Popular Education and Community Food Security: Contemplating Spaces for Food Systems Change

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Abstract

There are many problems that result from the contemporary industrial food system, vested as it is in capitalist interests, the scientific paradigm, and continual expansion and progress (Handy and Fehr, 2010). One such problem largely created from this system, is food insecurity, which particularly affects vulnerable and low-income communities McIntyre, 2003). Due to cuts in social provision and welfare, the effects of food insecurity have become exacerbated, while food banks and other charitable solutions have taken on the responsibility of addressing it (Riches, 2002). However, these initiatives have failed to substantially reduce food insecurity and have largely depoliticized issues of hunger while helping to marginalize and stigmatize people who cannot afford food. With the understanding that there are immense limitations and shortcomings within food security policy in Canada, and Toronto more specifically, this paper is dedicated to better understanding the community organizing realm, particularly what community food centres (CFCs), and community food organizations are doing in response to food insecurity in Toronto. As the community sphere has responded to food insecurity, this topic is worth researching in order that we can optimize these spaces.

This paper explores the role of current spaces for food security on the community organizing level, while endeavouring to understand what makes these spaces meaningful, and envisioning how these community spaces might become more ideal. Within this paper, the concept of meaningful or ideal is distinguished based on three main categories from existing literature: food security, popular education, and community organizing and social movements. Lastly, I look at some of the challenges that community organizations currently face, and may face in moving toward more meaningful or ideal work. The methodologies employed are semi-structured interviews with employees of CFCs in Toronto, as well as an arts-based workshop with community members from the Riverdale Food Working Group's (RFWG) three good food markets (GFMs), designed to better situate their personal experiences within spaces for food-getting. It is through these primary explorations that I better distinguish what is considered meaningful and ideal in the context of community work for food security. My primary data, in conjunction with the literature, suggest that scales of local and global, and inside-outside organizing related to food security, are fluid and flexible concepts, and CFCs are able to operate in and outside of these "categories" in order to get their work done. Conversely, the primary data and literature suggest the concept of process is prioritized above outcome-based instances of food-getting in relation to process-based organizing and participatory food-getting. Thus, this criterion is integral to the orchestration of CFC spaces. It is important to note that this paper is inherently process-based, and thus, hearing the voices of those who are involved in community food work, as well as those who may be marginalized and excluded from dominant narratives and systems of food-getting, was as important as any findings. Lastly, this paper is structured as popular education praxis: theory, action, and reflection, and it is my hope that it will continue a cycle of dialogue, critical awareness, and further action.

Foreword

This paper merges numerous topics that became more interesting to me during my time in the MES program. I came into the MES program with a lot of theoretical background, namely in philosophy, wherein my interests were in epistemology, political philosophy, and ethics. I wanted to stay true to my roots in philosophy and theory, while also venturing out and obtaining practical on-the-ground understanding. Paired with my passion and interest in food and community education, the union of my philosophical background with this more on-the-ground work seemed like the perfect fit for me. The environmental sustainability education (ESE) certificate, offered in the MES program, allowed me to explore food systems change and epistemology in a new way. I became interested in advocating the use of education, broadly defined, as a means of changing dominant narratives and socio-political constructs, while opening up ways of thinking and being in the world to be inclusive of other ways of manifesting. I started to recognize my own story, upbringing, relationships, interactions with food, and past experiences in the education system as exceedingly relevant to my life in the classroom and could no longer divorce these realms.

In the summer prior to starting MES, I began coordinating the South Riverdale good food market for the Riverdale Food Working Group, a non-profit community-led initiative committed to increasing food security and food education, particularly with low-income and vulnerable populations. Whereas my previous knowledge suffered from a theoretical trap, that is, I only ever learned what was in books and the classroom, what I learned at the market was invaluable. The space of the good food market represents so much: community, empowerment, safer space, social inclusion, refutation of dominant constructs, physical visibility, and more. For me, it enabled a different type of learning, new friendships, trials and errors, a lot of mistake making (something I had been so fearful of in the realm of academia and in my own life), and a true sense of belonging that I had not anticipated. My experiences with the good food market over the last three years have impacted my studies, my sense of being, and this paper immensely.

This research allowed for a true unification of theory, action, and reflection, which had been wanting in my past academic experiences. In several ways, this paper has deepened my understanding of the dynamics of community food initiatives, the existence of intellectual and physical spaces for change, the genuine power of coming together with overwhelming love and generosity, and it has been instrumental in helping me to place myself in this type of work.

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To my fellow MESers, thank you for enlightened classroom dialogue, coffee shop conversations, lengthy library dates, and friendships I will cherish, always. You have motivated and uplifted me. My work would not have been possible without your collective intelligence.

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To the Earth, broadly defined, I have such hope... thank you for moving me.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Major Research Paper Outline and Methodology

This chapter outlines the research objectives and questions of the major paper, gives a brief introduction to popular education praxis as the theoretical framework utilized, the researcher positionality, and the qualitative methodology utilized, which employs both semi-structured interviews and an arts-based workshop, as well as the justification for using these methods.

Research Objectives and Questions

My research will address questions of meaningful community organization spaces for supporting food security, moving from an exploration of the role of current spaces to contemplating idealized ones for food systems change. In identifying idealized spaces for community food security organizations, I will develop criteria based both on literature and primary research. I will then identify existing boundaries between these two spaces, while comparing existing literature with the personal accounts identified by those on the ground in these community initiatives. This primary research will be done through semi-structured interviews with employees of CFCs, and an arts-based workshop with volunteers of Riverdale Food Working Group's (RFWGs) three good food markets (GFMs), operating out of South Riverdale Community Heath Centre (SRCHC), Ralph Thornton Centre (RTC), and Eastview Community Centre (ECC). Next, I will reflect on the workshop and my position in this work more broadly. Lastly, I will discuss the limitations and shortcoming of this research, while offering some concluding remarks and next steps for inquiry.

This topic is worth researching because of the shortcomings of the policy sphere for food security in Toronto, and Canada more broadly. As the burden of responsibility

to combat food security often falls on the community-organizing realm, it is important to better comprehend what these spaces look like currently, and what they could ideally be. Moreover, I intend to better understand the boundaries to making these spaces more meaningful.

The specific research questions include:

1. What is the role of community organizing for food security? What do these current or existing organizing spaces look like?
2. What could more ideal spaces look like? What are the criteria for creating more ideal spaces?

Introduction to Popular Education Praxis as Theoretical Framework

In maintaining educative and community praxis as dialogical, denying the dichotomy between teacher (knower) and student (learner), Freire advocates for individuals as decision makers and active agents within an oppressive and hegemonic social and political world (2000). Freire suggests that the teacher within an educative setting speaks of reality and knowledge as if is "motionless, static, compartmentalized and predictable" (2000, 72), viewing the student as a container in which knowledge and "truth" are to be digested and later reproduced. Freire encourages instead a reconciliation of teacher-student relations in conceiving of pedagogical practice as active resistance and transformation to dominant class-based systems (2000, 69). This framework is integral to this paper in that the knowledge produced is to be understood as dynamic, process-based, experiential, and experimental. Moreover, creating and maintaining collaborative and dialogical relations is as much the intention of this work as is contemplating idealized spaces for community food security. In examining the relations between community

organizing and food security, I will structure this paper in the form of popular education praxis: positing theory, enabling action, and instigating critical reflection (Wakefield, 2007, 340). Moreover, I hope the conclusion will be understood as the beginning of a new cycle of theory-action-reflection. Though this paper is primarily explorative and contemplative, it will advocate the use of popular education in enabling food movements and organizing, while suggesting that the pragmatic, experimental, and local nature of contemporary community organizing is essential for creating food security (Baker, 2004, 309).

marino maintains that participatory research demands a complex, creative, and critical engagement (1997). The primary research used in this paper, acknowledges and involves the "researched" group in the collection, articulation, and creation of "data." By this, I mean that I do not intend to merely interview community members, collect data, and present it in static form, thereby reinforcing an oppressive framework. A participatory research methodology is necessarily inclusive of the community and group in which it works, allowing for the creation of knowledge and culture (Barndt, 2012, 65). Thus, dialogical exchange and mutual inquiry are crucial within this context (marino, 1997, 86). The participatory process I use within my research is not uncontaminated, that is, the interviewees and workshop participants were not involved with the design of the major paper idea, interview questions, and workshop design; thus, it is not entirely ground-up or consensus-based in that regard. There is, however, allotted room and time for flexibility and flux within both the interview and workshop design.

Researcher Positionality

I am a person with certain privileges. I am a white female who has never lived with food insecurity. Thus, I do not have the same knowledge or felt experience of many within the community in which I work and belong. As marino acknowledges, we are all creatures of context, and accordingly, we play a crucial role in either reproducing coercive habits or attempting to critically transform and change the existing system in which such habits exist (1997, 121). Moreover, I admit that to locate my own position is exceedingly complex as there are many privileges and disadvantages at work. Though I have never felt the immense disadvantages related to hunger, poverty, and poor access to resources, I do not believe this excludes me from this type of work and the communities in which this work is located. However, the coordination, facilitation, or involvement in these projects demands extensive critical reflection. I believe this type of work, more broadly, demands ongoing self-awareness and deliberation.

Increasingly, people in positions of relative power and privilege are engaging in community food security initiatives (Slocum, 2006, 331). Questions arise as to whether they are contributing constructively, to benefit the community in which food security issues are situated, or romanticizing alternatives and forming initiatives of their own desires (Guthman, 2008, 441). It is important that I allow space for my own experiences within my major paper, recognizing my privilege, position, and biases within my work, and communicating those within my paper. In, "Anishinaabe Mino-Bimaadiziwin" Darcy Rheault advocates a reconciliation of subjective and objective knowledge. In recognizing the value in storytelling, the framework and methodology I will employ advocates knowledge as inherently experiential and personal (Rheault xxi). Subjective

and felt experiences cannot be abstracted or separated from "objective" ways of knowing, but necessarily inform theories of knowing. Both academia and whiteness play a large role in contemporary food security movements, constituting positions of privilege. Guthman points out the "lack of attention to questions of privilege" (2008, 431) in examining contemporary alternative food movements, in which there is a "pervasive whiteness of alternative food movements" (2008, 433). Thomas suggests that "as white people, we have the immediate luxury of saying… things and actually getting listened to," (2001, 194) outlining the power of attaining a certain position. Moreover, she suggests, "there's no such thing as doing nothing," (2001, 209) as we currently live in a reality constructed by highly oppressive systems in which we can either act to refute such systems, or reproduce them in our inaction.

Though I do not claim to interrogate all the complexities of engaging in, and facilitating community organizing spaces for food security changes, it is my intention to remain transparent and self-disclose my relative privilege wherever necessary, while recognizing community organizing spaces are never neutral (Baines, 2006, 6). This is a deeply personal undertaking as it deals with many of the felt realities and passion within this field and the ongoing complexities of engaging in this type of work. Ultimately, I believe that the participation of privileged people in food security change is problematic and complex, but conversely, could be a necessity in facilitating change.

Qualitative Methodology: Semi-structured Interviews, Dialogical Narrative Analysis, and Arts- Based Workshop Approach

This research uses qualitative methodology, with the understanding that this is useful for issues that are not yet well understood, process-based, multidimensional, and

non-isolated. Moreover, qualitative methodology allows participants to express their perspectives in a more in-depth and articulate nature (Ritchie et al, 2014). In particular, a qualitative approach was necessary to allow participants to share their rich perceptions of food security issues within Toronto; food systems change, and the community organizing sphere, are complex and ongoing processes that are not subject to reductionist understanding. My goal then, was not to gather statistical data, but rather, to obtain diverse stories. Thus, this research employs both semi-structured interviews and an arts-based workshop in engaging the personal accounts of those working and volunteering within community organizations in the city of Toronto, with the belief that these particular methods allow for a slightly more informal, dialogical, and comfortable way of exchange with participants.

There are six interviews conducted throughout the research. Five interviews took place with Community Food Centres (CFCs) located in Toronto. These interviews were conducted at Foodshare, Riverdale Food Working Group (RFWG), West-End Food Coop (WEFC), Parkdale Arts and Recreation Centre (PARC), and The Stop Community Food Centre. One interview took place with Community Food Centres Canada (CFCC), a National organization that is based in Toronto. The idea behind interviewing six different centres was not to compare and contrast their efforts, but rather, to gain a more rounded understanding of what existing community organizing spaces for food security look like in Toronto, that is, their current role, and what those working within these organizations ideally believe the organizations should be. It was also my intention to look at what CFCs are doing in comparison or conjunction with existing literature, and then

identifying the boundaries between the existing roles of CFCs, and envisioned ideal or optimal spaces for CFCs.

The workshop component of the research utilizes dialogical narrative analysis (Frank 2010) in gathering stories from those involved in community food organizing. Frank emphasizes four main characteristics of this method. Firstly, it is best to understand this form of analysis as a practice of criticism rather than a mere methodology, because it connects social science with critical theory, thus refusing to accept common assumptions inherent in current structural hegemony. It is committed to both recognizing and unraveling one's own self-awareness (Frank, 2010, 73). Secondly, dialogical narrative analysis is inherently dynamic and operates as a movement of thought in constant flux, while not adhering to a static or stable knowledge system (Frank, 2010, 73). Thirdly, dialogical narrative analysis maintains that the interaction between researcher and participants is interconnected and does not exist separately; one engages in it to create new knowledge. Consequently, researcher and participants can inform one another, hence the dialogical aspect of the engagement (Frank, 2010, 74). Lastly, if it is to be meaningful, dialogical narrative is to exist and be developed outside of the interaction, that is, it is to continue to be utilized and learned from in larger movements of thought and action (Frank, 2010, 74). Moreover, the correlation between producing stories and producing one's own food are not merely metaphorical, but attain pragmatic value. It is through storytelling that we can actively and collectively discover new ways of knowing and acting (Ledwith and Springett, 2010, 108). It is "our stories that mark the beginning of the transformative process; they are the basis of our new stories" (2010, 125). This is the method that the workshop assumes, stressing criticism of the taken-for-granted

assumptions inherent in the food system, flux and experimentation in design, interaction and collaboration between researcher and participants, and the creation of new knowledge (also in the form of art-making).

I create primary data within the arts-based realm, resulting from a community arts-based process. I acknowledge art as providing an "alternative approach to knowledge representation and advancement" (Little and Froggett, 2010, 58), in which inclusivity and diversity are always at the fore. If we understand art constructs imaginative qualities pragmatically, education and art are fundamental to food community organizing (Cole and Knowles, 2010, 57). I believe arts-based research (ABR) is essential to address the knowledge problem and the current exclusivity inherent in the food system, while opening up experimental and flexible spaces for imaginative and creative knowledge making. The workshop design will rely heavily on art-creation and community building, recognizing an emancipatory framework as inherently meaningful to food systems change. Crucial to this approach is recognizing that all community members bring knowledge to the space, as well as recognizing the process as meaningful and open to flux.

The dialogical narrative analysis and arts-based workshop will take place with community members involved with RFWG. The RFWG is an organization committed to enabling food security, education, and empowerment, primarily within the Riverdale community. The organization does this through workshops, community building exercises, and educative practices. The GFM, a non-profit, volunteer-led community initiative, is the chief project to enable greater food security within an inclusionary and collaborative sphere. Through this initiative, community members come together in

coordinating, running, and creating feasible food security within the area. The workshop participants are volunteers involved with the GFMs, most of whom are clients of the SRCHC, RTC, and ECC, from which the three GFMs operate. The participants selected for the workshops will generally be of a vulnerable population, and thus it is my hope that they will benefit from the arts-based expression and empowerment framework of the workshops. The decision to conduct this workshop within this particular community is also based on my existing relationship with this community; having worked there the last three summers coordinating the SRCHC GFM and taking up other minor roles surrounding food access at the SRCHC. Not only have I have attained a level of trust with the community members with whom I work, which I believe to be essential in carrying out an ethical workshop, but I am part of this community and its organizing initiatives around food security. Stone-Mediatore recognizes stories as an inherently collaborative, collective, and mutual endeavor whereby "when we share stories, we speak not from "above" but from within a community" (2003, 64). When first conceiving of this project, I thought I would go into a new food community and learn of their practice, or conduct workshops with multiple vulnerable communities. However, I ultimately decided that such an endeavour might be exploitative in that I would be speaking from outside the community to conduct my research. Conversely, by working with a community that I am already very much a part of, the exchange remains mutual and collective. Though I would have liked to run multiple workshops in various communities, due to the duration of this degree and the length of this major research paper, paired with the time and effort it takes to build trusting and meaningful relationships with a

community, only one workshop was possible. I felt it would be the most fitting decision to carry out my research within this context.

Chapter Two: Framing and Naming the Issue: Food Security in Toronto

Setting the Stage: The Manifestation of Capitalism through The Enclosure Movement and The Third Food Regime

The Enclosure Movement originated in Britain in the 16th Century whereby commonly owned land was privatized for capitalist production methods (Handy and Fehr, 2010, 50). Enclosed land was portrayed as civilized, while the commons were regarded as barbaric (Handy and Fehr, 2010, 54). Thus, similar to colonial invasion, claiming to bring civilization to primitive and uncivilized territory, the capitalist regime of land privatization parallels the unjustified colonial conquest. This movement required the displacement of peasants from village and farmlands into urban areas, and the land was then used primarily for mass agricultural production. Posing a large threat to societal function and peasant livelihood, the privatization of land that occurred during the Enclosure Movement has become a huge part of capitalist production today, and this historical movement is fundamental to understanding the existing capitalist agricultural system. The Enclosure Movement largely reinforced capitalist ideals, asserting a hegemonic force over those who did not own land. This movement allowed for "industrial, scientific, or high farming,"(Handy and Fehr, 2010, 50), negating prior ways of utilizing the land, and often more sustainable production processes. Capitalism largely refutes the integrity of small-scale production, replacing prior production models with commodity markets (Bello and Baviera, 2010, 63). Foragers historically relied on "a land tenure system based on common property regime," (Lee and Daly, 2005, 32), allowing for an integral way of life and social organization based on communal survival and

wellbeing. However, due to the complex history of colonial conquest, much of these former cultural and social ways have been destroyed and deemed uncivilized in a modern context (Lee and Daly, 2005, 34).

