

**Planning for Food Justice: Addressing Conflict and Community Farm Governance  
through Participatory Action Video**

Author: Victoria Ho  
Supervisor: Dr. Martha Stiegman

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Faculty of Environmental Studies  
York University  
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## Foreword

Planning Theory collides with a slew of critical theories regarding how power and privilege manifest in planning policy. Though my major research initially took root in food systems and social policy, it has become apparent that the social issues plaguing food systems also dominate other realms of planning. In late 2014, cases of widely-condemned racialized police violence erupted in the United States. Immediately following the events in Ferguson and New York, Eric Holt-Giménez, director of Food First, a US-based organization at the forefront of community-led work in food justice, wrote an article titled *Tangled roots and bitter fruit: What Ferguson and New York can teach the food movement*. The lesson: a sustainable food system is impossible when it is based on an oppressive social and economic system. These systems manifest as the immense power inequalities, racialized and gendered divisions of labour, working conditions, and food insecurity faced disproportionately by women and the people of colour that grow, cook, serve, and buy food. Similarly, issue analysis in the planning field relate to the debates in policy analysis at large (Fischer and Gottweis, 2012). Therefore to investigate the role of the communicative planner in dismantling power inequities in the food system and elsewhere, my research applies participatory action video to a case study in food justice. However, the lessons learned can also be applied to spheres of planning and policy analysis beyond food systems planning.

This major project addresses a number of the currents of thoughts contained in my Plan of Study; namely the roles of social movements, governance, and power in the case of an evolving community urban farm. In a community-directed collaborative project, I used participatory action video to highlight local experiences with Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF) in Toronto, Ontario. The project intertwined with BCCF's ongoing transition towards community governance and my analysis investigates the role of communicative and participatory planning in addressing conflict, power, and knowledge production. In the struggle towards food justice in Toronto and worldwide, my imperative is to contribute a nuanced discussion on the role of institutions and community-based governance for socially-just land use outcomes.

This project would have been impossible without the dedication of the project's Research Advisory Circle members, the Jane-Finch Residents' Council, the BCCF's current and former staff, and my supervisor Dr. Martha Stiegman. They generously shared with me their passions and imagination during this journey, humbling me as a researcher and a supporter of community-powered agriculture. I am endlessly grateful for this experience. Here's to a lively future of community farms, and ground-breaking debate.

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## Introduction

Urban spaces are argued to be imagined, contested, and multidimensional ‘arenas of struggle’ characterized by conflicts over territorial control and identity (Lefebvre, 1992; Anderson, 1983; Roy, 2011; Hillier, 2002). While cities are at once physical phenomena, they are also made up of ‘plural worlds’ and the layered, ‘multiple stories’ of social life (Healey, 1992; Fainstein, 2005; Sandercock and Forsyth, 1992). These urban social tensions are exacerbated by uneven capitalist processes that necessarily create inequitable material and power relations, according to a post-Marxian analysis. Acknowledging this plurality and unevenness, Patsy Healey argues that place-based collaborative planning can create an “additional layer of shared landscape values” (quoted in Pinel 2015, p. 171), demonstrating a turn in planning theory informed by values of deliberative democracy and communicative action.

My research attempted to link communicative planning theory to practice by investigating how participatory action video could contribute to a community farm’s effort to develop a unique model of community-based governance. Importantly, the project intertwined with an overarching process at the farm to unravel and mediate systemic power relations. To contextualize the project within its social and theoretical framings and to offer a preliminary analysis of this ongoing work, the paper is divided into the following sections:

- i) *Major project and methodology*: This section will detail the project context and the process of collaborating on a participatory action video with community

members to address issues related to food justice and governance at Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF).

- ii) *Participatory action video to support community development*: Here I will share my experience of the video-making process and my observations, in relation to communicative planning literature, about the promise and challenges of collaborative video work to address conflict.
- iii) *Deliberative democracy and communicative action*: I will relate the project aims to concepts on narrative as a tool for community empowerment and collective imagining.

Finally, a summary analysis will conclude the paper and evaluate the contribution of the video project in addressing the conflicts and transition process at the farm, with reference to power and knowledge in planning theory.

