-centred policy and engagement.

To bring this into practice, the food citizen, that is, the citizen as a resident of a city or town, maintains an active role in the governance and management of an urban food system. The citizen critically engages in holistic behaviours that develop an appreciation of their own choices and impact on the food system, and how they support the wellbeing of the health of the self, the community, and the natural environment for present and future generations.

Constructing food and food systems as commons can help support food citizenship by creating a culture, politics, geography and economy of care that allow for sharing food and food resources in community as a process. The process of commoning is one that is based on relationships and relationship-building in family and community, spaces that are beyond the state and market. It is where people come together and cooperate in the governance of food and food systems. As such, commoning is both the process and the final outcome. In this way, imagining food systems as commons requires a radical social and ecological paradigm shift from the contemporary settler corporate food regime. In the city, food as urban commons situates the food citizen as the key actors in the system, and allows the people to claim space in the city for themselves. The bottom-up process of managing the food system as urban commons consists of a relationship between one, food and the food system itself, two, the community who governs it, and three, the rules and values that they decide amongst themselves in the process of commoning. This third aspect, differentiates commons from other systems of organisation, is empowering in and of itself. Food and the city comes down to a question about the governance of land and natural resources, and is intimately tied to power

and privilege. Sustainable urban food systems allow us to imagine a transformation that lets us reclaim the city and our right to food.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Non-Exhaustive List of Canadian Organisations Working on Food Systems Issues

Organisations

- Canadian Association for Food Studies
- Association for the Study of Food and Society
- Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society
- International Sociological Association Research Committee on Sociology of Agriculture and Food
- Sustain Ontario
- Nourishing Ontario
- Just Food
- Food Action Research Centre
- Community Based Research Canada
- FoodShare Toronto
- Toronto Food Policy Council
- The Stop
- Food Secure Canada
- Co-ops
 - Ontario Natural Food Co-op- connects small, diversified farms, health-food stores, and consumers
 - Karma Co-op in Toronto
 - The Big Carrot in Toronto