In parallel to the belief that commons are merely barbaric and primitive, is the dismissal of the knowledge systems and ways of life that reside within communal systems. Leduc emphasizes the Ecology of Mind Tradition, in which the relationship between how we view the land and place around us and the knowledge systems inherent in place are interconnected. Thus, in the context of privatization, it is noteworthy that these organizational changes affect "both external changes to the land and internal transformations to how we live in this place" (Leduc, 2016, 69). Similar to Leduc's assertions, Shiva suggests, "uniformity and diversity are not merely patterns of land use, but ways of thinking and ways of living" (Shiva, 1993, 6). Moreover, the process of enclosure of land extends to the enclosure of resources in general and all aspects of life – "knowledge, culture, water, biodiversity, and public services such as health and education. Commons are the highest expression of economic democracy" (Shiva cited in Miller, 2008, 156). Shiva discusses TINA (There Is No Alternative), in asserting that the dismissal of diversity in thought creates a subsequent disappearance of physical alternatives in which the very possibility of alternatives becomes excluded (1993, 5). This uniformity or disappearance of alternatives, in which there is an overwhelming singularity of knowledge and subsequent manifestation of that knowledge, is increasingly dominant in contemporary society.

Progress is an idea and materialization that has plagued contemporary society in ways unthinkable prior to the technological age. In "Thinking about Technology,"

George Grant suggests our contemporary society is a technological civilization, delineating it from all prior civilizations (1987). He discusses the limitations within the notion that technology is merely a praiseworthy progressive innovation, examining its political and social construction and manifestations (Grant, 1987, 12). Increasingly, the profound impacts of technology, rationality, and reductionist knowledge are overwhelming other ways of thinking and being in the world. Bai describes this phenomenon of modernity as "ecological physic numbing" (2009, 135) in which the pervasive qualities of rationalist worldviews overwhelm the knowledge found within the senses (2009, 136). Leduc suggests that the pervasive and overwhelming technological mindset is "making us more machine than human" (2016, 25). These dominant conceptions are pertinent within the realm of agriculture and food systems, in which dominant contemporary agricultural practices aid in the privatization and monopolization of agricultural knowledge, purporting a singular and universalized way of viewing and doing agriculture (MacRae et al, 1989, 177). MacRae et al. maintain that the scientific paradigm is lauded as a universalized and generalized knowledge, but constructs a singular truth under the name of scientific certainty, while it dismisses the unique qualities of time and place inherent to agricultural knowledge (MacRae et al, 1989, 177). It is noteworthy that "present-day capitalism could not have developed in its present form without the assistance of science and scientists," (MacRae et al., 1989, 185) as science presents an objective and isolated method that fits with a view of capitalism as the sole truth and way of thinking and doing. Shiva suggests that these contemporary monocultures of the mind pursue destruction while justifying it under the veil of "progress, growth, and improvement" (1993, 7).

A food regime can be defined as a "rule-governed structure of production and consumption of food on a world scale" (Holt-Gimenez and Shattuck, 2011, 110). Contemporarily, the third food regime has seen a far-reaching hegemony in which corporate interests command the rules, regulations, and goals of the agri-food sphere (Kuyek, 2007, 50). Increasingly, the force of the global economy and international rules restrict nation-states' ability to develop domestic policies without committing major economic sacrifices, thus the capacity to act is severely limited (Koc and Bas, 2012, 179). Though there have been many successes within the environmental movement more broadly, particularly in issue-based organizing throughout the 1960s and 1970s, it is evident that the prevailing productionist paradigm is still prevails over more broad-based environmentalism (Abergel, 2012, 79). Kuyek postulates that "in this system, there is no room for social, environmental, or even agronomic considerations that impinge on corporate profits" (2007, 50), and the system is controlled by agri-business to yield maximum control and thus maximum profit, beginning with the selling of industrial inputs. In the Canadian food system, it is in the best interest of the three of four largest corporations to work together, so to speak, as an oligopoly, exerting power and control over the entire food system (People's Food Commission, 1980, 60) whereby "the real competition [is] the competition for control" (People's Food Commission, 1980, 62). This vast system of control is largely equated with social progress and thus often thought of as a "better" way of orchestrating society (MacRae et al, 1989, 187). Inherent in this organization of the food system, with its focus on corporatization, international agreements, and profit maximization, is the notion that food security is seemingly not as important as trade (Abergel, 2012, 189). Consequently, "the system we live in is

organized to maximize profit, bolster corporate control and accumulate capital at the price of human satisfaction. In this sense, the present system is anti-human" (People's Food Commission 1980, 64).

Welfare Reform & The Social Safety Net: Perpetual Charitable Solutions

Food security can be defined as the sustainable and continual procurement of food that is accessible, affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate, including both adequate quantity and quality of food (Armar-Klemesu, 2000, 99). Food insecurity is pervasive, particularly within vulnerable and low-income communities, and is now considered one of the most prevalent social detriments of health (McIntyre, 2003, 46). In advocating food security, I recognize the consequences of food insecurity on health in a holistic way, inclusive of mental and social wellbeing, quality of life, happiness, community cohesion, and self-determination, to be defined in a complex way by the community affected (Hancock, 1999, 22). In the 1980s, poverty and food insecurity were exacerbated by cuts in social provision and welfare (McIntyre, 2003, 47). Between 1997 and 2002, a total of 1,800 new food banks opened in Canada, however, these initiatives have failed to substantially reduce food insecurity (McIntyre, 2003, 47). Contemporary approaches to food security in the Canadian context occur out of the rhetoric of benevolence, often in the form of charitable solutions. Riches points out that "welfare reform has become marked in terms of a return to residualism, privatization and charitable or faith-based responses to the meeting of basic human needs" (Riches, 2002, 658) while these provisions are becoming harder to attain as the eligibility requirements are increasingly restricted (Riches, 2002, 659). The widespread use of food banks, originally meant to be a short-term emergency approach to supplementing food security,

highlight the state's failure to fulfill the right to food (Riches, 2002, 650). Moreover, even when such provisions are available, the social safety net proves inadequate, and many recipients cannot access enough funds for an adequate quality and quantity of food (Rideout et al, 2007, 568). The People's Food Commission (PFC) coined this inadequacy "The End of The Month Blues" (1980, 16) in which recipients of welfare do not have a sufficient income to eat throughout the month, which is particularly challenging at the end of the month whereby anything and everything is eaten, and sometimes nothing at all. Thus, Rideout et al. highlight that reinstating the welfare state and reintroducing federal monitoring of social programs are essential facets to achieving the right to food in Canada (2007, 570). Interviewees from community centres have similar apprehensions regarding the service of food banks, wherein some state their contentions with this model:

The food bank model doesn't solve the problem. It's a band-aid. It doesn't do anything to improve their situation so that they can shift and transition into being more independent (Mandy, Food Programming, Interview, PARC).

We really try not to view it as us versus them. But our model is not about a food handouts or emergency food. It's giving people a place to feel welcome and meet friends, and ask for help if they need it. Food banks are often a place for people to receive food and leave. We want to go deeper with people and our relationships… it has a lot of power. We use food as a tool. It fills our belly, but it's tied to our culture, how we celebrate, it brings enjoyment, how we sit down and talk to people… it harnesses so many things (Manager, Interview, CFCC).

Questions arise, however, as to whether food charity facilitates the very problem itself, shifting the debate away from a highly politicized matter of food insecurity, and aiding in disempowerment and stigmatization for recipients (Rideout et al, 2007, 570). This common contention with the current supplementary approaches to food security is that "a latent function of food banks has thus been to permit the state to deny the human right to adequate food" (Rideout et al, 2007, 570). This is certainly a noteworthy

assertion, bringing to the surface larger questions regarding how to address food insecurity if both policy and charitable solutions remain insufficient. Moreover, some are critical of such provisions and programming as merely perpetuating and facilitating a business-as-usual approach to food security, leaving systemic inequalities and structural processes largely untouched. Conversely, Welsh and MacRae (1998, 247).suggest that we must change the current paradigm from the depoliticization of food insecurity and insufficient role of food bank, while shifting focus to larger systemic issues, working to enable subsequent active participation in food-getting

What Food Policy? Attempts to respond to Food Security from a Policy Perspective: Policy Snapshot

Policy change is an important way to respond to food insecurity in Canada. Overall, policy on food security has been extremely limited due to lack of political will, impediments to judicial enforcement in recognizing the right to food, and inadequate legal structures (Rideout et al, 2007, 571). MacRae (2011) emphasizes the need for a joined-up food policy within Canada, recognizing the multidisciplinary and all-encompassing nature of the food system, while suggesting we need ministries to work across agricultural, environmental, food, and health boundaries in order to implement food policy more strategically. Moreover, he suggests that changes to the structural way policy is made are unusual and evolutionary, and thus a transitional framework for a slow set of initiatives to implement change is necessary in order to tackle the large scale issue of food security in the Canadian context (MacRae 1999). As a result of these shortcomings within the policy sphere, much of the burden of responsibility to provide food security programs and services has fallen on civil society organizations (CSOs) (Koc and Bas, 2012, 191). During my interviews, it was evident that some of the

interviewees believed that the burden of responsibility resting on CSOs and CFCs allowed them the ability to advocate and affect larger policy advances through their work.

Advocacy is a little bit tricky, if you advocate too much you could lose your charity status in Canada, and so it's keeping us quiet, or quiet to a certain extent… community has a great potential then… we empower [community] to take on their own projects and expand their reach… to make the change they think is necessary in their community and they can advocate as much as they like… we empower people to use their voices, to make the change that's necessary… we rely on a very strong participatory framework (Yara, Evaluation Facilitator, Interview, Foodshare).

I think changes have to be driven from the communities… I think we identify the need the community has. The ground up and grassroots organizations personify the diversity of the city… in communities, and especially low-income communities, they have to be the voices. We can do that from organizing and advocating. Bringing our advocates to city hall… having voice (A Director, Interview, The Stop).

Neither the policy nor the community-organizing realms can exist in isolation to advance food security, and must employ a multi-stakeholder governance model to constructively improve food security within Toronto, demanding resources, time, and organizing instruments (Winfield, 2012, 84). The policy dimension of food security is beyond the scope of this paper, which focuses primarily on criteria for ideal community organizing spaces for food security change. However, the community-organizing realm must work in conjunction with the policy sphere in order to move forward, as often times, organizing efforts are stymied by policy and must better insert themselves into the policy structure. Mandy from PARC had an interesting viewpoint on the symbiosis between the community organizing realm and policy sphere, recognizing another key contributor in furthering policy and driving food movements forward. She states:

Getting the research out there and accessible, it's that way that we can influence policy… creating information… that policy writers have access to how we can make the change. I don't think it's by going to lobby. It's by producing work like this, that's clear and brings connections together. Ultimately, if we're doing the research in the community but also in conjunction with the academy if you will, and getting people interested, than that helps to make policy change… because unfortunately, still, academy seems to have

way more credit and voice for policy change than front line agencies… so that's the way I think it can happen (Mandy, Food Programming, Interview, PARC).

Within the current system, it is not obvious that either government or CSOs have the "knowledge, structures, wills, or capacity to work together in formal or loose networks of collaboration" (MacRae et al, 2012, 7). An interviewee speaks to the challenges that MacRae outlines, and the difficulties of operating without a ministry that addresses the multi-faceted nature of food systems issues:

Things in the political realm move really slowly, and it takes time and lots of relationship building to move forward. Within our sector, within community food security, we're really now becoming outspoken about the policy changes we want to see… for a sector we're pretty young in that realm. So even sorting out the issues and department we're going to go after is a challenge. So department of agriculture, maybe? But that doesn't fit a lot of things about food and food security. So even trying to figure out the right approach and pathway is still fairly tricky and new… that infrastructure just doesn't exist (Manager, Interview, CFCC).

Reframing the Issue: Defining Food Democracy and Refusing Passive Participation

Currently, there is no scarcity of food, but a scarcity of democracy (Lappé cited in Miller, 2008, 117). Accordingly, food security must allow for participative and active roles in accessing food, while veering away from the predominant short-term, recipient focused, and charity-based "solutions". Welsh and MacRae advocate food democracy or food citizenship, "emphasizing the need to move beyond food as commodity and people as consumers" (1998, 237) suggesting that the necessity of food democracy is particularly crucial in speaking to the problem of hunger in the first world (Riches cited in Welsh and MacRae, 1998, 240). Welsh and MacRae recognize that reframing community food security (CFS) does not merely demand a reconceptualization of food as more than a commodity, but demands that we establish a method of food citizenship that encompasses the numerous dimensions of the food system including the health of both the producer and consumer, environmental sustainability, and the fair treatment of the worker (1998,

240). Hassanein (2002, 83) suggests that food democracy is essentially a pragmatic device for organizing, both politically and philosophically. In regard to its political practicality, Hassanien recognizes that, although the contemporary food system is immensely problematic, as Alinsky (1972, 59) would suggest, "compromise is a beautiful word" and thus, recognizing the meaning in incremental feats in a necessity. In maintaining food democracy as philosophically pragmatic, Hassanien (2002) advocates critical reflection and intelligent action, following Dewey's suggestion for an experimental politics that refuses to remain static. Thus, food democracy is an ongoing method that is incremental and experimental in nature, thus warranting critical reflection in deciphering how it "should" best operate in order to constructively and innovatively include all voices within the food system.

Chapter Three: Popular Education and Spaces for Transformation

Defining Popular Education: The Pedagogy of Learning for Change

Freire maintains that our current epoch is categorized fundamentally by domination, denoting the necessity of liberation to contradict its persistence (1970, 103). This construction of society is organized through the "persuasion by the powerful [and] consent by the many. This unequal relationship is hegemony… monopoly of public truth" (marino, 1997, 127). Freire suggests "in order to achieve humanization, which presupposes the elimination of dehumanizing oppression, it is absolutely necessary to surmount… people [as] reduced to things" (Freire, 1970, 103). This demands both a refutation and an overturning of the prevailing assumptions within our social relations, positing that our worth is determined solely, "by our role and status" (Starhawk 84).

Conversely, Starhawk asserts, "another sort of response is possible… resistance, or empowered action- action that does not accept the terms of the system, action that creates a new reality" (Starhawk, 1987, 75). In contrast to the notion of a singular or monolithic knowledge held as absolute truth, the "democratizing of knowledge becomes a central precondition for human liberation because the contemporary knowledge system excludes the humane by its very structure" (Petty cited in Miller, 2008, 158). Thus, the task for an education for resistance and liberation is to be inclusive of multiple ways of knowing, thinking, and living.

Problem-posing education constitutes a valuable action of resistance against prevailing systems of oppression. Here, I will define problem-posing education namely in the context of Freire (1970) and Starhawk's (1987) work. Freire dismantles the current education system, what he calls the banking model of education, maintaining that this system is highly oppressive, in which the teacher is believed to hold the knowledge, transferring this knowledge to the learner as if they are an empty container to be filled (1970, 72). In this system, reality is construed as stationary, static, compartmentalized, and fatalistic (Freire, 1970, 71) and Freire largely contends that education suffers from a monolithic "narration sickness" (1970, 71). Conversely, problem-posing education denies the purported fatalistic trajectory of the current epoch, while working to reconcile the dichotomy between teacher and learner constructed by the dominant education system and larger societal structures, creating a learner-centred educational structure. In this sense, "education as the practice of freedom… denies that man [or woman] is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from the people" (Freire, 1970, 81). In rejecting the premise of social

relations as power relations, Stawhawk recognizes the ability to create a new system based on entirely different values, suggesting a different (perhaps non-hierarchal) orchestration of societal relations (1987, 75). In suggesting that resistance necessarily accepts the value of the self, individuality, and diversity, Starhawk advocates a resistance in which collectivity and community, supported by individual agency, can counter dominant assumptions and create other values (1987, 88). It is crucial to recognize that "resistance is the refusal to be negated by systems of control" (Starhawk, 1987, 86) in which oppressed and marginalized groups challenge systemic exclusion and build functioning alternatives. Thus, in creating connections and "structures of support" (Stawhawk, 1987, 84), the exclusionary approach within hegemonic and hierarchal relations is actively opposed and shifted. In this sense, problem-posing education parallels processes of becoming, denying fatalistic and static tendencies of dominant systems of control (Freire, 1970, 84), while critically recognizing the ability of all people to be decision makers in their own lives, rather then merely objects of a system of instrumentalism (Freire, 1970, 85). Similarly, Gibson-Graham suggests an ontological reframing in which we work to unthink economic determinism (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxx), denying dominant forces as fundamental, structural, or universal reality, while recognizing the possibility of alterative or other realities in transformative frameworks. This is the work of popular education praxis.

Praxis is "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970, 51), refuting the fatalistic nature purported by dominant socio-political constructs, in which a negation of reflection would merely be activism, and a negation of action would be verbalism (Freire, 1970, 87). Thus, popular education praxis demands cycles of

both reflection and action in considering change as a process. Education is a primary site for liberation, in which thinking itself is a kind of action, "in other words touching the world and being touched by it and in the process things (and we) are changing" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxix). Popular education asks us to consider what freedom and praxis look like within the context of learning for transformative change; wherein reality is understood as "undergoing constant transformation" (Freire, 1970, 75) and is highly dependent on context. In this sense, praxis acknowledges "people, as beings 'in a situation,'… rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark," (Freire, 1970, 109) or what Freire calls, situationality (1970, 109). Most significantly, Freire advocates popular education praxis that recognizes the possibility of transformation that is not necessarily development as we have come to understand it within dominant constructs, that is, not Beings for progress or for others, but rather Beings for themselves.

Uniting Education and Food: Tools for Transforming Society

Barndt acknowledges the ability for people to "create the kind of society they dream of" (2012, 70) in not only opposing existing systems, but in proposing and building legitimate alternatives. Barndt's work explores the interdisciplinarity of community-building, popular education, social movements, and local food systems in an all-encompassing exploration of political culture and transformation (2012). Food organizing can be one such way to engage in popular education, as "food is a window which allows us to look into any society anywhere in the world, and determine critically important things about its structure, especially with regard to social justice and the distribution of power and wealth" (Langevin and Rosset cited in Miller, 2008, 20).

Wakefield understands relations with food as a tool for setting up broad based education and mobilization (2007, 333). Arguably, community food organizing cannot happen without popular education methodology and praxis, in which an emphasis is placed on the participation and inclusion of everybody (Wakefield, 2007, 337). Coupling popular education and food security are integral in that they enable a reclamation of all people's capacities to take part in an increasingly global and corporate food system, in which food is often viewed as commodity and distanced from consumers, while recognizing that food issues are fundamentally about relations (Barndt, 2012, 68).