To locate the project in the theoretical debates on communicative action and power, I draw on literature from Habermas (1984), Healey (1992), Sandercock (2010), Gualini (2015), Miraftab (2009), Ahmed (2004), and Haraway (1988) for their discussions on planning and policymaking. Theories addressing conflict and democratic practice in postmodern urban studies also underpin my research on planning for just food systems. For example, authors Laclau and Mouffe (1985) regard antagonism- and resistance- as constitutive of democratic practice. Indeed, conflict is a potentially productive force. With regards to the role of citizenship and the political subject, then, my research also

considers argumentative/ discursive politics, deliberative planning, and participatory planning approaches.

### Role of the Communicative Planner

The MES (Planning) program has shown me that the planning field continues to face the following decades-old questions: What is the role of the planner? Who knows best? Who is involved? What forms of knowledge are considered in decision-making, and which sources? How do objectivity and values inform planning? Can a just outcome occur without a just process?

This debate was especially spurred on by mid-20<sup>th</sup> century planning convention that alleged the dominance of technical expertise over the experiential knowledge of urban inhabitants. Historically, the role of the planner was to ‘educate’ the public and, from a Gramscian conceptualization of hegemony, to “render subjects docile and compliant” (Leffers, 2015, p.133). Dissent in the theory surfaced and, in the 1980s and 1990s, collaboration developed as a favoured tool in order to address conflicting views of expertise. This repositioning of the balance of power in planning continues today, where Gualini and Bianchi (2015) assert that a “demand for more *communicative planners* emerges; they should mediate between local and expert knowledge, thus promoting social learning while including the results of participatory and bottom-up processes within a wider framework that includes the analysis of contingent and placed-based dynamics” (p.48). The authors continue that planning should take a ‘political turn’, a reminder of John Forester’s advocacy planning approach that demands planners

to recognize the political nature of planning and intervene for an explicitly value-driven, proactive practice. Considering this 'political turn', participatory video has the potential to draw from Lefebvre's 'right to the city' approach by democratizing, and therefore politicizing, the value-laden and multifarious planning processes.

Sandercock and Attili (2012) encourage the potential of multimedia narratives through their own work in participatory video and community development, crediting Cavarero (1997) and Melucci (2000) for the notion that "narratives not only interpret the world, they also create it" (p.186). Since this fluid negotiation of knowledge and meaning-making shapes worldviews and political practices, narratives are key to reflexive policymaking, according to Howarth and Griggs (2012). Referencing Gramsci's theories on hegemony, the authors note that power and ideology are actually facilitated through public policy. These policies mobilize the state's dominant values and images in order to construct a 'common sense', and facilitate the reproduction of capitalist relations (the problematic nature of a 'common sense' framing will be discussed later). In fact, the continued privileging of discourses that serve the status quo maintains these unequal relations.

With this framework in mind, my research takes on a community-based participatory action video (PAV) with the intent to interrupt the often invisible hegemony of the status quo in policy. Specifically, this project addresses the grassroots call for accountability and an inversion of power relations that acknowledges community expertise and need for local place-making. The narratives that emerge in the video highlight that the role of institutions is not to maintain themselves, but to support

the community's visions, strengths, and needs. Confronting the production of knowledge and power relations for more socially-just land use, then, PAV may channel opportunities for community members to exercise their right to 'full citizenship' and the 'democratic potential' of research (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, p.13). PAV provides a platform for directed dialogue and may be harnessed as a tool for intervention in urban governance, informed by a communicative planning approach. This use of digital ethnography "as policy inquiry and dialogue catalyst" is a method that has been implemented and discussed by Sandercock and Attili (2010, p.180; 2012) and I hope to contribute a nuanced approach to public policy conversations concerning community-based governance and 'planning from below'.

### **1. Major Project and Methodology: Introducing Black Creek Community Farm**

What is a community farm? The Residents' Council (RC) of Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF) is navigating a conversation on this topic, both with the current farm's partner organizations, as well as amongst the community members that the farm is meant to serve. The 7-acre urban farm is nestled between high rises and high-traffic roads at Jane Street and Steeles Avenue in Toronto, Ontario. The farm is a startling site in the dense Jane-Finch neighbourhood, and lies in the one of the city's most racially diverse and marginalized areas (City of Toronto, 2011).

BCCF is currently managed by a lead organization, Everdale, in partnership with other long-running food groups Afri-Can Food Basket and Foodshare. The farm is in the midst of developing a community-based governance model in conjunction with locally-

based partners such as the RC, a community group of Jane-Finch residents that was formed voluntarily to represent resident desires and act as a formal body through which residents could engage farm management. The RC was born out of an urgency to develop a farm model that could meaningfully involve and serve the Jane-Finch community.