The People's Food Commission (PFC) marked a seminal time in uniting popular education praxis and food movements within the North American context. The PFC epitomizes the experimental nature of bottom-up democracy, wherein the very process itself represents "an incredible moment of participatory democracy" (Miller, 2008, 25). The project worked off the assumption that everyday experience is valuable, and that "stories of how things work and fit together have an important validity" (People's Food Commission, 1980, 7). Throughout the process, there was an overwhelming sense that the educational system both supported and defended the dominant food system, whereby "there is not much room in our educational system for any questions about the direction of our economic system," (Sister Burge cited in Peoples Food Commission, 1980, 75). As a result of institutional forces, such as the educational system, and the oligarchy controlling of Canadian food distribution, many involved in the PFC process felt a sense of powerlessness, that is, "a sense that the trends are not only damaging, but inevitable" (People's Food Commission, 1980, 77). Through this process, however, legitimacy was given to people's experiences, while knowledge and understanding was emphasized in

recognizing that many of the injustices in the food system were due to external forces, and the participants themselves were not responsible for the exclusivities inherent in it (People's Food Commission, 1980, 76). Though the solutions given through the PFC process were diverse, and often contradictory, the process itself exemplified an experimental, process-based, participatory education framework, in which a diverse group came together to share stories and instigate dialogue. The solutions offered by those in conversation often depended on some degree of involvement from the state, however, the extent to which the state should be involved in food systems change, was often very complex and contested (Peoples Food Commission, 1980, 65). The PFC later claimed, "as we heard people's stories, the picture was clear. The state can come to people's aid, but its role is largely to support the trend away from people having control of their food system" (Peoples Food Commission, 1980, 67) , that is that the state system was supporting the logic of industry and a "small but powerful minority" (Peoples Food Commission, 1980, 67). Moreover, the PFC pointed out that the state was merely patching the system when necessary, rather than addressing widespread systematic or structural changes (Peoples Food Commission, 1980, 68). Though this process was arguably imperfect in instigating concrete and pragmatic outcomes, it did offer a process-based framework for both gaining and exchanging learning regarding the food system. In a very tangible approach, "stories about food can be used to shape social change" (Miller, 2008, 27) that many people can relate to and build together, even if in disagreement.

Today, the ability to exist in a space, or have meaningful spaces for food security, illustrates the possibility to think and manifest differently. In contrast to what was once the Enclosure Movement's privatization of communal land for growing food for oneself,

"the struggle for land has also become a struggle for education, for schools, [and] for the right to know" (Branford and Rocha cited in Miller, 2008, 173). Popular education, in opening up spaces to discuss the dominant socio-political construct, and in always relating the self to the world and the world back to the self in cycles of praxis, amalgamates reflection and action in attaining social change for the individual and collaboratively. The stories we tell about food, and how we tell them, is a cultural production of meaning, whereby we shape the world in an "ongoing construction of reality" (Miller, 2008, 46).

Storytelling, Arts-Based Expression, and Dialogue

Within a vastly shrinking, monopolized, and exclusionary public sphere, the role of storytelling in conjunction with popular education, holds promise for transformative social change. Razack recognizes that certain "voices [are] silenced through traditional education" (1993, 55), a system in which prevailing stories and dominant truth is increasingly hegemonic. Conversely, Stone-Mediatore recognizes storytelling as an outlet in which all persons within a community can actively engage and participate in community life as "all of us have the ability to act in and evaluate our world" (2003, 49). Storytelling plays a distinctive role within community building and empowerment, allowing communities to engage in self-inquiry and self-knowledge (Ledwith and Springett, 2010, 117). In adopting the praxis of storytelling, Ledwith and Springett (2010, 115) advocate a commitment to bringing multiple voices into the conversation about teaching and knowing as a way to break through the old to create the new. Storytelling, as a methodology, is increasingly warranted to gain access to shared realities "in a way that other methods struggle to achieve" (Little and Froggett, 2010, 471). Barndt

recognizes that stories bring the whole self into community and sharing, while affirming all persons as producers of knowledge, rather than passive consumers (2012, 77). marino (1997) encourages change that is emancipatory, avoiding the reproduction of hegemonic and oppressive systems, while advocating a bottom-up approach. She suggests that "silent resistance needs to be transformed into stories of resistance," (marino, 1997, 30) in allowing a multiplicity of voices to be heard, understood, and taken seriously. Moreover, it is "our stories that mark the beginning of the transformative process; they are the basis of our new stories" (Ledwith and Springett, 2010, 125), and thus should not be negated and denied. Stories are important in that they not only equip us with an outlet to "tell the story differently" (Frank, 2010, 10), but they also "project possible futures" (Frank, 2010, 3) in bringing together the creative capacities of diverse groups, and often times, acting as mobilizing forces for social movements. In an interview, it was brought to my attention that storytelling does not always "solve" the problem, but it does still have merit within community organizing spaces.

These food initiatives, they struggle… the good days are easy, right?… people are negotiating, do I pay rent, or do I pay groceries? These are not difficult decisions; they are anguishing, they torment, they terrify, and they paralyze. The community centres help negotiate those struggles and those frustrations by giving people a place to talk and tell to their story, or to just share their frustrations and realize they're not the only ones... it doesn't necessarily make it better, but it doesn't make you as isolated, because you're not the only one (Antonio, Good Food Market Hub Animator, RFWG, Interview).

Within the realm of social change, "storytelling refers to an opposition to established knowledge" (Razack, 1993, 55) acknowledging also that established systems of knowledge remain largely monological in understanding reality, and thus are inherently limited and faulty. In contrast, Pässilä et al recognize that "exchanging experience, ideas, and opinions… [is] key when creating a reflective learning culture"

(2013, 159), necessary for transformative change that does not rely on hegemonic notions of truth. In recognizing the role of storytelling as indispensable, Pässilä et al emphasize storytelling in its ability to construct shared-understanding, emphasizing a collective learning process that requires "interaction, dialogue, and a questioning of prevailing assumptions" (2013, 160). Razack acknowledges that popular education and the employment of storytelling accept a diversity of voices, acknowledging all voices as valid within the conversation (1993, 63). It is through storytelling that a space can be utilized to "co-create dialogue" (Pässilä et al, 2013, 163) in which truths and stories are viewed on a horizon, not in accordance with dominant constructions of hierarchy. Thus, storytelling is used to move "towards authentic representation of the individual and community voices" in which communities engage in "making meaning" (Little and Froggett, 2010, 459) that is seldom acknowledged within the dominant sociopolitical context. In this sense, "everyday stories are people's art" (Boyd cited in Frank, 2010, 27).

Arts-based research (ABR) can be defined by a

> "mode and form of qualitative research in the social sciences that is influenced by, but not based in, the arts broadly conceived… to enhance understanding of the human condition through alterative processes and representation forms of inquiry to reach multiple audiences by making scholarship more accessible" (Little and Froggett, 2010, 59).

Similarly to the negation of storytelling within the public and academic sphere, ABR has been critiqued for its supposed inadequacy within the traditional system of education. Conversely, ABR has the ability to "fuse artistry and art making with scholarship" (Little and Froggett, 2010, 57) while validating "the diverse forms of knowing that [are] part of everyday experience" (Little and Froggett, 2010, 57). ABR attains an "active process of

meaning making [with] transformative potential" (Little and Froggett, 2010, 62) by prefiguring the free society we wish to create (Graeber, 2007, 3). While deconstructing dominant narratives and affirming a multiplicity of ways of knowing, "art tells gorgeous lies that come true" (Bey, 2003, 40). Pässilä et al advocate art-making in its ability to offer a new lens to tackling problems (2013, 163). Our ability to produce art in a collective capacity, ranging from visual arts, to performance, to festivals and celebrations, asserts everybody's ability to actively create while contesting dominant forms of production and expression. Thus, in the movement for food security, the outlet of arts-based expressions and ABR turn mere consumers into producers of their own world, taking seriously all ways of life and experiences.

Dialogical narrative analysis "considers how stories make human lives good by providing ideals, imagining hopes, providing models of resistance to injustices, and feeding imaginations of how life might be not only different, but better" (Frank, 2010, 159). For Freire, dialogue is fundamental to reconciling teacher-learner relations, maintaining both teacher and learner are jointly responsible for the process in which both grow (1970, 80). This is because "dialogue refuses what monologue aspires to… finalization" (Frank, 2010, 97) in which participation and co-construction is taken seriously, and the initial premise is that "the participant is the expert from whom the researcher hopes to learn" (Frank, 2010, 99). Thus, the banking model of education is dismantled through dialogical exchange, whereby "in dialogue, we seek a connection, we suspend our own truth to explore other people's truth, and in doing so move towards a collective narrative" (Ledwith and Springett, 2010, 108). Dialogical exchange is pivotal within popular education, and Freire advocates that the relation between teacher and

learner should always be dialogical in nature (1970, 80). Conversely, when "dialogue ends, everything ends" (Frank, 2004, 47) aiding in the problematic and essentially hegemonic silencing of certain voices. Freire maintains that anti-dialogical action aims to preserve, while dialogue both accepts and mobilizes transformative processes (1970, 179), advocating that true revolutionary potential demands initiation of courageous dialogue.

Experimentation, Experience, and Plurality: A Politics of Possibility and Becoming

Orr suggests that the current political-ecological crisis is ultimately a crisis of education in which we have been dominated by the "industrial mind" (1995, 44) and the subsequent inability to conceive of life otherwise. The dominant rhetoric holds the stern and deep belief that we can rely solely on "economic growth to solve environmental and social problems" (Suavé et al, 2007, 46) in which education directly supports economic growth (Sauvé et al, 2007, 47). Moreover, Gruenewald maintains that institutions of education are sites of control, strict hierarchal regime, and hegemonic practices in which experimentation is largely lost (2002, 521). The difficulty of altering educative practice and the regulatory and controlling realm of education, is a very deep fear of making a mistake or utilizing experimental knowledge (Orr, 1995, 44).

One of the simultaneous strengths and weaknesses of problem-posing education, is that it is challenging to pinpoint with precision or certainty, because rather than start with a prescriptive program, it "must search for this program dialogically with people… of which the oppressed must participate," (Freire, 1970, 124). Otherwise, it would merely reproduce the same fatalistic oppression found within the dominant framework. If we are to construct an education "system" or anti-system, and a parallel politics that

counters the current dominant conception, then it must work to deconstruct what the current system is, while understanding existing vulnerabilities, asserting the best means to dismantle it, while reconstructing something vastly different. One of the difficulties is constructing something new and not merely reproducing the same hegemonic oppressions inherent in the current system. marino's work is striking in that she contends languages of transformation attempt to produce pragmatic alternatives to languages of dominance, oppression, and hegemony, while not merely reproducing those systems. However, she recognizes that often times we slip into a reproduction of the realities found within dominant society (1997, 25). She calls this "slip up" social amnesia, in which during the struggle to seize means of production, "we easily forget about our responsibility to replace the old ways and invent new practice. We merely relocate ourselves in a hierarchy of power" (marino, 1997, 42). The exploration of other ways of being, and the process of becoming and transforming, is riddled with mistakes, and marino suggests that both making these mistakes, and exploring them, is crucial to any real political change (1997, 121). True democracy is "participatory, constantly negotiated, [and] constantly in process" Miller, 2008, 14) and thus, is necessarily inclusive of trial and error. Learning and knowing should be understood as an unproven experiment, not prescribed or predetermined, but flexible, ongoing, questioned and restructured indefinitely (Gruenewald, 2002, 531). In my interview with Antonio, he discusses the highly experimental nature of food organizing work, while speaking to his experiences as Good Food Market Hub Animator and the trails of working in a field that is built on compassion and generosity, words he uses often to describe spaces for community food. He states:

It's got difficulties, and you know what, we're always going to have difficulties… the footprints go all over the place, but I guess the key is, they go all over the place, it is not devoid of footprints, people are walking all over to find ways to take care of one another (Interview, RFWG).

Gruenewald highlights Thoreau's acknowledgement of different ways of knowing that manifest within felt experience and being in the world (2002, 531). In attempting to escape the prescriptive confines of pedagogical practice, Thoreau denies the fatalist construction of contemporary education in its denial of the possibility of change. If we are to understand the realm of education as a mirror of the political landscape "combatting capitalism means refusing a long-standing sense of self and mode of Being in the world, while simultaneously cultivating new forms of sociability, visions for happiness and economic capacities (Colectivo Situaciones cited in Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxxv). An interviewee adopts an optimistic stance on the boundaries of institutions and the ways in which certain boundaries can promote unlikely outcomes. She states:

The thing about these hard boundaries, if nothing else, they promote unbelievable creativity and new ways to push boundaries, and that has been wonderful… to see ways we can change (Mandy, Food Programming, Interview, PARC).

Gibson-Graham discusses the notion of an "ontology of a politics of possibility" (xxvii, 2006) emphasizing the necessity of making and remaking a space to interact with ideas, exist and experiment, mobilize locally, and sustain continual work. Seeking to approach food systems change and food security demands "pluralistic ways of thinking about the world and acting to change it" (Petty cited in Miller, 2008, 129). Moreover, the existence of alternatives makes a very fundamental statement about the dominant ideology, indicating "it is not the only way, that economic systems are multiple and diverse" (Miller, 2008, 68). A politics of possibility, or becoming, can cause initial discomfort, in that it contests and reconstructs the pervasive static and fatalistic

construction of the dominant socio-political discourse, however "the most fundamental leaning, or relearning, will have to go on in public bodies: especially learning the ability to work with unpredictability and initial chaos- generally the organized chaos- of genuine democracy" (Wainwright cited in Miller, 2008, 180). This notion of politics, as non-prescriptive and highly contextual, recognizes that "a movement's vision functions a little like the mythology of a ritual practice; it is ambiguous enough to inspire all manner of different actions…negation and construction of a shared reality… a bit distorted, even a bit weird" (Miller, 2008, 145).

Temporary Autonomous Zone: Uprising, Evasion, and Action

Consequently, the notion of the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) is worthy of exploration within the context of popular education and in understanding the possibility of creating the world we wish to live in. Coined by Hakim Bey, TAZ is a sociopolitical method that evades the formal and dominant capitalist structure, while refusing to merely wait for revolutionary "moments" to occur. Sellar solicits "what exactly is the TAZ: another experiment in speculative fiction, an academic essay, or a serious political manifesto?" (Sellar, 2010, 85). The aim of Bey's work is to highlight indeterminate zones in capitalism that refuse to be integrated into dominant narratives; such zones are often not extraordinary moments, but rather, exist within everyday life. Sellar recognizes that although TAZ has been greatly misunderstood, accused of mere rhetoric, and degraded from overuse, its applicability and reinvention within late-capitalist is increasingly deserved. Bey refrains from clearly defining TAZ, and conscious of constructing political dogma, he suggests it is best "understood in action" (2003, 97). TAZ exists "not only beyond Control but also beyond definition, beyond gazing and

naming as acts as enslaving (2010, 130). Bey works to establish how TAZ might operate, cognizant of utopian ideal, suggesting that TAZ exists as historical moment, psychospiritual, or existential, but must also manifest in "tactile tasty physical space (ranging in size, from say, a double bed to a large city)- otherwise it's no more than a blueprint or a dream" (2003, xi).

Bey distinguishes TAZ from common notions of revolution, distrusting the permanence that revolution often posits in attempting to create a static structure in struggles for change (2003, 98). Bey's disdain for revolutionary moments also stems from his recognitions that such moments are ultimately subject to "absorption once the revolution has been fomented…" (Seller, 2010, 85) and thus, often reproduce the dominant structure of control. Conversely, Bey understands TAZ as an uprising or movement toward change; a temporary creating in which by its very nature, it seizes every available means to realize itself (2003, 109) and thus remains inexplicable by using the present, namelessness, in flux, and becoming properties of becoming in action. In refusing the notion of TAZ as revolutionary, static, or formed, Ward understands TAZ as "fleeting pockets of anarchy that occur in everyday life" in that we begin to see it everywhere and nowhere, in its disappearance and temporality (cited in Sellar, 2010, 91). Thus, TAZ necessarily flows impurely and in formlessness as, "any attempt to precipitate a crystal of ideology would result in flawed rigidities" (Bey, 2003, 59).

Here, I will briefly review two different examples, or manifestations, of TAZ and how they exemplify its components. Though TAZ necessarily attempts to evade structure, form, and naming, it is important to distinguish it from mere utopia or rhetoric, rendering it useless, while exploring what it could lend contemporary politics and social

movements. If TAZ is to be useful in formulating a politics of becoming and liberation, investigating moments of TAZ and drawing conclusions from best practices is certainly worthwhile. Poetic terrorism (PT) is one manifestation of TAZ as discussed in length by Bey. Bey contends that PT must be categorically divorced from all conventional structures for art consumption, in which the primary aim is not money, but change (2003, 6). Bey contents that poetry is largely dead in the Western world, or rather, it now exists in a "world without risk" (2003, 19) where words are no longer considered a crime. Conversely, Bey wishes to reconnect poetry to the body. He encourages using it not as a crime against the body, "but against ideas" (2003, 19), that is, recognizing that words and thought can be dangerous and hold immense meaning. Bey contends "the TAZ is an art of life in continual rising up" (Bey, 2003, 132). PT can range from going naked in public, graffiti-art in the subway and public monuments, pirate radio information dissemination, poems in a courthouse washroom, fetishes in the park, Xerox-art on windshield-wipers of cars, and so on (2003, 6). Bey suggests that PT is about risk and spontaneity; in this sense, it is truly an embodiment of TAZ in that its strictly fleeting nature parallels the creation of something against and in refutation of dominant maintenance of structure and control. Bey suggests that "nature has no laws ("only habits"), and all law is unnatural" (2003, 49). In this sense, PT exemplifies the chaotic as the "continual principle of creation" (Bey, 2003, 63) using artistic expression as a way to perpetually produce anew.

Punk Cuisine offers another distinct example of TAZ, illustrated by the Black Cat Café in Seattle as "a space beyond the reach of the American State" (Clark, 2004 19). This space was set up as a way of critiquing privileges and challenging social hierarchies. The punks partaking in the Black Cat Café largely believed that industrial food filled

people with the "norms, rationales, and moral pollution of corporate capitalism and imperialism" (Clark, 2004, 19) and wanted to break away from food as commodity. Bey contends that "food, cooked or raw, cannot escape from symbolism" (Bey, 2003, 54) adding that "food belongs to the realm of everyday life, the primary arena for the insurrectionary self-empowerment, all spiritual self-enchancement, all seizing-back of pleasure, all revolt against the Planetary Work Machine" (Bey, 2003, 54). Thus, Punks eat food purchased in bulk, directly from farmers, homegrown, stolen or reclaimed, directly refuting the food-getting constructs of the industrial food system and putting into action an alternative way of being (Clark, 2004, 20). Ketan from Black Cat Café describes the space as "a safe space… a haven for people who live their lives away from the bullshit of corporate oppression… [to] be free from control by government or other forms of semantic, abusive power things" (2004, 21). Many in the space hold the belief that raw food is unpolluted by toxic chemical and capitalist culture; in this sense, there is a direct correlation between body and mind, the physical and mental (Clark, 2003, 23) recognizing these realms cannot be divorced. The Black Cat Café "concocted a daily life of meaningful situations, anarchist discourse, and resistance to the system" (Clark, 2003, 25), while punks utilized food as a medium to "make themselves, theorize, and contest the status quo" (Clark, 2003, 25). The Café operated for five years, and embodies TAZ not only in evading the State and managing to operate somewhat unnoticed, but in operating by anarchist and egalitarian principles, while celebrating practices that are non-hierarchal. Notably, the Café allowed "a cultural space" (Clark, 2003, 25) for people to exist together that denied the dominant narrative. In contrast to PT, the Café did not just

spontaneously act against systems of control and institutional structures, but erected a space to exist otherwise.

In recognizing the necessity of creating spaces for and of freedom, TAZ is crucial in imagining and creating the world anew (Barndt, 2012, 79). Importantly, TAZ is not simply against or in opposition to the dominant system of knowledge and its material manifestations, but demands that we actively create new ways of being together that are more inclusive, collective, and operate in non-hierarchal ways. TAZ, in following with the movement, fluidity, and dynamic nature of popular education praxis, is experimental and primarily meant for diverse explorations of new or other ways of being in the world. In this sense, TAZ is largely a learner-centered approach to progressive social change. Popular education envisions a space of energy and creativity, in which the focus is on the process of attaining a new vision. TAZ then, offers a sovereign and communal space in which non-hierarchal and non-hegemonic ways of life can be realized, reflected on, and engaged in. I believe the notion of TAZ is remarkably valuable today, in which an emphasis is often put on winnable and knowable gains. Conversely, TAZ accepts the unknowingness and flux of thinking and living in non-dominant ways, and utilizes these experimental moments as an advantage point. Bey is "not touting TAZ as an exclusive end in itself, replacing all other forms of organization, tactics and goals… [however] it can provide the quality of enhancement associated with the uprising (2003, 99) and thus TAZ should be viewed not just as an end in itself but as "forms of struggles toward a different reality" (Bey, 2003, 111). If we have not yet found a way to combat food insecurity and systems of exclusion, seemingly a further exploration into alternatives, new experiments, temporary interruptions, and dis-organizations, is warranted.

Chapter Four: Social Movements and Contemporary Community Organizing: Addressing Timeworn Oppositions

What Public Sphere? Democratic Orchestration and Process versus Outcome in Community Organizing

Shragge defines community organizing as "a search for social power and an effort to combat perceived helplessness through learning that what appears personal is often political" (Rubin and Rubin cited in Shragge, 2013, 3). Organizing, mobilizing, and community building creates the "capacity for democracy and for sustained social change… bringing people together to combat shared problems and to increase their say about decisions that affect their lives" (Shragge, 2013, 3). This delineation of community organizing is similar to that of Marx and Engels' understanding of community, suggesting that in "community [with others has each] individual the means of cultivating his [and her] gifts in all directions; in community, therefore, is personal freedom possible" (cited in Starr and Adams, 2010, 40). The notion of democracy is often praised for its participatory inclusion of society. However, crucial to understanding contemporary lived democracy is the divergence between democracy as an idea and democracy as current political practice. Fraser urges us to be critical of current democratic organization, suggesting we need to, "protect alternative models of democracy" (1990, 57) that are more inclusive of the public's concerns; we must work to enable democracy in practice. Moreover, as Fraser recognizes, we need not view knowledge and ways of life in a hierarchal manner, suggesting some ways of life to be better and others to be wrong, but should recognize co-existing ideas and ways of life (1990, 67). Community organizations are one such way "people could have a voice in shaping their organizations and communities" (Shragge, 2013, 13). While we are largely cast into believing certain truths because of the monopoly that few have over our knowledge and societal

orchestration (Dewey, 1927, 157, "democracy should be designed… to bring out the genius in everyday people because society would benefit tremendously from unleashing so much energy and creativity" (Paine cited in Miller, 2008, 175). Interviewees spoke to their particular organizing efforts, and the participatory nature of their work in regard to decision making processes wherein collaboration often takes place with the community involved.

The [good food] market has never really been designed by us, it's always been kind of designed by the neighbourhood… its genesis was a catchment area that said there's not enough affordable food… a frustrated network of communities saying we cannot participate in feeding our families in a way that is dignified or makes us proud… let's try and provide food at least until incomes can come up and people have a living wage… let's take care of one another, let's figure out how (Antonio, Good Food Market Hub Animator, Interview, RFWG)

Before running programs, we undertake a community consultation process. What are the needs and gaps in the community, what do people want to see, what will make you come out and participate, what are the barriers for you? It's very much so shaped by the participants beforehand. And then we are focused on evaluating programs during and afterward… really getting a sense of how this program should shift and morph… really an eye to if it's relevant to community desires (Manager, Interview, CFCC)

How do you see your community, how do you want to be involved… and having the voice of those people be heard and have a seat at the table (Susanna, Communication Coordinator, Interview, WEFC)

In an attempt to dismantle the façade of public participation and initiate truer forms of participation, community organizing must be process-driven and process-reliant, negating the outcome-driven society in which we live (Shragge, 2013, xvii). It is Shragge's belief that "immediate goals become subordinated to the democratic process and politicizing experiences" (Shragge, 2013, 9) in order that community organizing be more meaningful. If the goal of organizing efforts is largely to be heard, to democratize society, and address larger systemic issues of inequality, a process-based emphasis seems a necessity. Hooks discerns "we are a very naïve public about social change… this

culture doesn't encourage us to think about transformation as a process… we are addicted to notions of radical revolution moments that transform everything overnight" (cited in Miller, 2008, 43). If we are to understand reality as a process, rather than as a static happening (Freire, 1970, 92), then palpably, the ways in which we understand organizing efforts should parallel that reality. Alinsky recognizes that "process tells us how. Purpose tells us why. But in reality, it is academic to draw a line between them. They are part of a continuum… Process is really purpose" (Alinsky, 1971, 123) wherein "democracy is not an end but the best means" (Alinsky, 1971, 12). Understanding the merit in process-based approaches, in which participatory democracy is fundamental, demands a balance between slower transformations and larger revolutions, in which pragmatically speaking, often-time changes are only incremental and small-scale (Shragge, 2013, 5).

Presently, a needs-driven model of assessing a community, in which a community's needs, deficiencies, and problems are assessed, is most frequently utilized and the community begins to regard itself as fundamentally deficient, "victims incapable of taking charge" (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993, 2). This model denies community wisdom, while often attempting to "fix" a community with service providers, largely ignoring the capacities and strengths inherent in it. In utilizing this model, there is an "inevitable deepening of the cycle of dependence" (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993, 3). Conversely, in honouring a process-based and democratically orchestrated community organizing framework, capacity-focused development, often referred to as asset-based community development (ABCD), rooted in capacities, skills, and assets of lower income people and their neighbourhoods, recognizes that "development must start from within

the community… there is no other choice" (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993, 3). This type of community mapping, vastly different from needs mapping, looks at local assets and ways in which such assets can be connected and constructed from within the community.

In my interview at WEFC, Susanna spoke with me about the Parkdale Community Economic Development (PECD) Planning Project, which largely began as a community mapping project built from ABCD in the Parkdale neighbourhood, attempting to identify resources, networks, best practices, community skills, and community organizations that could collaborate and collectively come together to best support the vast changes in the neighbourhood that were leaving many community members isolated and disconnected. Susanna stated:

There's a lot of gentrification happening, it's happening very quickly... and instead of denial or a push away, or dichotomy of us versus them, it's really important in Parkdale that there are projects like this, where we say, yes, there is gentrification happening, what do we want to do about it, and how do we want to have our voices incorporated in this change that is happening… this has been an incredible thing to see… It's really an incredible practice in terms of surveying neighbourhoods and understanding what directions the residents actually want to go in… it's very grassroots, very on the ground level with people in the neighbourhood... it's amazing to see there's an action plan (Communications Coordinator, Interview, WEFC).

This model is largely relationship driven, wherein strong ties are emphasized so that communities can rebuild local relationships and utilize the capacities inherent in different members. Aigner et al build on the framework of ABCD and introduce the concept of whole community organizing, defined by "cooperation and collaboration of everyone… everyone in the neighborhood or community contributes their talents and gifts for themselves and for everyone else. We want to create a situation where everyone belongs and everyone gives their gifts" (Aigner et al, 2002, 92). In this sense,

"community as a social system… underscore[s] the importance of social interaction for the development of mutually shared meaning" (Wilkinson, cited in Aigner et al, 2002, 94) with the importance of "building of relationships to end social isolation" (Aigner et al, 2002, 100) central to the organizing process. Moreover, Aigner et al are adamant that the community, in all its facets, is regarded as fully capable to create and collaborate to achieve its goals, suggesting that "horizontal relationships drive the vertical ties" (Aigner et al, 2002, 94) and a community must fully orchestrate from within, before succumbing to outside relations that could aim to coopt and control it. Aigner et al advocate an empowerment paradigm in which each person has an inbuilt intelligence to mobilize his or her talents and contribute to a community (2002, 100).

The term emancipation has been equated with empowerment, as they both belong to the participatory worldview (Boog, 2003, 427). To emancipate means "to free oneself from restraint, control or the power of someone else, especially to free oneself from any kind of slavery… emancipation was the main political preoccupation of critical theory and critical action research" (Boog, 2003, 427) during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century. Moreover, emancipation largely refers to a collective transforming of society, beyond mere freeing (Boog, 2003, 428). Contemporarily, the term empowerment, "enrich[es] the concept of emancipation with notions about personal being and competencies, and motivational elements… the structural transformation of society with the radical feminists' notions of personal growth and personal strength" (Boog, 2003, 428), demanding both a reflection of political awareness and getting to know oneself and capacities. Initially, what distinguished these two terms was that emancipation was more structural in nature, wherein empowerment was regarded as more

personal; when paired together, actions of emancipation and empowerment lead to transformation. However, it is now understood that empowerment, in its own right, can be used to describe both collective and group empowerment, in that "people cannot fully realize their potential in life if they have no control over the (internal and external) factors that determine their lives" (Jacobs cited in Boog, 2003, 428). Empowerment corresponds with the model of ABCD and whole community development is that it supports the view that "people have the capacity to act and reflect… people are able to accept or reject certain elements, reframe issues and articulate change" (Sewpaul et al, 2014, 56). Importantly, participatory democracy is "not only seen as a goal inherent in emancipation or empowerment, but must also be experienced in the practice" (Boog, 2003, 428). On understanding the fundamental role of community empowerment within CFCs in helping community members to reflect, reject, and reframe certain elements of their position, a Director at The Stop Community Food Centre states:

It's creating a place. A place for food. A place that people can rely on. A place that there is consistent access to food. Just knowing that there is a place to go that is respectful and dignified… I think being here, as regular part of the community is important. I think the social justice work has to be front and center. What we always want to tell people is that it is not your fault; it's the system. You don't have enough food because you don't have enough money. The reasons might be many, but this is not your fault. There are people who can help, and there are supports. And this is important. (A Director, Interview, The Stop Community Food Centre).

One such example of a community empowerment approach is that found within the AHAH method. This particular method or seminar suggests that workshops should aid in both short-term and long-term goals that offer both strategies for making pragmatic changes for participants who may face oppression, while connecting to larger visions to change structural and systemic barriers (GATT-fly, 1983, 35); both are necessary in facilitating change. This approach is fundamental in that it "helps the participating to

objectify their own experience… participants are "naming" their world, which is the first step toward controlling it" (GATT-fly, 1983, 45). The AHAH method states,

> "this approach is linked to our conviction that at the root of our present unjust economic and political structures is not only an inequality in the distribution of income but also an exclusion of the vast majority of people from any meaningful decision-making power over their own lives-particularly denial of control over their own labour and products of their labour. We call this denial of control "disempowerment." It relegates a majority of people to being merely objects and denies an essential attribute of what it means to be human: to be creative, to enjoy the fruits of our creativity in the community with others and to be subjects of our own history" (GATT-Fly, 1983, 8).

The AHAH method utilizes symbols and the drawing of pictures to map out and place the experience of participants in connection with larger political patterns, wherein the workshop is organized into three categories: first, asking questions about the participants' experiences; second, thinking critically about the picture made; and third, asking questions about the future and what the next steps are in order to mobilize action. The method emphasizes that others largely share personal experiences, and the approach helps participants to see these connections, wherein these patterns can then be translated into collective action for change.

Making Meaning in Contemporary Organizing: The Contestability of Inside-Outside Approaches

Shragge recognizes community organizing that operates both outside and away from the state, or as integrated within the state system, suggesting both forms of organizing can either lend to the status quo or enable progressive social change (2013, 22). Notably, he recognizes that even integrational approaches, or what I refer to here as inside approaches, can be oppositional in nature, in that they erect spaces that directly conflict with and oppose systems of exclusion. Though many contemporary movements have distanced themselves from the more broad-based radicalism of 1960s movements, contemporary movements still have the ability to create and maintain meaningful

oppositional change by creating democratic spaces (Shragge, 2013, 131). This contribution to social change is largely a result of certain approaches employed in organizing efforts, denying the top-down approach of the provision of services, and enabling community health and cohesion through democratic involvement and ongoing direct participation. Shragge suggests that today, the dominant form of community organizing is the development model, utilizing a consensus building method, whereby change happens within systemic and structural constructs and relies on partnerships and provision of services, often resulting in closer relations with the state (2013). Notably, this approach often aids in the depoliticizing of wider power and structural issues (Shragge, 2013, 122). Shragge suggests we must remain critical of the partnerships inherent in the community development model, as often these "necessary" relationships hide questions of interest and power (2013, 131).

Arguably, with a vast deterioration of socio-economic conditions, community organizations have become a part of the system, and thus a part of the problem itself, rather than an oppositional force (Shragge, 2013, xiii). A social movement can be defined as a group of individuals who "inject themselves into politics and challenge dominant ideas" (Doyle and McEachern, 2008, 85) in an attempt to disrupt the taken-for-granted routines of normal politics (Doyle and McEachern, 2008, 86). Often times, contemporary social movements orchestrate collective opposition through the political apparatus known as the state. Poulantzas maintains that the state supports economic stability namely to protect itself, while enforcing capitalism for its own self-interest, oftentimes doing so by supporting the very conflicts and issues of justice that social movements are struggling with and fighting against (1978, 30). The notion that true

social change can only be achieved through the state is the "hegemony of hegemony" (Day, 2004, 717) in that it assumes "hierarchal forms" (Day, 2004, 717) in addressing any social problem. Draper contends that in looking upward to the state to initiate change, society is denied emancipation and is still controlled largely by the state's political decision-making (1968, 3). Consequently, when organizing efforts orient within the constructs of the state, where the ruling elite hand down "freedoms" to society, citizens are stripped of their freedoms and liberation (Draper, 1968, 3). In this understanding, the "freedoms" society attains under state rule is always subject to the state's perception of what society should be entitled to; the state is in control of its citizens. In this interpretation, the struggle is about obtaining freedoms, rather than lifting obstacles and striving for positive interventions, which is certainly another kind of interaction with organizing and the state.

Day suggests that truer forms of social change must come from "non-hegemonic forms of radical social change," (1968, 717) escaping the problems inherent in the hierarchal structures of both the state and socialism. One such "truer form" is anarchy, meaning, "contrary to authority or without a ruler" (Ward, 2004, 1), embodying the ultimate end of both liberalist and socialist theory. Contrary to socialism, which purports a working class rule, anarchy suggests no rule, but rather a society that is collectively orchestrated and "attempts to develop non-exploitative or laboratory social relations" (Shantz, 2011, 2), free of the state and capitalist control. Anarchy is the notion of a self-governed society in which organization is egalitarian and groups coordinate according to need, "where we work and live together cooperatively" (Shantz, 2011, 9), often found through "practical experimentation," (Hardt and Negri 411). Anarchy offers an

alternative to many of the problems constricting social movements today. Anarchy suggests that all voices should be heard and incorporated for a true democratic society to flourish; the multiplicity of disadvantages and privileges within the hierarchal power system would be abolished. Questions arise as to whether contemporary community organizing approaches should adopt more radical social movement tactics and forms, or conform to the inside approaches vested in the state system.

It is difficult to discern the stages of anarchy creation, particularly, as Graeber suggests, because "if there is one rule… it is that there are no strict rules. Movements work best when they best adapt themselves to their particular situations. The best democratic process depends on the nature of the community involved" (2013 298). A methodical deposit of anarchic creation is inconsistent. However, it is useful to examine best practices and instances of anarchy-inspired movements to best understand how anarchic organizations, movements, and communities are created and operate, while avoiding a mere theoretical explanation of anarchy. Occupy Wall Street (OWS) is a noteworthy example of an anarchy-inspired and anarchy-orchestrated movement which can be helpful not just in analyzing the stages of realization, but also the importance of anarchy creation. Firstly, I will explore the methods used to create the movement and subsequent OWS community. Secondly, I will address the aim of the movement. Thirdly, I will gauge whether the movement was successful. And lastly, I will explore whether, moving forward, OWS might allow room for compromise and what next steps for the movement might entail.