In a partnership between the RC, the community advocacy group *Jane Finch Action Against Poverty* (JFAAP), and York University, I collaborated on a participatory video to document the voices of community. The issues documented pertained to food justice and community governance of BCCF. The aim was to help inform the governance model under development. Eleven people were interviewed for the video, with representation from residents, former/current staff, and management.

In the following section, I will draw on the semi-structured video-recorded interviews conducted for this project to contextualize the founding of BCCF, the socio-political community setting, and initial tensions that surfaced related to the mission and governance of the farm. I then explain the research objectives and project design, and track the evolution of our research that ultimately coincided with the parallel work of a consultant who was hired by BCCF to oversee the conversations on a Transition Plan and recommend next steps.

### *Project Context*

In January 2012, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) published a Request for Proposals for lease of the agricultural land and farmhouse at

4929 Jane Street. Toronto's preeminent food and farming organizations- Everdale, Afri-Can Food Basket, and Foodshare- acted quickly to prepare their respective applications in time. To see a project running for the 2012 farm season would require soil remediation, infrastructure and markets prepared, trained staff, and seeds in the ground in only a few months' time. Time was short.

In a snapshot, Everdale (est. 1998) runs sustainable agriculture and farmer training programs in Ontario, Afri-Can Food Basket (est. 1995) is headquartered in Jane-Finch and leads youth-focused food security and urban agriculture projects in the African- Canadian community, and Foodshare (est. 1985) works with communities and schools to deliver food literacy and food security programming. Recognizing that each award-winning organization offered unique expertise to a community farm project, the individual groups decided to collectivize their efforts and become partners in the proposed BCCF project, according to interviewees. Already, the organizations had successful histories of collaboration and ground-breaking work in sustainable farming and food systems advocacy.

BCCF won the bid from the TRCA and the groups set to work. Unfortunately, the first farming season was squandered due to the time required to remove plastic mulching left by the previous tenants. Food could not yet be grown for markets. Community consultations were held thereafter to discuss the vision of the farm and how to ensure its accountability to the community. At this point, the farm's existence was still largely unknown.

*Jane-Finch and the dangers of universalizing alternative food discourses*

As BCCF grows, Jane-Finch residents have been highly active in order to see BCCF thrive as an empowering space that benefits the community. Historically, the NGOs and agencies that have been awarded program funding to “help Jane-Finch” often have not represented the faces of Jane-Finch; rather, they have been external to the community and involve predominantly white leadership. Community leaders that have consistently organized in response to issues concerning community agency and justice have therefore been highly critical, vocal, and invested in ensuring accountability by decision-makers. This approach therefore included involvement at BCCF and community-based efforts to renegotiate the farm’s identity and purpose. For those interviewed in this video, a community farm in Jane-Finch must be informed by a food justice approach that empowers community as decision-makers and benefactors, and recognizes the community’s specific strengths, histories, and goals.

Jane- Finch has been one of Toronto’s most marginalized neighbourhoods since the 1960s, when a population boom that saw urban growth and the mass construction of large-scale affordable housing adjust the area’s racial and class composition (Narain, 2012). Jane-Finch’s residents are highly organized and vocal on the persistent issues of racism, precarious employment, and power dynamics that also tangle the neighbourhood into a reliance on sporadic grants for community programming.

Given the number of projects in Jane-Finch that have been initiated by grant dollars only to see funding cut and those initiatives subsequently dissolved, ensuring that the project was well-formed enough to inspire community support had been a

critical consideration by the project initiators, according to some farmers involved in the early stages of BCCF.

After the farm's first year of operations, the RC, and eventually some farm staff, began to vocalize their criticism of what they saw as a hurried approach. "First of all, it's called Black Creek Community Farm. And that to me means *community*. That's all of us, with all of our hearts, all of the time," one resident explains in an interview. For many Jane-Finch residents and members of the community advocacy group Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP), any outside organization seeking to do work in the neighbourhood must be cognisant of how the historical and cultural context shapes present-day experiences and meaning-making with regard to relationships between community and institutions.

Taking risks to identify what could work, or not, the farm experimented with different markets during the 2013 and 2014 growing seasons. BCCF produce was experimentally sold at farmers' markets outside of Jane-Finch in order to secure higher selling points and generate farm income. However, some residents voiced that selling food outside of the neighbourhood was contrary to their philosophy of a community farm, according to the interviews. In addition, the lengthy debate of 'who is community' and 'who benefits' brought to light the neighbourhood's multiplicity of values as farm management began considering how to determine who should have access to land, whether community groups or individual residents.