A key component of OWS is that it operated by consensus, whereby "a group does not vote, it works to create compromise, or even better, a creative synthesis that

everyone can accept" (Graeber, 2013, 52). The first step, deciding to create a General Assembly, and consequently tabling the question of particular demands, was essential to the process and remainder of OWS, avoiding top-down and prescriptive organizing. The movement was often ridiculed for the refusal to create a leadership structure, and its rejection to delineate concrete policy statements; Graeber explains these critiques are two ways of asking the same question, "why don't we engage with the existing political structure as to ultimately become a part of it (2013, 88)? Instead, the movement formed numerous breakout groups, a model referred to as horizontal, whereby a larger group forms working groups dedicated to different facets of a movement (Graeber, 2013 33). Later, the decision was made to occupy Zuccotti Park on the basis that it was close to Wall Street, accessible, public, and visible. The park hosted thousands, and "a community began to emerge, with a library and a kitchen and free medical clinic, live stream video teams, arts and entertainment committees, sanitation squads, and so on… General Assemblies were held every day at 3 P.M" (Graeber, 2013, 53). Numerous camps began appearing around America, endeavouring to create consensus based direct democracy and General Assemblies to suit their own unique communities. Graeber notes, "a genuine grassroots movement for economic justice had emerged in America… of democratic contagion (2013, 53). Crucial to understanding the power of the General Assembly was that the General Assembly was the messaged itself; it was an open form for people to talk about problems and propose solutions outside of the existing framework, utilizing direct democracy.

OWS aimed to open up the radical imagination, with the belief that "once people's political horizons have been broadened, the change is permanent" (Graber, 2013,

xix). The movement, similar to other anarchist actions, centers on "prefigurative politics—an approach to social change focused on movement forms and practices which 'prefigure' in the here and now the qualities desired in the good society" (van Gelder, 2011, 735). Prefigurative politics, or what Graeber refers to as small-a anarchism, is fundamentally practical in nature, utilizing direct democracy, wherein people collectively act in creating the society they want to live in, while rejecting the idea that it is necessary for politicians or elites to make decisions for us (Taylor, 2013, 739). OWS "sought to carve out space, both figuratively and literally, where a new form of politics could be practiced and modeled" (Taylor, 2013, 738). Graeber (2013) suggests that the seizing of space is moral, psychological, and physical. This model is often referred to as a dual power strategy, similar to the TAZ, in which the aim is to create liberated zones outside of "existing political, legal, and economic order, on the principle that that order is irredeemably corrupt. It is a space that operates, to what extent is possible, outside the apparatus of government" (Graeber, 2013, 259). Lastly, though there have been accusations made that OWS was disorganized and contradictory in its fundamental purpose, Graeber suggests that the "ultimate aim would be to create local assemblies in every town and neighbourhood, as well as networks of occupied dwellings… that can become foundations of an alternative economic and political system" (2013, 261). Graeber emphasizes,

> "for small-a anarchists… that is, the sort willing to work in broad coalitions as long as they work on horizontal principles- this is what we'd always dreamed… the experience of watching a group… making collective decisions without a leadership structure, motivated only by principle and solidarity, can change one's most fundamental assumption about what politics, or for that matter, human life, could actually be like" (2013, 89).

Some key components, lending to the success of OWS, was the media's choice to acknowledge and take seriously the protests, in conjunction with OWS's decision to engage in non-violent protest, so that the media could not paint the movement in a negative manner. Moreover, the international context was crucial, in that similar occupations began to engage and mobilize. Graeber suggests "economic polarization is now a common threat to us all" (2013, 63), and the genuine interest to fight back became widespread. Lastly, the movement was perhaps successful because it refused to seek some "immediate, pragmatic solution… [it] refused to appeal directly to existing political institutions at all… clearly, the movement did not succeed despite the anarchist element. It succeeded because of it (Graeber, 2013, 87).

Was the movement in fact successful? Graeber maintains, "when we talk about process, what we're really talking about is the gradual creation of a culture of democracy" (2013, 196). Though the movement was ultimately fleeting, it is important to remember, "in social movement terms, a single year is nothing. Movements that aim for immediate, legislative goals tend to flicker quickly in and out of existence" (Graeber, 2013, 149), unless the immediate goal is part of a longer-term, carefully crafted overall transition plan. Moreover, in contemplating the success of OWS, Wallerstein suggests that defining revolution contemporarily, may mean "transformations of political common sense" (cited in Graeber, 2013, 280). Conversely, however, it is important not to glorify the movement, as it was not without faults and limitations. For example, the General Assemblies employed throughout the movement were frequently about the logistics of occupying, and often sounded like "long house meetings punctuated with political slogans… the length and efficiency… engendered high rates of attrition and burnout" (Taylor, 2013,

739). Another problem with the General Assemblies, though admirable in tending to collective and pragmatic concerns of camps, was the loss of broader questions of, "vision, goals, and strategy" (Taylor, 2013, 740). Prefigurative movements often conflate tactic with strategy, and this affects their ability to create broader social movements with longevity.

In moving forward, Graeber asks how this space might be reopened (2013, 259). What might another parallel strategy look like for OWS, one that does engage with the existing political structure? Graeber, though initially skeptical of the state, suggests this engagement could help foster and develop direct democracy, by recommending one or more constitutional amendments. The first amendment, Graeber suggests, would be eliminating money from political campaigns, and the second, an abolition of corporate personhood (2013, 264). Moreover, he suggests that strengthening OWS, or a similar future movement, would be dependent on building additional and improved alliances, in order to build the movement up and out. However, he suggests the inherent structure of the movement would have to remain horizontal in order to honour its anarchist orchestration (Graeber, 2013, 260). Taylor highlights the gap that exits between the radical democracy of the TAZ and the social services and community organizations that have utilized closer relations with local government and business. What might a renewed urban politics offer in terms of a space that exists in-between tactics and politics (Taylor, 2013, 742)?

Contrary to stringent offenses made against the state, Alinsky was committed to a more pragmatic approach to community organizing and social change. He suggested we should "begin where the world is if we are going to change it to what we think it should

be. That means working in the system" (Alinksy, 1971, xx). In "Rules for Radicals" (1971), he does not discuss anarchy at any great length, though I imagine he might take issue with no authority, ruler, or hierarchy as a starting point, as this is not the current structure in which we live. Instead, Alinksy shares his admiration for compromise within the realm of community organizing, submitting "a society devoid of compromise is totalitarian" (Alinsky, 1971, 59), and "I want to believe in radical change, chaos, anarchy, alternatives… but I also want to see change that can happen now, pragmatically… and that seems to me, to mean compromise" (Alinsky, 1971, 59). Saul and Curtis highlight that some radical non-profit groups view government funding as inherently corrupt, but similar to Alinsky's views on compromise and the pragmatics of organizing, opt for more practical techniques, remaining critical in their approach to procuring funding, but recognizing the necessity of a well-funded organization. They suggest "the reality is, the revolution is not easily funded… nonprofit corporations must be cautious and vigilant, asking themselves from whom they accept money, and if by doing so they are undermining their own longer term goals of social change" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, 239). Importantly, "private money… can also be vulnerable" (2013, 232) and thus Saul and Curtis advocate what they call a biodiversity of funding, securing funding from numerous different sources, and remaining conscious and critical of where funding is coming form. Moreover, it is imperative to remember that "funding comes with strings attached… grants tend to be very perspective, representing the politics and direction of the party in power… overreliance on government money can result in a certain sleepiness of an organization" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, 231). In all of the interviews I conducted, the theme of funding was mentioned as a major boundary.

There's so much potential… all of a sudden you come up against the funding wall… it's such an ugly topic, but it's such a real thing… that's a big focus of staff at any of these organizations… it takes away from time spent with community members and on programs. It's stressful. If some of that was alleviated, who knows what we would see. The quality and quantity of programs would go up. We need ongoing core funding… [it's] definitely a big one in our ability to scale up the model, and it limits that (Manager, Interview, CFCC).

The hard boundary, of course, is money… it's having to make difficult decisions... We work on a very tight budget, so it would be nice to be able to breathe a little bit… it would be nice to be able to offer our members more opportunities for skill development. That would be ideal for us… Stuff is happening. It's really really happening… I'd like to see more of that happening though (Mandy, Food Programming, Interview, PARC).

Funding is always… you just never stop. I've worked in many sectors doing fundraising, and this is definitely the hardest, but for sure the most rewarding (A Director, Interview, The Stop Community Food Centre)

Funding is one of the main ones… all of the other things I can think of come from funding, even indirectly, like offering staff permanent positions and job security… [it] ultimately impacts the kinds of programs you can have in the communities you're working with (Yara, Evaluation Coordinator, Interview, Foodshare).

We have a lot of staff members that are doing [work] outside of their job requirement… in terms of budget… some of these people need to get paid. No one has really asked for a paycheck… I don't really want to ask too much of people, it's exhausting (Antonio, Good Food Market Hub Animator, Interview, RFWG).

The necessity of funding to operate is evident. Sometimes that funding comes from the state and sometimes it comes from corporate, private, or individual donors; it can have strings attached, agendas, or hidden missions. Regardless, funding is certainly a boundary to organizing within community spaces. I parallel thoughts on the pragmatics of organizing within the state; though I want to see radical change devoid of hierarchy, hegemony and the prescriptive qualities of funding with strings-attached, I recognize both the reality and merit of inside approaches. To discount the value of inside-outside approaches seems unfounded, even if they often operate within dominant constructs (Miller, 2008, 126). It is important we recognize the accomplishments of the community development model, which utilizes a consensus building method, often operating within

systemic and structural constructs that rely on partnerships with the state and the provisions of services, (Shragge, 2013). Simultaneously, it is important to remain critical of existing funding, operation, and protocols, while not merely relying on the provision of services and integration of change within state boundaries; we must dream big and create long-term visions. The job of the community organizer is to work with pragmatics, concretely, but also to build alternative visions, and shift power, as "both pragmatism and vision are necessary" (Shragge, 2013, 3).

Think Global, Act Local? Contesting the Myth of Local Organizing Inadequacy

Evidently, community organizing fundamentally operates on a local scale. Thus, critiques commonly underscore their supposed inability to construct broad-based and progressive social change in opposition to dominant and increasingly global systemic constructs. While local objectives are laudable, it is not clear that these approaches address the structural issues of poverty (Johnston and Baker, 2004, 314). Johnston and Baker suggest that for community food security (CFS) programs to attain more credibility as an alternative to the current industrial food system, they must be able to reach a larger number of marginalized peoples, or jeopardize being labeled a luxury channel of food distribution that is only accessible to a small portion of the population. In order to have a larger impact, CFS initiatives must "scale out to other localities and households, but they must also scale up to address structural concerns like state capacity… and the unequal distribution of wealth at the national and global scale" (Johnston and Baker, 2004, 314). This process of scaling out will require examining the significance of the state as an intermediate scale of struggle (Johnston and Baker, 2004, 315). Hinrichs recognizes that "questions of the global and the local scale in particular, are frequently treated as static

ontological entities and as polar opposites, with little understanding of their interrelations or social constructions (cited in Johnston and Baker, 2004, 314). This dichotomization obscures the junctures between scales, as well as socio-economic processes that make certain scales more prominent than others (Johnston and Baker, 2004, 314). Johnston and Baker advocate reconciling how we understand scale, as it is essential to contemplate the relations between scales and start to move in and out, and back and forth between scales (2004).

The Good Food Box (GFB), a program of Foodshare, demonstrates the strengths and limitations of these types of local CFS programs in combatting the current system, the inadequate welfare state, as well as the romanticization of local green entrepreneurialism. The GFB seeks to model an alternative way of distributing food "outside the global industrial food system… promoting local food, commensality, and a community development approach to food procurement" (Johnston and Baker, 2004, 315). It does this by buying directly from local farmers, delivering directly to urban consumers, and enabling a field to table distribution with an alternative to corporate food structures. In "combining community development and popular education approaches, the GFB encourages food consumers to become food citizens with rights and responsibilities" (Welsh and MacRae cited in Johnston and Baker, 2004, 318). In this way, the GFB program stretches food beyond the micro-scale of the individual and home and into the community and municipal realm, while politicizing the domestic level inherent in corporate selling and global trade (Johnston and Baker, 2004, 318).

Similar to other locally rooted CFS projects, the GFB is pragmatically established to build a system of justice, integrity, and democracy; however, it exists within

"structural problems at the national and global scales that are not easily rectified by local efforts" (Johnston and Baker, 2004, 314). Two chief issues of scale are evident barriers for the force of local efforts: firstly, the global scale of the current industrial system and its ability to produce and distribute to consumers relatively cheap food regardless of locality and seasonality, and secondly, the deterioration of the welfare state and social assistance and growing rate of poverty, inequality, and food insecurity, with increasingly unaffordable housing, and structural unemployment, and underemployment (Johnston and Baker, 2004, 314). While scaling out and up would be valuable in creating a larger impact for low-income and marginalized populations most in need, "this manner is not only daunting, but carries the risk that locally rooted programs will transmogrify into large-scale, faceless bureaucracies, disconnected from the local community based roots that made them successful in the first place" (Johnston and Baker, 2004, 314). Thus, the GFB, and similar CFS initiatives that are integrally locally-based, are paradoxical in nature, wherein the success of the model is limited in scale, but seemingly necessarily so. In moving forward, it is increasingly important to pay attention to the role of the state, beyond that of municipal level initiatives and interactions between governance and community-level work, in order that CFS can be more impactful in generating more meaningful structural changes toward food security, democracy, and social justice.

Foodshare is explicit about the role of the municipal government in its programs, such as the GFB, which offered "public legitimacy, finances, and moral support while the organization experimented with different distribution models" (Johnston and Baker, 2004, 320). Former coordinator of the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC), Rod MacRae, recognizes that the dynamic loops between policy and local projects has been integral to

the success of local food security projects in Toronto, wherein a lack of engagement from the municipal realm and policy side weakens the progress of CFS and is certainly missing elsewhere in Canada (cited in Johnston and Baker, 2004, 320). Thus, municipal governance is an important space for political dialogue, "offering a meaningful opening for grassroots political engagement" (Johsnton and Baker, 2004, 320). Notably, Shragge parallels the necessity of moving in and out of scales, suggesting that local and broad-based efforts are symbiotic in nature; signifying broad-based movements cannot operate without local manifestations, and vice versa (2013, 5).

> "without local organizing, agitating, educating, and leadership-building, broader change is impossible- but without "the movement," bigger campaigns, alliances, and collation-building, local organizations cannot contribute to wider social change and can fall into insular activity, whether that is service provision or attempting very limited campaigns and very limited issues" (Shragge, 2013, x).

Throughout my interviews, the ability to build outward, strengthen communications, and construct alliances was recognized as a boundary to creating more meaningful work, while also hindering the ability of small-scale local community movements to scale out to produce larger changes. Interviewees believed that being able to build alliances and work together with other CFCs would be of value to the work they do, making them more impactful. Interviewees stated:

Good communication can be a boundary between us and other organizations in the field, in terms of uniting some of our recourses in order to achieve a higher impact… some disconnect and misconnection happens… why not get together and have a discussion about it? How we can expand our reach, and at the same time learn from each other and get stronger as a movement? …I think we could, by combining efforts, perhaps have something physically that looks more like a food hub… different organizations working side-by-side. In my own opinion, I think this would really fortify building alliances… that would make our impact much wider (Yara, Evaluation Coordinator, Interview, Foodshare).

There's also the potential of us being part of a new food hub project that's in development… that would include a community kitchen space, and educational space,

and growing space, and including that in the plans… to what degree WEFC would be involved in that, we don't know yet, but it would be an amazing contribution to the work we already do here (Susanna, Communications Coordinator, Interview, WEFC).

The other thing, which isn't unique to this kind of work, is improved communications, so we're not inventing the wheel every time... if we can talk to other agencies, and work together… it's a matter or having patience, that's the communication piece, and we're acutely aware of it and making steps forward, but there's a ways to go (Mandy, Food Programming, Interview, PARC).

Community organizing and subsequent progressive social change exist and happen simultaneously, wherein incremental change is enabled through local community organizing efforts. Thus, a chief challenge of community organizing is "keeping one eye on winning local, concrete struggles and the other eye on the broader pictures, building bridges with wider struggles" (Shragge, 2013, xxv) and exercising balance between these two dimensions. Slonit refers to this sort of symbiosis as "place-based globalism" in which "you can have an identity embedded in local circumstances and a role in the global dialogue" (cited in Gibson-Graham, xxi, 2006), an approach emphasizing the necessity of making and remaking a space to interact with ideas, exist and experiment, mobilize locally, and sustain continual work. Starr and Adams highlight the benefits of a decentralized politics that supports the unique context of a community while "drawing on the strengths of many knowledges and social systems" (Starr and Adams, 2003, 41). Oftentimes, it is hard to quantify local work with any certainty. And while often discounted regarding its ability to generate larger structural or broader changes, it is important to acknowledge that local "work is making a difference in [people's] lives every day" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, 193) in that it is "creating an organization that reflects the kind of world we'd like to see" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, 103). Allen contends that "participatory democracy at local levels is absolutely necessary but local politics must be

in addition to, not instead of, national and international politics" (1999, 122). Whereas it is often difficult to grasp the significance of local efforts, Alinsky reminds us that,

> "Much of an organizer's daily work is detail, repetitive and deadly in its monotony. In the totality of things, he is engaged in one small bit. It is as though as an artist he is painting a tiny leaf. It is inevitable that sooner or later he will react with "what am I doing spending my whole life just painting one little leaf? The hell with it, I quit." What keeps him going is blurred vision of a great mural where other artists- organizers- are painting their bits, and each piece is essential to the total" (Alinksy, 1971, 75).

With any organizing movement, as Shragge and Alinksy maintain, the broad-based social movement cannot mobilize or be realized without all the smaller, vital parts that make up the whole. Integral to local movements is that "what [they] do is inextricably intertwined with where [they] do it" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, 246). Thus, measuring "success" solely in terms of connecting to broad-based global social movements is not instinctively desirable. In fact, due to the participatory nature in which community organizations operate, and the empowerment paradigm from which they draw, local organizing efforts necessarily operate within a small-scale community realm. Interviewees express their contentions regarding the ability for the local level work of CFCs to contribute to larger global or broad based social change, and the ways in which these two realms undeniably interact:

Do I think that our local efforts can connect to a larger global initiative? Absolutely. I'm not even going to hesitate on that. If more communities were able to do a multitude of smaller initiatives that took care of their communities, it would be very difficult to ignore or neglect these solutions. These communities are not allowing their frustrations to go unnoticed, they're looking for their own solutions, they're finding partners… they're finding voice and saying this food structure is not accommodating to everybody and it's leaving a lot of us behind. They're finding an alterative market. Traditional structures are moving away from us at a pace that we can't keep up with… if they can't accommodate us then we're going to create our own network. And neighbourhood after neighbourhood, we've begun to find solutions. These are smaller initiatives, but their span is immense (Antonio, Good Food Market Hub Animator, Interview, RFWG).

Yes, I think for sure they have the ability to. There are so many voices on the ground that have direct experience with the actual issues. I think when those voices are activated

they have influence on policy. Right now, we're looking at basic income and we're using all of our voices to push for that. And at CFCC, as a national organization, we're trying to use our platform to push for that (Manager, Interview, CFCC).

While some interviewees trusted the direct correlation between local community efforts and contributions to larger global social movements, a director at The Stop Community Food Centre, expressed contention regarding the current methods being used, though opting to remain optimistic:

I think it's the only way, but I'm not sure, I hesitate because I'm not sure we're doing our best in coordinating… and providing a larger voice and platform. I think we could be doing a better job. I think the setting up of new [community food organizations] is important so that there are places across the country that can have a model with similar outcomes, but what there could be more of is consistency in the actual model… I think we have to put things very clearly to policy makers (A Director, Interview, The Stop Community Food Centre).

Lastly, there was some skepticism surrounding the pathway to actualize this larger broad-based social food movement, and whether the community organization, or frontline operation, is in fact the right realm:

It goes to resources; resources in all these organizations are extremely tight, and there really isn't the ability to be able to go social movements… I don't see it anyway, and we are a fairly large agency… community agencies right now, are influencing real live people that we can put faces to. Here, we are building networks within the community to be able to support one another- that's our focus. In a perfect world, that would be fantastic. We have many members who have gotten engaged in issues, for example, we took them to Put Food in the Budgets' AGM, or some members are involved in housing advocacy, or mental health advocacy, but these are more small, incidental stories and successes… I don't see anecdotal… my experience isn't so much that (Mandy, Food Programming, Interview, PARC).

Regardless of these queries, ranging from pure optimism and belief in the ability for CFCs to connect and create larger global and broad based social movements, or the more cautious mentality regarding method, resources, and individualized scale of operation and purpose, all interviewees were certain of the impact CFCs are making on the local level. Gibson-Graham so articulately suggests, "this emergent imaginary

confounds the timeworn oppositions between global and local, revolution and reform, opposition and experiment, institutional and individual transformation... They now refer to processes that inevitably overlap and intertwine" (2006, xix).

Chapter Five: Primary Research and Personal Accounts: Engaging Stories for Change

Workshop Introduction: Outline & Objectives

I had numerous motives for employing a workshop for my major paper research. The workshop, or "action," to use the language of popular education praxis, captures the theoretical dimensions discussed at length in this paper. The action directly correlates with the goal of community organizing, democratic processes, popular education, and storytelling and ABR, to question systems of exclusion and food insecurity while attempting to create an inclusive space and produce knowledge anew. The workshop gave participants the platform, creative outlet, and space to actually engage in dialogue with other minds and experiential bodies, a physical space and stage that is often not available to them. It also gave them the direction and respectful "safer" space to work through some of the questions they had regarding food issues and their own experiences at the GFM, which we often do not have time to speak about during the day-to-day operations of the market. The focus of the workshop was to capture the process of popular education within the context of a community initiative for food security and empowerment. Here, the terms community members, volunteers, and workshop participants will be used interchangeably, as the volunteers of GFMs are also community members. The specific objectives of the workshop were:

1. To explore what community food organizations (specifically the GFM) do for community member's lives and what community members do for GFMs,

2. To help improve GFM operations,

3. To learn from, and better hear, community members about their experiences and relationships with food-getting, food issues, and community organizing, and

4. To explore what storytelling, increased dialogue, and art can offer community building, thinking about food, and producing new knowledge.

The workshop was organized to address similar themes from the semi-structured interviews undertaken with employees working in community food centres, though the workshop participants, in contrast to the interviewees, were generally of a marginalized or vulnerable population. I did not want to just ask employees of CFCs their thoughts on food security work and exclude the oppressed from the conversation, as I believe food security work should be done with the community involved. The workshop was structured to determine whether the GFM space is meaningful to them, boundaries and challenges to GFM operations, and more meaningful and ideal spaces for CFS work. In this sense, the GFM can be seen as a microcosm for community work and relates to larger questions and contentions regarding the meaning inherent in these spaces.

Similar to Foodshare's GFB program, the GFM demonstrates a laudable local effort, implemented across Toronto, to create a food system in opposition to the dominant corporate one. The GFM allows for an alternative that sits somewhat outside the system and includes low-income populations that are often unable to participate in mainstream forms of food-getting. The GFM does not only promote food security for marginalized

and vulnerable communities, but focuses on local produce, sustainable food procurement, food education, and community building, and works to alleviate social isolation. Moreover, through education and politicizing food issues, the GFM works to increase food democracy and empowerment, for both community members and particularly its volunteers. However, the GFM is not without contention, and questions arise as to whether this alternative plays a role in combatting any larger structural and systemic problems inherent in the current food and social system. Johnston and Baker, aware of the divergences inherent in the GFB program, might suggest that this program too, would have to scale up and out to have a greater impact. This would mean that it would scale out to reach a larger population of marginalized and vulnerable people and scale up to address policy changes and structural and systemic issues that create oppressions, food insecurity, and exclusion. Johnston and Baker are careful not to romanticize these local community efforts, recognizing their shortcoming; but they understand the risk in scaling up, wary of the possibility that community rooted initiatives might morph into disconnected, tightly controlled government operations (2004, 314). Thus, it seems worth contemplating how GFMs might operate inside-outside the state, and the merits of such expansions.

I wonder how GFMs embody aspects of TAZ, or might move toward such embodiments. As discussed above, TAZ is a sociopolitical method that evades the formal and dominant capitalist structure, while refusing to merely wait for revolutionary "moments" to occur. A GFM is a non-profit initiative to increase access to healthy food, particularly in low-income communities, while creating a public space for "socialization, volunteerism, and celebration" (Foodshare Toronto, 5). GFMs not only improve food

security, but also aid in the creation of space for education and dialogue (Foodshare Toronto, 5). GFMs counter the industrial agricultural system in numerous ways, by operating as a non-profit, and thus not treating food as merely a commodity. Often, shoppers at the GFM are able to buy food near cost, while FoodShare and its funders effectively absorb a certain percentage of the price. This brings up questions about whether this space truly qualifies as TAZ; nevertheless, such inquiries reveal important pros and cons about the orchestrations of this space. Though the GFM does operate to some degree with the support of the state and relies on funders, its economic relationships could be considered alternative to the dominant construction. Miller suggests that the existence of such alternatives makes a very fundamental statement about the dominant ideology, indicating "it is not the only way, that economic systems are multiple and diverse" (2008, 68). GFMs are also noteworthy in that they attempt to organize space in a way that is collaborative, community-based, and inclusive, dependent on the capacities and capabilities of all community members and not based on role, status, and existing hierarchies. Whereas marginalization and stigmatization exist within societal constructs, specifically in relation to those who suffer from multiple vulnerabilities, the GFM strives to create a space free of, or outside of, these constructs, in which all are welcome to volunteer, shop, and exchange dialogue. Miller points out that food security initiatives are not exactly non-economic, that is, they often operate inside dominant economic relations with funding and assistance from the state, and this is often true of GFMs. However, to discount these initiatives, or to deem them unimportant alternatives, would be to refute their meaning. Thus, there are certain constituents within the GFM that demonstrate the TAZ, namely that it constructs an economic alternative outside of

capitalist profit and progress, while demanding food as relationships rather than commodity; However, due to the GFMs connection with the state, external funding, and dependence on existing structures, it is unclear whether this could truly "count" as TAZ in accordance with Bey's distinguishing features. More exploration is warranted including whether it fits the notion of uprising or how this space could move toward embodying TAZ more stringently, and whether this embodiment of TAZ would be desirable within the GFMs organizational context.

Though disputes regarding the locally-rooted structure, and the inside-outside realm of GFMs are pertinent, the stories told by participants are largely reflective of their experiential and personal understanding of spaces for food systems change, adding another criteria in contemplating the meaning of community food security spaces. The stories told by participants disclose their involvement in the RFWG and GFMs, experiences in community building and community relationships, promises, challenges, and frustrations of community organizing, and individual empowerment. Their observations embody several positive themes, despite the grave and overwhelming issue of food insecurity, marginalization, and exclusion. The stories told suggest a wide range of ideas and relations with food: family and kinship relations, community and inclusivity, eating together, gardening and farming; food systems and industrialized agriculture; accessibility, and enjoying and loving food. In an attempt to let these stories shine, while being conscious of colonizing the voices present with categorization or clarification, my intention is to leave the stories told by participants as whole as possible, allowing them to stand alone.

What follows are the stories of participants organized by particular workshop activity and with some interjections indicating thematic relevance. I will share reflections on the workshop as well as on my own position as a facilitator. Lastly, in the concluding section, I speak to my position in the RFWG, zooming out from a mere reflection of the workshop; this reflection will be relevant not only to major themes discussed by participants of the workshop, but also to those woven throughout this major research paper.

Community Food Stories: A Communal Arts-Based Workshop Production

I developed a workshop template based on three main activities or themes: generative images, oral-story sharing and meaning, and visioning beyond boundaries. I then had workshop participants reflect on their experiences, namely, they shared their thoughts on the use of art to discuss food. For generative images, participants were to arrange themselves in small groups and select a food-related image that resonated with them. Once in small groups, participants were to exchange stories and write down major themes or thoughts on sticky notes. After small group discussions, we returned to the larger group where the small groups shared their thoughts and themes, often branching out into larger group discussions on said themes. The idea behind this activity was to share personal experiences and develop dialogue about food-getting; it also ended up being integral to larger discussions about the contemporary food system wherein workshop participants, with very little interjection from myself, questioned, discussed, and exchanged knowledge and stories regarding their personal and political stance on the food system.

Richie and Jacky chose an image of irrigation for tomatoes, from which they shared some of their discussion with the larger workshop group:

We were talking about back home. He was talking about Barbados and I was talking about Ecuador, and how it reminded us of how people buy in a small community. People often get the food from their backyard, or go to the market. There was no such thing as going to a supermarket; my parents really didn't. It was mainly going to the market (Jacky, South Riverdale).

And you'd just interact with people you'd see regularly, instead of government and private institutions, you'd just ask people their opinion, or you'd trade beef for vegetables or something like that, that's what we'd do in Barbados. It was about interactions (Richie, Eastview).

Richie and Jacky likely decided on this image because it resonated with them; they shared a common experience both having grown up in a country in which their food-getting experience was quite different than in Canada. Their stories emphasized the every-day quality of growing your own food, shopping at a local market, and the pivotal interactions inherent in this relationship of getting food. Richie also contrasted this experience with the current Canadian context, in which food-getting is delegated to the government and private realm. It seemed to me that Richie was describing his experiences in Barbados as more of a community realm, in which food-getting is based on barter and interaction rather than formal economy.

Laura, Ann, and Neeka chose three different images: cans on a conveyer belt, an image of a family at a dinner table, and an image of a Metro Grocery store:

It's basically Sunday night dinner, or like mom cooking Christmas dinner. It's like the structured family. Or, it could also be a big needy family, and it takes a lot of money to feed them… The cans in this picture are like the food bank. It probably came from Metro at some point… we made a story. But however you look at it, it'll be how you perceive it, right? It's all about how you want to perceive this and what your experiences are (Laura, Eastview).

After asking if it was okay, Laura, Ann, and Neeka decided they wanted to link three images together to create a story. The group initially painted a picture of a happy family at the dinner table eating together, and then said perhaps it is actually a big needy family that must supplement their family meal by utilizing food bank services. Evident in this discussion was the group's ability to perceive food stories in multiple ways, understanding that people have different stories depending on their experience and knowledge.

Andrew, Sherri, and Jennifer chose a picture of an industrial poultry farm, and shared the following thoughts, which then opened up a larger discussion with the rest of the workshop participants:

I normally eat chicken and fish. Looking at this, it looks cruel, dirty… I don't really want to eat chicken anymore. And it changes minds, pictures like these. It has a big effect. It makes me feel guilty now. Seeing stuff like that… it's reality. It's reality that we have choices to make (Sherri, South Riverdale).

There's certain foods, chicken being one of them, where when we eat them, we feel guilty. This is a choice. This doesn't have to be like this, the way we treat chickens and the way we eat; we can choose otherwise. It's making it difficult to enjoy the things we want to enjoy (Andrew, Riverside).

Do you think it's because our population is so big now, that that's why we're growing chickens like this? When my mom came from the Caribbean Islands, we just had chickens in the backyard. But there are so many rules now. The chickens don't even taste the same anymore because of how they're grown (Ann, Eastview).

Because our population has grown so rapidly… we have a tendency now to steroid feed our animals… we just have to keep up (Laura, Eastview).

Ya, everything has been industrialized. Things have to be produced (Richie, Eastview).

Evident in this discussion, which began as a somewhat simple question regarding where the poultry come from, is a deeper query about the moral implications of eating poultry from a factory farm, and the ways the contemporary food system has

industrialized and shifted from earlier ways of growing food, for example, as Ann brought up, backyard chickens in the Caribbean. The stories elicited a certain amount of guilt and moral concern about consumption choices. This image, and the themes and stories derived from it, enabled a multi-faceted dialogue about food issues that was not only personal, but also political and pertinent to present food systems thinking. Workshops participants were eager to offer their own stories, as well as add information and knowledge to other stories.

Claire and Jacky chose a picture of fast food, from which they shared their themes and stories. This quickly sparked a larger discussion about health, food waste, food access, and alternatives. The following is a conversation between workshop participants:

I have the happy food here. Pizza, hot dogs, hamburgers, fries, onion rings. It's easy to make; it's not hard. Stick it in the oven and it's done. But there's also bad things about it. It's pretty greasy, it's fatty, you can eat it anywhere, including the subway, you can take it on the go, there's so much variety, and it makes you gain a lot of weight (Claire, Eastview).

You can die from it eventually (Neeka, Eastview).

Do you know long and how many resources it takes to produce a single hamburger? It takes a hell of a lot of actual production to feed the animals, and it's very expensive. Way more than to do something like this [holds up an image of a pastoral farm] (Richie, Eastview).

But it's too expensive; that food is too expensive [in conversation with the image of the pastoral farm] (Neeka, Eastview).

I think I want to cut down on eating chicken… I can't think of a good way to eat it (Jennifer, South Riverdale).

I know from living on a farm, that food is a lot fresher than what you get in the grocery store, and the price is very practical. You just have to buy it in a bigger quantity. At the end of the day, we are still killing animals and eating it. But maybe there's a better way. So it's just something to think about (Laura, Eastview).

We might be aware of these issues and we want to change how we eat, but sometimes we can't. And you're stuck in that position. You know about it and wish you could eat better. Maybe there's nowhere around, or no food you can buy (Jacky, South Riverdale).

Sometimes you can find it, but it's way too expensive (Sherri, South Riverdale).

My son goes to school and he'll eat lunch every day, but it's way cheaper to get a supreme fries as opposed to a salad. Is it healthy? No, it's not. But to eat healthy is way more expensive. It's not going to fill him up (Laura, Eastview).

Plus, in Toronto, we're building all these buildings, but where are we going to grow all of our fruits and vegetables? (Ann, Eastview).

There's so much free territory and vacant lots… but sometimes people can't envision using them (Richie, Eastview).

At this point, workshop participants had warmed up. Having discussed some groups' images and themes, participants were eager to consider a multiplicity of themes, offer stories, and debate. The primary theme inherent in this discussion was that of poor health as a consequence of food insecurity. Workshop participants acknowledged that, often times, options are limited, and while eating "happy food" is not ideal, food is often too expensive and not accessible. While participants are cognizant of the harm of unhealthy food, they felt unable to make the changes necessary due to financial, social, or geographical position and existing structural problems. Before we took a break, there was some discussion about urban agriculture to grow more healthy food, but there was no discussion about whether this food would be more accessible or affordable, and there was some concern that the rate of building and gentrification in Toronto would overpower the will to utilize vacant lots and green space to grow food. However, evident in this activity, was respectful and contemplative dialogue about how and why food-getting is particularly challenging for marginalized people. The groups' stories discerned themes of locality and scale, personal as political, consumer choice and guilt, poor health, precarious food, and potential alternatives.

For the oral-story sharing and meaning activity, I asked participants one question, "what is the best thing that happened to you at the GFM?" to spark discussion regarding how this initiative, or this space, holds meaning for people's lives.

Well, I got to spend time with Ann, and we went to the same high school together, but we didn't know each other until we met at Eastview a couple years ago, and then we found out we had mutual friends and we reconnected. It's really about reconnecting, plus, present company (Richie, Eastview).

I just found it's helped me to learn how to talk people, and gave me better people skills. It helped me with that. I hadn't used those skills in a long time. I didn't work in a long time so it brought that back (Sherri, South Riverdale).

One of my favourites, I haven't eaten plums in close to ten years, and this Wednesday we had huge local plums, and I ate one at the market. I always get to eat new things while being around my friends (Ann, South Riverdale).

My favourite part of the market is that my daughter found other people to interact with… she loves them (Claire, South Riverdale).

The best thing… to be in a position and be useful, where people can share their stories with me. To be in a position to be available in a neighbourhood that I didn't think I was very close with to begin with (Andrew, Ralph Thornton)

The main pattern, similar to that distinguished via my interviews, is that meaning within these spaces is largely derived by relationships and a more rounded understanding of CFS initiatives than that outlined by merely food-getting. Indicated by workshop participants' responses, the market offers a space for support and interaction, wherein building community connections, sharing resources, and offering a place to talk is perhaps just as important as getting affordable and healthy food. The stories told by workshop participants were all in this vein, echoing a lot of the interviewees notions that CFCs allow for a supportive space largely free of stigma and marginalization, it makes sense then, that within these space, friendships and ties build that might otherwise be missing in the isolation of other societal realms, and this ends up constituting meaning for community members regularly involved in the GFM initiative.

Lastly, the visioning beyond barriers activity was prefaced by the question "What's one thing at the GFM you'd like to see happen that is currently missing for you?" which sparked extensive dialogue not only about what people would like to see at the GFM, but also about the current challenges in the space and barriers to doing more meaningful work at the GFM.

It should last longer… we still harvest stuff later in the season (Ann, Eastview).

Let's start the market earlier and end it later (Claire, Eastview).

It's still cheaper in the fall, and it would be feasible for families then to come out to get healthy food (Laura, Eastview).

People's struggling doesn't end… people's frustrations and fears don't just go away (Andrew, Riverside).