According to one former farmer, the approach to "*build a community farm now, and bring the community into the fold once the project emerged*" was dictated in part by

the funding timeline crunch, but also because *“there was no reason to think that it wouldn’t work, without that experience”*. Now that BCCF has lived that experience, the former farmer advises that BCCF *“must now commit to learning and doing in a more informed and reflexive way”*. A project partner also accounts that given the uniqueness of a community farm model, they felt it would be necessary to establish a structure at least temporarily, and adapt *“when the challenges come”*. In retrospect, the partner also acknowledges that the process to involve community *“could have been much more thorough”*. According to some interviewees, the short timeline inhibited this avenue.

The initial model at BCCF intended to provide (short-term) farm training and a beautiful farm park space, according to a project partner. This award- winning model of a training farm has been highly celebrated in other spaces with dramatically different cultural and socio-economic environments, but a collectively-run and community-based farm situated in a racialized and marginalized urban community is novel in Canada. One project partner says, *“The idea of a community farm, none of us as partners had ever heard of. We Googled, we looked all over. There were challenges”*. It surfaced from the interviews that though each of the partners were highly skilled in their areas of expertise, creating an organizational model from scratch, and within a very short timeline, would necessarily be a learning process met with difficulties along the way.

A former farmer describes management as *“super progressive in their field of supporting alternative agriculture and supporting young farmers that want to become contributors to sustainable agriculture”*. Explaining that alternative farming is an organizational model that faces extreme pressure and skepticism within mainstream

economics, this environment led to a managerial impetus of *“coming up with a vision and sticking with it”*, the farmer describes. In a highly racialized urban community that prioritizes ‘by us, for us’ grassroots agency, however, the model did not fit. Considering these structural barriers to alternative agriculture and the socio-cultural context of Jane-Finch, the BCCF community has been working together to conjure up a new model.

Julie Guthman (2008) describes the “unbearable whiteness of alternative food” by arguing that so-called alternative food movements imported with “missionary zeal” tend to serve the interests of white outsiders more than the needs and desires of the communities of colour that the organizations seek to serve (p.435). Drawing from her US-based research, Guthman contends that some of the major discourses in food politics assume a desire to work in farming without acknowledging the colonial history of the food system and the effect on present-day associations with agrarian work and soil. Further, these discourses fail to locate the alternative movement’s place in a history of countercultures in the lives of people of colour, and naively expect localism to serve the social interests of all groups. From these observations, Guthman concludes, “whiteness perhaps crowds out the imaginings of other sorts of political projects that could indeed be more explicitly anti-racist” (2008, p. 443).

This universalizing of alternative discourses makes invisible the self-representations of marginalized groups throughout the food system. All organizations that run ‘alternative’ projects aimed to reform the food system are therefore called to reconsider their legitimacy, and whether they reflect the politics or values of marginalized and racialized social movements. In the case of BCCF, then, organizers are

addressing how the farm can avoid falling into the discourse trap described, and instead develop a meaningful governance structure for locally-based food justice.

### *The Residents' Council*

In autumn of 2013, the BCCF Community Engagement Coordinator organized a series of community consultations. Out of those consultations, a Residents' Council (RC) was formed by Jane-Finch residents to help shape the farm by providing visioning and direction to the projects and programming. Prior to the RC, a structure was not yet in place to ensure space for dialogue with community members. According to one former farmer, the formation of the RC was really “the birth of the project,” and a way to ensure community relevance of the farm project.

At this stage, the RC voiced that it did not yet feel like BCCF had a clear identity that was distinct from Everdale as an organization, according to some RC members. Residents detail in interviews that part of the resolve to build a strong community-based identity stems from a history of neighbourhood programming where the awarded funds fail to produce clear community benefit. One resident states, *“There was a lot of discomfort around [funding]. Not because we didn't trust Everdale as an organization, but as a community, Jane-Finch has a lot of buzz, and people from outside of the community often get funding for doing work to help Jane-Finch, to help the community, all of these projects. The community also came with this [pause] being very protective and [pause] wary of agencies coming in to do work”.*

This issue of representation, privilege, and the distribution of benefits is not unique to Jane-Finch; unfortunately, it is endemic in the 'food movement' and in community work more generally, as described earlier (Guthman, 2008; Gottlieb and Josh, 2013). The resident further explains, *"Take for example the Priority neighbourhoods. The City [of Toronto] gave funding to 13 priority neighbourhoods to carry out programs. And then when there was no more funds, all of these great initiatives, all of these programs for youths, all of these art spaces, all of these fantastic initiatives, there was no sustainability"*. The problem of implementing projects without sufficient regard for the historical, socio-economic, and cultural context exists in planning as well (Sandercock and Attili, 2010; Healey, 1992; Roy, 2011). This discussion of power relations in planning will be discussed further on.