Ya, those concerns go on all year (Richie, Eastview).

It would be easier for people to come to the market in October than to have to travel and walk so far to find food (Ann, Eastview).

The first theme workshop participants discussed was their desire to extend the market season, while bringing up multiple relevant issues of food access: cheaper food more proximate than grocery stores, and healthy produce. Workshop participants also noted that it was unfair or arbitrary that the market did not extend beyond the summer season, as people's struggle to obtain affordable and healthy food does not just go away when the market ends. For that reason, one of their main visions for the GFMs was to extend the season.

I think also, we should try and make things at the market, like food samples and meals. But for us to make it, not somebody else… for example, Neeka and me could make a dish one week. So it's us deciding what is made (Claire, Eastview).

Increased food skills for volunteers (Jacky, South Riverdale).

Just more things to do at the market, like arts stuff (Ann, Eastview).

And we had a corn roast and made corn people, more of that (Sherri, South Riverdale).

Workshop participants envision a market space that is more animated, one that not only has more things to do, such as art activities, a corn roast, and food samples, but activities that they themselves can facilitate and participate in. This is incredibly valuable, not only in having a more animated space that lends itself to community building, but also in empowering volunteers to take on tasks and improve skills at the GFM. In my experience animating the GFM space, it does not necessarily require copious amounts of funds, but more hands and ongoing energy and commitment. The basic operation of putting on a market, unpacking food, setting up tables, chairs, putting up a tent, pricing, selling, and so on, requires a lot of facilitation and volunteers; it is also tiring work and volunteers are asked to do a lot week after week. Thus, any extra activities, while ideal, are secondary.

We should have more young people participating and actually coming out, and actually being visible at the market… it's for them. It shows them how to interact, how to spend money, and how to eat well (Richie, Eastview).

Young people are the future. If you think about it, they need experience and they can't get hired these days without so much experience. They could put this on their resume. By having young people work at the market, they could build experience and learn so much (Claire, Eastview).

We have a lot of low-income people come out, I'm not trying to stereotype here, but it gives our kids the chance, and the skills… just to give them the opportunity to see how it goes for them (Laura, Eastview).

And sometimes when you get kids in on it, they can speak more easily to their peers about these issues and about health, and it's important to get that attitude and that mentality out there (Andrew, Riverside).

Workshop participants seemed incredibly interested in seeing more young people volunteer at the GFMs, where volunteers are 40 and older. Though this is not something I accounted for in my research, and my work does not focus on youth, although it is

certainly relevant to issues of food security, education, and community building and empowerment. I was not particularly aware of this vision for the GFMs as it has not been of particular interest at SRGFM, where I coordinate. Workshop participants seemed adamant on getting the point across, that young people would not only add an interesting dynamic and fresh eyes, but it is also crucial for them to learn how to eat healthily, interact with others, gain experience and skills, and also influence other community members on the importance of these types of initiatives.

I think that we should do fundraising… we used to do that, and I don't know what happened to that. I think for us, it's good to have a car wash, a bake sale, sell items we don't want at home anymore. There's some us that really showed up every week and we want this. That's what we should do. We have to extend the season and help people out more in the community (Laura, Eastview).

Maybe we should make a petition… because everybody keeps saying no when we want to make things happen (Neeka, Eastview)

The amount of things I've been shut down on is infuriating… we're being told no. It's absolutely frustrating (Andrew, Riverside)

Lastly, workshop participants had a desire to do fundraising for the GFMs, again, namely with the intention of extending the market season. The idea behind fundraising was that the volunteers work hard and want to take care of the community. This dialogue also brought up difficult previous defeats, when attempts to fundraise or try new things at the market had been dismissed, and workshop participants shared their frustrations regarding this.

Before concluding the workshop, I had participants reflect on their experience. The activity, called heads, hearts, hands/ feet, included numerous reflection questions regarding the process and facilitation of the workshop; most pertinent to the workshop

objectives, however, was gauging how workshop participants felt about using storytelling, dialogue, and art to think about food issues and community organizing.

I feel art allows us to open up and share our stories with others (Jacky, South Riverdale).

It seems like [stories and art] free up everyone's imagination, and it's a more comfortable way of interacting with people and coming up with new ideas (Richie, Eastview).

I believe that we got to step out of our zone, you know, everybody has their own thing and different qualities; I believe that we got to step out through drawing and painting (Laura, Eastview).

I enjoyed this workshop so much; everybody was so willing to communicate with each other. Using stories and art is so positive in helping you to think not only about what you're eating, but also about how you can actually change it (Jennifer, South Riverdale).

For me, I have difficulties writing, art has always been a great way or another means to express when you have difficulty writing or speaking. It's also a good way to be honest with people or yourself. It doesn't even have to be understood by others (Andrew, Ralph Thornton).

Reflections on the Workshop and Facilitation: Process, Time, Position, and Play

One of the most insightful things I learned from the workshop is derived of process, from planning to the day of facilitating the workshop. I have learned to never expect a certain outcome. Prior to the workshop, I set out my theory, objectives, and template, expecting to hear certain stories from the workshop participants and having anxiety about how the day might unfold. Acknowledging that most GFM volunteers struggle with issues of food insecurity, marginalization, and stigmatization, and some suffer from mental illness and drug addiction, I anticipated certain difficulties or triggers, and was worried this might affect the outcome of the workshop or make for a difficult space. Academia is incredibly outcome driven, from picking courses, to planning paper outlines, to concluding the research and writing the final paper. This outcome-based focus is certainly not the case in a facilitation space in which popular education and

organizing is to flourish. I feel I put an unnecessary amount of pressure on myself leading up to the workshop, hoping I would attain the "right" objectives and "good enough" outcomes that would work seamlessly into my paper, and hearing stories from workshop participants that confirmed my hypothesis and fit nicely into the theory. After the workshop, I felt especially confused and struggled with how I would present my findings. Would I edit the stories? Should I have asked heavier questions about the weight of these political and systemic issues? Could I organize stories differently? Could I interject and summarize? Ultimately however, I did not change my research plan and certainly did not edit the stories, as I do not believe that is ethically permissible. However, I did decide, to utilize these findings, contentions, and confusions within this reflection section. One of the most useful tools within popular education is the ability to reflect on theory and action. Without this ability to reflect, I believe popular education would render inadequate in education and community organizing. I recognize that academia does need to attain an outcome that lends itself to feasible change and social justice efforts. However, it is worth contemplating to what extent this outcome-based mentality tarnishes process-based research and social justice work, especially when working with vulnerable groups, and to what degree outcomes can be secondary to process.

Though the workshop offered participants a space to tell their stories and exchange dialogue, the "action" component of the workshop (that is, action beyond dialogue, as I do consider dialogue an action) might be to initiate changes and take steps based on what participants said and envisioned. For example, they might raise funds, extend the market season, recruit youth into the market operations, and empower

volunteers to take on more activities to animate the space. Though my boss, the Good Food Market Hub Animator, was very willing to hear what participants wanted from the GFM, and is truly an advocate of all these components, the boundaries around funding are persistent. I firmly believe that the insight offered by workshop participants, all having volunteered at the market between one and four years, is incredibly valuable. Their attention to what on-the-ground procedures and activities need to change, and what is working well, allows for a first-hand vantage point on GFM operations. Additionally, there is a degree of understanding regarding how the larger operations work, in regard to the community centres orchestration, policy boundaries, grant writing, and funding. Unfortunately, it is difficult sometimes to explain how hard it is to change these things, how tirelessly everybody is working, or how difficult it is to assure funding. Thus, a certain degree of defeat remains in terms of what can come of this workshop. Consequently, I maintain that the workshop allowed for a constructive process-based instance of dialogue and storytelling, but fell short of an actionable plan, at least thus far. Perhaps if the workshop was done over multiple days, throughout the GFM season, it could have yielded actionable results and more resources for change. That being said, I do think that it is impactful for participants and community members to take part in these types of workshops, to work through their own queries regarding the food system and engage in dialogue with others who might have some of the same experiences, while imagining and creating what could be.

In regard to setbacks or limitations, time management was a challenge. When participants show up at different times, or have to leave at different times, it creates difficulties with the schedule. However, I also recognize that workshop participants may

have prior commitments, and for whatever reason, might not be able to commit to the full workshop yet still want to attend. Popular education emphasizes that the agenda start on time, respecting all who attend, that the schedule remain fully visible, while still allowing for fluctuation and fluidity. I was able to uphold this commitment only some of the time. With the challenge of managing time, I feel the workshop may have suffered. For that reason, some activities were a little rushed, while others could have been allotted more time. Though this was not a huge detriment in the end, and the workshops participants probably did not notice, I wonder how I might both keep time and communicate time better in future workshops.

Another reflection is on my positionality within the workshop and how this position affected the type of space. As mentioned previously, locating my position is complex as there are numerous privileges and disadvantages occurring simultaneously. However, in this context, my privileges, and the fact that I have not experienced food insecurity or grave amounts of societal isolation, put me in the dominant culture. At certain points, I found myself repeating what participants said, asking more questions about particular stories, or restating what participants said in different wording. Upon reflection, I wonder if that was useful for participants and myself, or if perhaps my efforts aided in colonizing or changing what participants truly meant in their original telling. I also question whether I was a good listener, or if perhaps I was always seeking something while listening, which is a complex action that encompasses numerous dynamics. Pertinent to the notion of good listening is to know your own position and power in the room, as well as being able to tell your own story. Consequently, on a pragmatic level, I wondered how I could properly position myself and reveal my privilege as to best remain

transparent with workshop participants. Though I did take time to introduce my research, discuss the workshop objectives, go over consent, and talk a bit about my interests, I did not tell my story at any length. Ultimately, I actively made the decision to organize things this way, because the workshop was a short three hours and I wanted the focus to be on workshop participants' telling their stories. In popular education praxis, the emphasis is on community members sharing their own experiences and knowledge, recognizing that all people are experts of their own lives, and for that reason, I did not find it particularly necessary to spend time establishing my position or lecturing. Ledwith and Springett advocate storytelling to take place "in relations of trust, mutuality, respect, and that dialogue is the basis of this praxis" (108). Thus, I recognize that merely asking others in the community to share their stories, without offering one's own story as facilitator, does not embody a respectful and mutual endeavour. However, I do believe that there are others ways to create relationships and foster dialogue that do not insist on a facilitator telling their story in the same ways participants might. Having worked in the community for three years now, and building relationships within the community over time, I do think I have positioned myself, while honouring transparency and honesty.

Lastly, I hope that going into future workshops and facilitating experiences I will remember to maintain a certain level of playfulness. Though the feedback from workshop participants was overwhelmingly positive, in that participants claimed I was well-spoken, confident, and created a relaxed and inclusive environment, while suggesting the overall experience was educational and well organized, I felt nervous leading up to and during the workshop. I believe playfulness is crucial to any facilitation experience for two reasons. Firstly, for the facilitator, it is important to recognize that

humility and mistake-making are okay. Not only might this make for a more juicy opportunity to reflect, but also it is often not detectable to workshop participants when a facilitator makes an error or mistake. Secondly, workshop participants feed off the energy of the facilitator, and thus, having a calm, positive, and playful energy will fill the room with a constructive ambiance. In a space of flux, flexibility, and experimentation, it is crucial to recognize that not everything will go according to plan; this could mean anything from a marker running out of ink, to the food tasting bad, to forgetting a paint colour, to an unrelated tangent, to a shouting match between participants, to a trigger that causes trauma. However, things could also go smoothly and surprise you in fruitful ways, so remembering to be playful is essential.

My Position in the GFM and Food Security Work more Broadly: Thoughts on Hope and Burnout

It's difficult to hear workshop participants' dialogue about lengthening the market season, recognizing that this extension means not only an increase in access to more affordable and healthy food, but also a space that helps community members break from isolation and maintain healthy relationships built throughout the summer market season. The fact that the GFM is run during the summer, approximately June until mid-September, is, of course, not arbitrary; it is dependent somewhat on weather, and fully on funding. The RFWG's GFMs have been running for four years now, and the duration of the market has always remained relatively the same. Week after week, while coordinating the SRGFM, I'm asked by volunteers and community members alike, when the season is ending, if we've received more funding, and if we are able to extend the season. The truth is, I really don't know. This year, after reading Nick Saul and Andrea Curtis' book **"**The Stop: How The Fight for Good Food Transformed a Community and

Inspired a Movement" (2013), and gaining insight from interviewees at numerous CFCs, I became increasingly aware of the boundaries imposed by funding, and the necessity of procuring it from numerous different sources in order to maintain programming. That's when I asked my boss at RWFG, Antonio, the Good Food Market Hub Animator, why we couldn't just somehow extend the market season. In previous years, we have procured funding from Trillium, but it seemed funding was ever harder to come by. I explained to Antonio my concern about relying on a single funder. What if funding becomes harder to procure? What if our deliverables aren't up to snuff next year? We are a non-profit, after all, which means we are a negative profit, I always say. I went home to write an internal grant of sorts, asking the RFWG, and South Riverdale Community Health Centre (SRCHC), more specifically, to allow us to fundraise and extend the market season. This would be done through individual donors; good ol' fashioned phone calls and door knocking. We were not asking for a paid staff member, or any real assistance from the existing staff. We were simply asking for the space to exist. This would be an experiment of sorts; this would be the community responding.

Antonio and I were excited at this point. He spoke with his manager at the SRCHC who wanted to push this forward, but it seemed slightly out of his hands and not exactly his job. We were all unsure of whom to speak to; something so small and insignificant, demanding such a small amount of money to move forward, is such a big task. The manager said he was interested in meeting with both Antonio and I to identify how this money would be raised and the logical next steps to getting this off the ground. This back and forth went on for about a week, followed by another week of silence. I almost assumed it had been forgotten altogether. At that point, a passionate social worker

at SRCHC heard of our plan to extend the market season. She's an advocate of the GFM and on the steering committee of the RFWG, and she puts in her time strictly out of passion for food issues. She told Antonio and I that there is already about $500.00 that we can use toward the GFM, and this was our target number all along; just enough to keep afloat and account for any loses. She also wanted to look into acquiring some funds to give the volunteers a voucher to shop at the market, though this is something we've always had during the regular market season, a $4.00 voucher for a half shift at the market, and an $8.00 voucher for a whole shift. This money goes a long way given the cost at which we're selling food. Plus, when volunteers already have the expectation of receiving a voucher, and food accessibility is the chief purpose of the initiative, not having the funds to give volunteers a voucher is understandably a barrier to extending the market. Nonetheless, at this time, the conversation concluded that we could have access to the funds. The $500.00 is ours, and the money for the vouchers would be looked into. A week went by and we heard nothing.

It's so hard and tiring. The entire season feels like a cycle of ups and downs due to uncertainty, unpredictability, and understaffing. It's also just a difficult space to facilitate and operate in most of the time. It's such a wave of hope and burnout, of excitement and apathy. The extension of the market is such a small gain that it seems almost silly. I reminded myself for whom this is meaningful. It could be at least another month of affordable food, another month of getting outside, seeing friendly faces, feeling welcome, talking to somebody, and resisting isolation. Things seem to move at a glacial pace sometimes, and though I can't speak to all CFCs or CFS initiatives, my experience at RFWG and SRCHC is that everybody wants it to happen so badly, but we are spread

too thin. Even seemingly small steps, things you might imagine would take an extra hour or a single phone call, are not a priority when there are daily programs to run, services to provide, emergencies to address, meetings to attend, grants to write, advocacy to be done, and self-care. The regular market season ended a couple of weeks ago and it is October now. I'm not yet sure if we will get it up and running again this season, and I know people around me want this to happen. Occasionally, I get upset thinking there are people in different positions than myself who could possibly expedite this initiative and just make it happen, and here I am willing to coordinate and take it off their hands as soon as a I get the go-ahead, and then I am reminded that "an organization that feeds on the passion and idealism of its workers forget[s] that even such individuals have their limits" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, 213). I recognize that this market extension is so meaningful for the volunteers and community members who benefit so much from the space, yet I also acknowledge that those working for and with CFS initiatives are doing the best they can. Alinsky's personal philosophy mirror's my own, and is anchored in optimism, "for optimism brings hope, a future with purpose, and therefore, a will to fight for a better world" (1971, 22). I am hopeful and I am still striving.

Saul and Curtis write "being under-resourced, overworked and overstretched can lead an organization and employees to burnout… preventing them from looking beyond the day-today-grind to fighting conditions that cause poverty and hunger in the first place" 2013, 217) they recognize "there's a whole lot of effort, great work and individual action, but not a lot of tangible systemic transformation" (2013, 217). I recognize this contention, as well as the necessity of putting efforts into larger systemic, structural policy changes. However, I also believe we cannot stop working for smaller gains, certainly not before

we have appropriate systems in place that alleviate food insecurity and social isolation, make the welfare state and social safety net once again more inclusive, and create a living wage. In fighting to extend the GFM, I recognize the micro level of the meaning of this operation, and before acting I always ask myself "to what end?" Will this make a difference? Is this worthwhile? Is this meaningful? Sometimes I am doubtful, and sometimes that doubt lasts longer than I'd like to admit, but my response is always to continue in action. I reiterate Alinsky's understanding of the life of an organizer, "the thought of copping out never stays with him [or her] for more than a fleeting moment; life is action" (1972, 79).

Discussion: Revisiting Food as the Catalyst for Transforming Community… Society? The Role and Meaning of Community Food Spaces

Throughout Toronto, CFCs, food hubs, and food movements are mobilizing to create feasible alternatives to the global food system and associated food insecurity. Those involved with the food movement are hopeful that we can utilize "the power of food to build a better neighbourhood and a better world" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, xviii). Often, questions regarding the meaningfulness and progressive ability of these communities and organizations arise, in recognition of the extensive capitalist agricultural regime (Baker, 2004, 308). The focus has been on the inability of place-based and local food movements to link with larger global movements, or to influence systemic and structural changes, however, Baker emphasizes the local in its ability to create political spaces that engage people in democratic relationships in everyday life, the importance of spaces to come together, share information, expertise, and knowledge (Baker, 2004, 315). The "cult of the individual has become the dominant narrative" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, 97), whereby competition and individual gain have been emphasized

and have prospered. Conversely, Saul and Curtis maintain that mutual support is a chief factor behind CFCs, in which participating in the decisions that affect one's lives are central. These spaces of coming together "illustrate how groups, marginalized from the formal political process, can both produce and contest space" (Baker, 2004, 323). Lang recognizes that, "ultimately, food is both a symptom and a symbol of how we organize ourselves and our societies… from the political perspective, it makes sense to see the dynamics of the food system as titanic struggle between the forces of control and the pressure to democratize" …. "when we succeed in capturing… operations as a process, not a structure, we have succeeded in glimpsing food democracy" (Miller, 208, 176).