### Research Objectives and Design

It was from this context that I approached the RC about building a visual document of community experiences with the farm. The RC supported the idea as a potentially important community archival piece and learning moment for both viewers and participants. The main project objective shifted over time, and ultimately the aim of the video project was to strengthen the RC's voice within this conversation and to feed into an internal dialogue already underway. The video project would create the space to collectively reflect on the challenges and successes along the way; in addition to the participatory nature of the video production, the final video would be screened at a

facilitated meeting with community members and the farm's partner organizations in order to address matters that surfaced in the video.

### *Funding and Research Direction*

When I approached BCCF's Project Manager in August 2014 about whether a short documentary project would be useful to the farm and community, the response was enthusiastic and the project proposal was placed on the next Residents' Council meeting agenda. Initially, I had conceived of the project as a curated moment in time to highlight how residents understood food justice and the purpose of BCCF, in the context of their experiences at the farm. Perhaps the views presented could be shared with other communities looking to learn from a new community farm model. BCCF is a unique space in Canada, without an existing model on which to base its organizational structure and goals. My original intent was to support the development of a reflective space for residents through video, so that those involved at BCCF could use the video as a tool to take pause, hear each other, and carefully deliberate on how the farm should proceed.

Shortly after I proposed the project to the RC and gained their support, a Catalyst Grant competition was opened in October 2014 by the York-TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC) for projects involving community-university collaborations. I raised the opportunity with my supervisor, Dr. Martha Stiegman, who saw this project as potentially part of a longer story arc in York University's relationship with BCCF in supporting the community's efforts in food justice. Dr. Stiegman suggested that in

addition to building the video archive as a material document, it would be critical to also build a facilitated screening into the project so that the perspectives shared would have a designated moment with the farm partners. This way, the catalytic element of the project would be embedded in the Transition process. It became increasingly evident that this research would be a vehicle for both collaboration and advocacy.

Meanwhile, a group of Residents' Council members indicated their interest to provide research direction to the video project. A Research Advisory Circle (RAC) made up of six RC members was formalized in the context of the joint CEC grant application led by Andrea Boucaud of JFAAP in partnership with Dr. Stiegman and the RC.

My role as videographer was to carry out the interviews, then produce and edit the video. The RAC would guide the video project by helping to develop the interview questions, structure the budget, direct the edits, decide how the piece would be used in the community, and generally oversee the video to ensure that the project was in line with their vision and true to their experiences. Dr. Stiegman, a documentary filmmaker, was the principal investigator representing York University and would provide guidance for the overall research design and methodology, community collaborations, and the video editing process.

In early November, the RAC, JFAAP, and York researchers together submitted an application to create a video, which we initially proposed would have a 20-minute running time, and won \$4000 in late December 2014 to fund the project. The grant would fund the RAC's efforts, honorariums for interviewees, a facilitator, and expenses

to screen the video (childcare, food, transportation). We set to work fine-tuning what the video would achieve, as well as a list of interview subjects and questions.

### Project evolution

Autumn 2014 was a tumultuous time for the farm and, according to informants, BCCF was grappling with a heavy workload by all hands, funding and grant opportunities with restrictive parameters on how to distribute the dollars, and confusion over the farm mandate. With these issues in mind, a two-day Visioning Session was held in mid-November 2014 to provide a dedicated space to address the question *What is Black Creek Community Farm?* The session brought to the surface a flurry of ideas, confusion, and grievances. The winter season culminated in an identity crisis for the farm. As discussions about a community takeover of the farm accelerated, uncertainty and tensions came to a head. The RC asserted that it knew community needs best. Yet, the partner organizations also possessed the necessary technical experience in farming and food literacy programming. Conflict erupted concerning each group's roles in the project. As summarized by one Jane-Finch resident, "all players have been burned".

To address the quickly unfolding events at the farm, Everdale's board of directors brought in a facilitator grounded in organizational development through an anti-racism and anti-oppression lens. The process began in the new year, with the facilitator hired to mediate challenging conversations that initially focused on organizational development goals. The facilitator's role as a mediator then expanded to address a much larger system of complexity as it became clear that job descriptions and

terms of references were only part of the picture. The more deeply rooted questions unveiled by the facilitator's process revealed a need to address the elusive ideas of food justice and community empowerment. A food justice lens seeks to "transform where, what, and how food is grown, produced, transported, accessed, and eaten" for a more equitable food system that restores ecological balance, democratizes the food system and redistributes wealth and power (Gottlieb and Josh, 2010, p.5; Holt- Giménez, 2011).

Meanwhile, our video project was changing to reflect the dynamics of the farm and was pushing through, despite setbacks. For example, interviews were delayed in part by the month-long strike in March 2015 at York University, which was supported by the RAC. The project was also changing in scope alongside the facilitator's process and the RAC's evolving needs in response to the increasingly heated farm dynamics.

As the conversations deepened at the farm and the facilitator's work emphasized a need to address the larger socio-economic questions of food justice, the objectives of the RAC shifted away from asking informants to simply share their experiences of and visions for the farm, and moved towards elucidating the video's viewers about the political foundations of race, class, and labour in Jane- Finch. Interview participants focused on the wider need for a governance transition by placing BCCF within the network of social systems that tie in the struggle for food justice.

In the end, some RAC members interviewed for upwards of two hours, while others did not interview and/or needed to step back from the project altogether. Five substantial 30-minute interviews with former staff rounded out different experiences at the farm. In addition, the RAC requested interviews from the partner organizations. Two

representatives from Everdale and one representative from Afri-Can Food Basket gave 30-minute interviews. Foodshare could not be incorporated into the video process in time due to the last-minute suggestion by the RAC and because the relevant representative was on leave.

After completing the interviews, I developed and continuously submitted rough edits of the video to the RAC and Dr. Stiegman for their approval and direction. Ensuring that the RAC directed the video content was imperative given the charged context and project objective to highlight community voices within the internal dialogue. It was critical that the RAC help make decisions about potentially sensitive material and that the edits reflected their concerns.

Our initial project design included hiring a facilitator to help ensure that the issues raised in the video would be addressed constructively and thereby feed into the governance process. As mentioned earlier, after we launched the video process, challenges at the farm deepened significantly and BCCF hired a third-party facilitator to unravel the governance issue and provide recommendations on the Transition Plan. The video therefore moved away from the initial vision of catalyzing a dialogue and instead contributed to the facilitator's ongoing process. The facilitator would use the video as a tool to present his findings, which coincided with the video content, in a more vivid and direct way. With the charged farm dynamics and powerful stories shared by the project participants, RAC members asked me why the video needed to be twenty minutes long. To incorporate more content, the running time was extended to one hour. The video was screened at two meetings facilitated by the facilitator, one with the RC and another

with the partner organizations. Further discussion of the video's outcomes and next steps are forthcoming.

## **2. Participatory action video and supporting community development**

A fundamental question that frames my research is: How does power dictate whose knowledge informs the parameters of a project intended to serve a community? The farm project faced challenges of legitimacy due in part to competing ideas of expertise and where power lay in decision-making. Multiple stakeholders also had difficulty recognizing how various parties could equitably contribute different sets of knowledge. I draw on communicative planning theory to interrogate how knowledge is framed and produced to inform urban governance and planning decisions in a community farm project.

### *On 'Knowing': The Emergence of Communicative Planning*

One resident states in an interview that mainstream institutions “*need to step back*” from a decision-making role, explaining that rather than place themselves on a board or other governing body, institutions should leverage their resources and “*put it in the hands of community residents who are the experts that might find some of these tools beneficial*”. This recognition of community-based knowledge is not only about accountability, but figures into the farm's identity-formation. The resident continues, “*Because BCCF is positioned under Everdale as a program, it doesn't have its own identity. And Everdale's identity is very different from BCCF*”.

This community-based video project brings attention to John Friedmann's classic declaration of a 'crisis of knowing' in planning (1973). Though Friedmann acknowledges the role of experts, he advocates a planning approach that advances 'mutual learning'; a pairing of local, experiential knowledge with expert knowledge. Through participatory action video (PAV), I sought to investigate whether visual narratives can cultivate the 'mutual learning' advocated by Friedmann.