While CFS movements have been one such attempt to respond to food insecurity and inadequate short-term "solutions," in that they counter the passive and often demeaning participation in charitable food banks (Tarasuk, 2001, 490), it is difficult to simply qualify the value of these initiatives. CFS originates from a more comprehensive approach to food security, recognizing the fragmented and incoherent visions inherent in the more traditional approaches, while recognizing a prevention-oriented framework that centers on both immediate and long-term food security initiatives (Allen, 1999, 199). Wayne Roberts refers to these food movements as fusion movements, "antipoverty work… intertwined with environmental sustainability and health… Not only about access to food but also about the importance of cultural values and community connectedness" (cited in Saul and Curtis, 2013, 66). CFS is defined as a condition in which residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice (Hamm and Bellows, 2003). Often community food initiatives have the ability to enable or at least supplement food security,

while creating a space of inclusivity and transparency that aids in empowerment (Wakefield, 2007, 333). It is through CFS that people can participate and politicize food issues, recognizing food as a "salient issue for everyone" (Allen, 1999, 120). Food democracy is an "ongoing negotiation, disagreement, and change" (Miller, 2008, 177) that demands "ongoing action- witnessing, speaking, participating- in other words, change driven by hope." In my interviews with organizational leaders, I wanted to find out what interviewees, doing on-the-ground work in community organizing, believed the role of CFCs, or spaces for food organizing, was in supplementing food security in Toronto. In nearly all my interviews, the responses were not merely about supplementing food, though the issue of hunger was crucial. But CFCs were described as much more holistic in nature; and the words of interviewees were ripe with hope and enthusiasm about these spaces. They stated:

The major thing that [community food centres] can give is space… it provides a space that permits [us] to exist, that gives [us] the resources… all these community centres have everything these initiatives wishing to combat food insecurity might require. By giving us land… that's almost the lion's share of the battle, or of the struggle, because now we can activate, now we can decorate it with food, now we can start making relationships with Foodshare of other organizations, and say we have a space where we can put into practice our compassion, our consideration for our neighbourhood. We can be outside and people can see these acts of generosity (Antonio, Good Food Market Hub Animator, Interview, RFWG).

The role of community centres is fundamental… they promote empowerment of community members to take on projects… to believe change comes from the bottom up… there's such a community here… everyone wants to help… with creativity, and with great humour, it's all possible (Yara, Evaluation Facilitator, Interview, Foodshare).

We are the people combating food insecurity in Toronto…I think if it weren't for us we would have much higher levels of food insecurity in Toronto… being a part of this, there obviously is some bias… but it is definitely community agencies feeding the hungry. I don't see government doing this… I think we are at the forefront of this movement… but what's starting to happen, and here especially… it's not just about feeding people, it's about helping them build skills and helping them do what they need to do to feed themselves… to me, food, and the community agencies that are doing this work, and there

are so many doing so many wonderful things, are not just giving nutrients, but they are giving life back… The impact is about building relationships… people feel that they can give back for what they are getting… there's that whole idea about sharing, it's very very powerful. It's very powerful (Mandy, Food Programming, Interview, PARC).

In terms of Community Food Centres we don't so much look at trying to improve food security in itself, in the definition that we are all very familiar, but food insecurity is a product of living in poverty. People living in poverty also face a number of other related issues around social isolation, poor health, not being able to have the resources or time to navigate social services… there are a lot of different factors that come out of living in poverty. That's where the CFC model really tries to pick up the pieces. Its not an issue of food, its an issue of income. We're using food as a way to alleviate some of the other factors that are an outcome of living in poverty… The other role for community organizations is to be the voice for what is happening to people. To be the frontline. To give people the opportunity to speak out. If we could activate some of those voices, to push for changes… there could be quite a big groundswell (Manager, Interview, CFCC).

Baker identifies community food security movements as a site of place-based politics, in which the process of engaging is a challenge to the corporate food system. Baker emphasizes that these spaces foster food citizenship that meets both personal and societal needs, ranging from therapeutic, social opportunities, nutrition supplementation, and environmental sustainability (2004, 308). One such example Baker explores is the Riverside Community Garden, a partnership between Riverside Apartments management company and Greenest City, wherein residents transformed the space in order to beautify the area, grew their own food, engaged in recreational activity, resisted the isolation of living in an apartment building, and engaged in social activity. The management saw this as an investment, for instance, making the space livelier and aesthetically pleasing reduced vandalism, and property maintenance costs went down (Baker, 2004, 321). This demonstrates how marginalized citizens can use their neighbourhood as a means of resistance, both creating and disputing space; it also illustrates the use of gardening and community initiatives to imagine and practice an alternative to the industrial food system through active collective participation.

Community food centres, food hubs, and food movements are "creating opportunities for people in [their] neighbourhood to articulate their needs and begin to fight for their rights" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, 108). Saul and Curtis stress, "the bottom line is: food banking hasn't worked… and it won't solve the problem of hunger" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, 126), maintaining that "only sustained, thoughtful, prevention-focused social and economic policy will build a more equitable society" (Saul and Curtis, 2013, 126). In recognizing his own work at The Stop, Saul acknowledges that he "can't claim community kitchens… are going to end the poverty and hunger of participants, [but] they can definitely help low-income community members eat more healthily, have greater control over their personal circumstances and break out of their isolation" (2013, 74). In this sense, "food is also a catalyst for social change" (Miller, 2008, 10) . In these spaces of community, participants are "using food to talk about politics," to build social relationships, and to take action (Miller, 2008, 13). In my interview with Antonio from RFWG, he echoed this notion of food as a catalyst for change but also as a tool for building relationships and resisting isolating, describing how it is used at the GFM in order to initiate conversation with vulnerable community members. He importantly drew connections between the personal and political way in which we relate to food, and utilize it to relate to other people.

Even on your worst day, you are welcome here, and there's a space for you… I know we sell food, and as important as that is, its on par with all of these other components; it's the opportunity and the excuse to really dig into each others lives and take care of one another and find out the reality that many of us are living… when we gather at the dinner table, the food is just the excuse to hang out with family and friends… it's the vehicle… that allows us to be together (Antonio, Good Food Market Hub, Animator, Interview, RFWG).

Though community food centres may not solve the issue of poverty and hunger, and there is contention about the ability for such organizing to create larger global, structural, or systemic changes, I believe these instances of organizing are easy to qualify; all you have to do is listen to the stories and experiences of people involved and moved by this work. When I asked interviewees whether they believe this work to be meaningful, and how they might define meaningful in this context, their answers and the themes they spoke to were unanimous:

Yes. Meaningful is that participants, members, see improvements in their lives in whatever way they identify as improvements. As an outsider, I can see 100% health improvements- physical and mental- I see improvements in soft and hard skills sets, they are able to communicate better, they have learned tools to move forward… they've gained confidence, increased self esteem, they've built relationships, they feel they were isolated and now as apart of the community… they feel connected and they've built support and made friends… it is so powerful (Mandy, Food Programming, Interview, PARC).

Yes, absolutely it's meaningful. The stories that I hear on the ground are in some cases life changing for somebody. Some people have experienced poverty for so long and have felt the stigma of attending food banks… to have a place people can access, to be treated equally… just trying to establish that people living in low incomes or experiencing poverty are worthy, when there's such a mentality that they don't feel they're worthy, and that is pretty prolific. Even just establishing that is meaningful, and can empower. People deserve more. People deserve to be treated equality (Manager, Interview, CFCC).

We hear over and over how The Stop is like a home to people… when they come here, it may take them a while, they may find meaning right away... but there is meaning beyond just access to food. I think most people we talk to have found meaning. To me, what's meaningful is being able to make some sort of mark beyond what is just access to food (A Director, Interview, The Stop Community Food Centre).

*I find these spaces full of meaning, absolutely- what they mean to this neighbourhood, what they mean to the issue of food security… They can look at this space and know [they're] safe here… [they] can find someone who will talk to [them] about the mundane, or [they] can go here and feel [they] belong to this neighbourhood… some people come up to me and say they feel they don't belong to this planet… and they come to this centre and they remind themselves that maybe they do… and to give anybody who comes here for a moment, or even a day, that you mean something to us… and every time you come here I want to see you as often as we can, and to not hesitate on that… we're going to work as hard as hell to make sure that you can see that (*Antonio, Good Food Market Hub Animator, Interview, RFWG)

Interviewees and workshop participants distinguished parallel notions of meaning, indicating the significance of CFC spaces is found in their ability to connect community members to "something bigger" beyond just providing food security; these spaces provide crucial relationships, inclusion, and empowerment. Listening to the personal account of interviewees and workshops participants parallels Rheault's understanding of knowledge as fundamentally experiential and personal, as he recognizes that subjective ways of knowing cannot be separated from objective ways of knowing, but rather, informs theories of knowledge (1999). In this sense, it is integral to understand that both interviewees and workshops participants' insights define meaningful within the CFS realm. Larger bodies of literature, discerning patterns, best practices, and loftier studies are invaluable. However, the negation of personal accounts that often exists within the public and academic sphere should be reassessed in its ability to blend the "subjective" and "objective" realms (Little and Frogget, 2010), lending warranted insight to literature and outdated notions of "hard data."

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Shortcomings: Main Limitations of Major Research Paper

I recognize two main shortcomings of this work. Firstly, this research addresses one of the key players currently addressing food security, CFCs, while neglecting to address in any great depth the policy structure and policy makers. Admittedly, the challenge here is for CFCs to learn how to better put themselves into policy and decision making systems (MacRae et al, 2012, 9). Due to my focus on contemplating the role of the community-organizing realm, better understanding the meaning inherent in the

community level, and ascertaining the boundaries to optimizing this sphere, I was unable to examine the policy realm, boundaries to the current policy structure, and existing issues within food policy in Canada. I do recognize, however, that these domains are inextricably co-dependent in creating more meaningful food security work, and it is my belief that working to optimize only one of these spheres is ultimately shortsighted. The second principal limitation of this research is what popular education can deliver in the change process. For example, in the case of the PFC, popular education offered a remarkable instance of process-based organizing, bringing diverse voices to the table, enabling dialogue, discerning complex and entire issues, and aiding in empowerment for those individuals involved. Nonetheless, in terms of outcomes, it did not yield actionable policy change. Thus, questions arise as to whether popular education, in some cases, can offer structural and systemic changes, or if food systems change demands other means to arrive at actionable outcomes. This is not to say that process-based organizing and incremental participatory democracy are not meaningful, as I hope to have demonstrated they are. Rather, it is worth questioning and employing a diversity of means in achieving food systems change.

Concluding Remarks

Given these limitations however, I am still prepared to say that the work that CFCs are doing is meaningful, in that they constructively affect individuals and communities while not only supplementing food security, but in approaching the social detriments of food insecurity and building community in a more holistic way. During my research, it became overwhelmingly evident that interviewees and workshop participants alike found an abundance of meaning in CFC spaces, namely via the relationships built

and empowerment fostered; in this sense, food is very much a tool to achieving these outcomes. In terms of what these spaces should ideally look like, I still have a lot of questions and am cautious in positing any specific proposals. Interviewees and workshop participants named funding as a major boundary to more meaningful work, suggesting this affected numerous operations such as programs, staffing, more effective communications with other CFCs, and conceivably the ability to be more impactful on a larger scale. While some interviewees suggested that more hard policy wins would produce more meaningful work, others believed that the empowerment framework allowed for winnable goals and concrete gains for their community by taking issues into their own hands. In regard to the local, incremental, and small-scale level at which CFCs operate, some interviewees suggested the local level is adequate to inspire larger-scale movements to food systems change. There was some doubt, however, about how this should be achieved, whether via the academy, or a scale out model employed by CFCs. In this sense, it seemed the interviewees confirmed the adequacy of the local to combat broader structural and systemic issues, and were not willing to discount the credible efforts of local initiatives, despite not always being certain of the best model or means. Additionally, the interviewees were adamant that funding was critical to produce larger and more meaningful policy gains and food security change in Toronto and Canada, suggesting that such changes must be orchestrated inside government to be impactful. Though I do believe the government must play a bigger role in reinstating the welfare state and providing more social services, I also wonder what can be done outside of and beyond the state, in terms of broad-based and progressive movements that operate in a non-hierarchical and non-hegemonic societal orchestration.

Nevertheless, in terms of postulating particular criteria for creating more ideal spaces for food security work in Toronto, I advise primarily, that such approaches should employ popular education praxis, but should be wary of any dogma. My data suggest the criterion that should remain untainted is the importance of process-reliant and process-driven approaches to food security organizing, indicating that CFC spaces should not sacrifice community participation for outcome-based achievements. Both interviewees and the literature (refer to popular education praxis, the AHAH method, PFC, PECD Planning Project, OWS) were not willing to compromise a just and democratic process for "quick" outcomes, conceivably established from above. By this, I mean that decision-making within these spaces is often times slow, incremental, and decided with the community involved. This process-based organizing is preferable to outcome-based organizing, even if prioritizing outcome-based gains might mean quicker and more efficient results. To me, this indicates that just as important as any outcome, is the bottom-up participatory means in which that outcome is reached; this process-based approach cannot be compromised or the outcome would be rendered inherently problematic. This is largely because CFC spaces are attempting to model a microcosm of the very society they wish to create (Barndt, 2012). Unlike process-driven and process-reliant organizing, other main principles of local versus global and inside-outside organizing, were much more flexible and fluid in nature. It seemed CFC spaces were able to move in and out, and back and forth between these scales in order that they get their work done most efficient and effectively, utilizing whatever strategies, services, and procedures necessary. Thus, CFCs should principally adopt process-based approaches to organizing, employ both inside and outside strategies, posit meaning in local, incremental

and more broad-based movements, and recognize the merit in individual experiences and stories of meaning. Thus, I parallel Gibson- Graham's refutation of stark dichotomies, recognizing that our understanding of these processes, global and local, revolution and reform, institutional and individual transformation, and so on, are often times interrelating rather than mutually exclusive (2006, xix).

Next Steps: Necessary Further Areas of Inquiry

This paper utilized popular education praxis in constructing theory, action, and reflection, to be understood in an ongoing cycle or spiral. Thus, I recognize that there are necessary further areas of inquiry and next steps. There are two main areas that I was unable to explore during this research paper either due to the time, width, and depth of this paper, or because they only surfaced during the research. As stated in regard to the shortcomings of this research, delving into the limitations of the policy sphere more stringently, which is not an easy task, is necessary in order to optimize food systems change and better understand how to create more ideal spaces for food security in Toronto. This major research paper focused on one crucial facet of food security, the role and importance of the community-organizing realm of food security, and how CFC spaces might be more meaningful. However, I recognize that for food security work to be more impactful, it must encompass both the community and policy sphere working in conjunction.

Additionally, as I was undertaking this research, other questions surfaced that may not seem directly related to spaces for food security change, but in my opinion, are interesting, inherently significant, and thus worth researching. An earlier quotation from

my paper, taken from the PFC, states "the system we live in is organized to maximize profit, bolster corporate control and accumulate capital at the price of human satisfaction. In this sense, the present system is anti-human" (1980, 64). Furthermore, Welsh and MacRae stress the need "to move beyond food as commodity and people as consumers" (1998, 237). To me, these assertions generate ethical dilemmas; these are questions of moral weight. Thus, in moving forward, an indispensable area of inquiry is the moral, and often uncomfortable discussions surrounding food security debates, and how these ethical queries translate into political and epistemological material. Both of these next steps, the first, called multi-stakeholder approach (Winfield, 2012), and the second, what we might call an ethical consideration (Curry, 2011) evoke notions of pluralism in food systems change. These next steps are crucial in recognizing the necessity of operating in the food system while considering multiple actors, manifold ways of thinking and being, and spaces for creating change. How do we build a pluralist food system in which CFCs, CSOs, individuals, policy makers, and academics have an equal seat at the table? Can we create ethical pluralism in the food system? How do we honour multiple epistemologies and ways of being? Is this desirable? Can we achieve it?

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Appendix 1: Interview Subjects

Yara, Evaluation Facilitator, Foodshare Toronto, July 22, 2016

Antonio, Good Food Market Hub Animator, Riverdale Food Working Group (RFWG), July 26, 2016

Susanna, Communications Coordinator, West End Food Coop (WEFC), August 3, 2016

Mandy, Food Programmer, Parkdale Arts and Recreation Centre (PARC), September 7, 2016

Manager, Community Food Centers Canada (CFCC), September 14, 2016

A Director, The Stop Community Food Centre, September 16, 2016

Appendix 2: Semi- Structured Interview Guides

Note that the questions provided below act only as a guide for the interviews, but due to the nature of semi-structure interview, questions varied. The conversations varied from interview to interview. Moreover, the interviewer may have chosen to alter, add, or leave out certain questions based on the context and conversation during the interview time. However, all interviews namely honoured the content below.

1. What do you believe the existing role of community organizations is in combatting food insecurity in Toronto, in general?
2. What do you believe this particular organization to be doing to supplement food security, pragmatically?
3. Do you believe this organization approaches food security/ food getting in a participatory way, with the community involved?
4. What do you think this community organizing space should look like, ideally?
5. Is this space meaningful to you/ do you believe it to be meaningful for others? And how would you define meaningful in this context? (Criteria for meaningful/ ideal spaces for community food security below, if necessary)
    a. Quality and quantity of food for nutritious diet- participatory in nature
    b. Efforts that yield larger systemic changes to existing oppressions
    c. Larger policy advocacy and structural changes (inside-outside approaches)
    d. Connecting local nature of community initiatives to larger global broad-based organizing
    e. Arts-based production→ participation and creation, ability to create and connection to empowerment frameworks and community building
    f. Experimental, flux, flexibility, mistake-making within the community organizing realm
6. How might this space be more meaningful/ ideal? What is needed for that?

7. What are the current boundaries to creating a more meaningful/ ideal space for community food security?

Appendix 3: Workshop Participants

Andrew, Ralph Thornton

Ann, Eastview

Claire, Eastview

Jackie, Eastview

Jacky, South Riverdale

Jennifer, South Riverdale

Laura, Eastview

Neeka, Eastview

Richie, Eastview

Sherri, South Riverdale