This approach seeks to address the legitimacy problem experienced by projects conceived and run by agencies outside of a community, as described in Section 1. The action by Jane-Finch residents to intervene in a community development project and disrupt the daily practices of the organization brings to mind the role of radical or insurgent planning (Miraftab, 2009). Miraftab critiques how oppressive power relations can be maintained and legitimated "through governance that promotes political inclusion, but avoids translating it into redistributive equity" (p.41). This is "the hypocrisy of modern citizenship" in neoliberal capitalism (p.41). In the BCCF project, RC members did not only wish to be 'included' or provide input via the 'invited spaces of citizenship' described by Miraftab. As highlighted in the video, the RC engaged in oppositional activities in order to imagine a community farm space on their own terms.

### *Seeing from somewhere: Redoing 'objectivity' in planning*

A half-century of critique since the 1970s by Forester, Churchman, Davidoff, Friedmann, and Lefebvre has challenged the positivist deficiencies of traditional planning cartographies that privilege rational- scientific epistemology and assume a

singular public interest. This conventional spatial thinking has narrowly focused on the city as a morphological entity, a functional machine that runs on experts and data. In response, participatory planning and communicative planning emerged in the 1980s and 1990s to address representation and equity issues in the field (Healey, 2003; Miraftab, 2009; Sandercock and Forsyth, 1992).

Sandercock and Attili (2010) build on this body of critical literature to argue that meaningful living environments are also comprised of the individual and collective practices of people, of inhabitants navigating through relational space within their embodied subjectivities. This postpositivist recognition of the nature of living in the city is also interpreted by Lefebvre and Régulier (2003), who note that the body is “at once both subject and object”. Following, the often contradictory social and cultural practices of cities is formed by the interactions of cultural diversity, human material biology, and nature (Lefebvre and Régulier quoted in Highmore, 2014, p.37). This framing articulates how community simultaneously influences and is influenced by the project site, how protecting the space for community benefit also demonstrates a protection of self, of the community.

On the potential insidiousness of power inequality, feminist author Donna Haraway notes that critical theorists “don’t want a theory of innocent powers to represent the world, where language and bodies both fall into the bliss of organic symbiosis” (1988, p.579). Rather, knowledge needs to be ‘translated’ where power differentials cleave communities. Haraway argues that modern critical theories are needed to address “how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meanings

and bodies, but in order to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life” (p.580). The discussion of *life* is a perspective that is fundamentally missing from planning theories based on scientific positivism and the Western cultural narrative of objectivity. This objectivity seeks to reduce knowledge claims to a single language, or ‘a single story’ as novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie famously cautions.

Positivist planning is thus critiqued for distilling objective ‘truths’ within a framework boiled down to the dominant worldview of the white, male gaze (Haraway, 1988). This treatment of data serves to interpret objects “as straightforward facts...without thinking carefully about how to interpret its significance” (Silva, Healey, Harris, and Van den Broek 2015, xxx). Haraway’s approach therefore departs from the positivist framework and refers to this false objectivity as “the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere” (p.581). A feminist objectivity, Haraway continues, acknowledges the ‘partial perspectives’ of humans. To understand the world, we need to give credit to each person’s social location, their “situated and embodied knowledges” (1988, p.583). Fischer and Gottweis (2012) align with this critique, noting that public policy is a social construction based on language produced through argumentation: the argumentative turn that credits Habermas’ foundational work in communicative action theory. How planners frame problems and understand public issues is dependent on creating shared meaning.

### *Situated knowledge and the BCCF*

The RAC was keen to launch the video project because of this need to create shared meaning and shine a light on people's different social locations. Racism and poverty manifest in Jane-Finch in daily practices that inform how community members make meaning out of social interactions and events; this includes how external organizations will be held accountable by community. The daily instances of systems of oppression often go unnoticed by those who experience privilege and power (Ahmed, 2004; Haraway, 1988). The video's goal was therefore to create a space for residents to share their stories and community knowledge not only as farm users, but as people that interact with power in vastly different ways than those who hold more power.

### *Role of the planner/policymaker*

Within the 'communicative turn' in contemporary planning, storytelling acts as a tool for acknowledging reflection and collective imagining as an epistemological intervention in the field. Such representations of urban life critically disrupt conventional planning not only to make planning policy livelier, but also to intervene in the urban conflicts that define city spaces (Sandercock, 2010). Storytelling tools are increasingly represented in post-positivist planning literature, which has begun to consider the creative capacities of planners to expand the language of planning and integrate multiple 'ways of knowing' into planning practice (Pinel, 2015; Healey, 2003; Sandercock, 2010). As opposed to framing the city as a machine to be run efficiently,

the city might be thought of as living organism or ecosystem comprised of a complexity of intertwining lives and without a linear destination.

My research fits within this frame of analysis by asking how the planner or policymaker can enable citizen participation through narrative storytelling, and how this strategy might be used to address hegemonic policy discourse. Can planning policy explicitly acknowledge social (and physical) location? And can narratives shift the balance of power?

#### *Ethnographic research methods: Participatory action research*

Ethnographic research methods such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews have been used to address these questions of power in order to increase the legitimacy and justness of planning practice (Pinel, 2016; Håkansson, 2015; Mirafteb, 2009). The story-centred process can, for example, help to highlight marginalized voices, gauge the legitimacy of proposed plans, and document stakeholder values, knowledge, and interests (Pinel, 2015). Such research methods require the practitioners and researchers to become enmeshed in physical and social proximity to the context in question. This experiential learning is argued to be instrumental in aiding planners to understand local specificities and meanings, and avoid unintended or adverse outcomes. Håkansson (2015) adds a 'pedagogic-ethnographic approach' to this methodology, emphasizing that planning research centering on "an understanding of practice, rather than linear explanations and unidirectional cause-effect relations" is critical to describing social interactions and daily practices of meaning-making (p.182).

Participatory action research (PAR) builds on ethnography by engaging the research subjects as co-investigators and “connects knowledge to action” (Pinel 2015, p.172). PAR can be used to identify existing and potential conflicts and inform how places manifest power relations and may also engage groups to develop a coherent local identity for collective political action. Specifically, participatory video has been used in greater frequency since the 2000s as a way to subvert power hierarchies and “look alongside rather than look at research subjects” (Kendon, 2003, p.143).

Given that modernization projects have been notorious for having insufficient regard for local contexts and power relations, planners have a responsibility to acknowledge how the field of planning can oppress subjects in the city (Yiftachel, 1999; Miraftab, 2009). Planners thus need to bring the knowledge and experiences of residents to policymaking in a visible, meaningful way.

As videographer, and planning student, in the video project, I made an effort to practice this philosophy of ‘looking alongside’ and seeking to ensure that the subjects told their own stories through participatory action. The major trial I experienced with advocacy, however, was the potential to alienate. In fact, one viewer stated that “pain without hope is dangerous”. On the ethics and logistical challenges of advocacy video, Cizek (2005) counsels that as “the editor, you are mediating the relationship between the subject and the audience. You have the capacity to perpetuate stereotypes or to advocate for a new relationship between audiences and subjects as partners” (p.176). Actually, the role of videographer appears to parallel the contested role of the planner.

### 3. Deliberative Democracy and Communicative Planning

Communicative planning theory informs my involvement with the video project by drawing attention to the power (for good or evil) of language and human interaction. The communicative approach aims to accumulate local knowledge, assist political powers to 'borrow' legitimacy from citizens through political discourse, foster inclusion through diversity, and mitigate hostility by restructuring expert-citizen relationships (Gualini and Bianchi, 2015). To address how planning can serve or disrupt the status quo, this section considers some of the debates on the roles and limitations of communicative planning.

Jurgen Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action (TCA)*, written in 1984, is an influential planning framework that theorizes the role of communication in bringing social actors to a common understanding through reasoned argument. Meaning-making is an inter-subjective process, a constant interaction of the subject-object problem whereby human knowing and being are intertwined with history and society. Like language, meaning is shared. Habermas thus attempts to reformulate knowledge construction and the meaning of rationality using TCA to connect different 'life-worlds' through language. Habermas describes the 'lifeworld' as the shared common understandings that develop through face-to-face contacts over time.

Mutual participation comprises the lifeworld and both dialogue and rhetoric are regarded as instrumental in shaping both policy and interpersonal discussions. As popularized by feminist scholar Carol Hanisch in 1970, the personal is political: systemic power structures, policy, human agency, and interpersonal relations are inseparable.

Through reflexive dialogue, Habermas argues that debate provides pathways to a collectively imagined understanding of truth.

At the time, Habermas wrote that social institutions were facing crises of legitimacy, and a 'colonization of lifeworld by systems'. For example, rather than seeing people engage in public debate about differences, the conversation might be stifled by the state based on quantitative media such as votes and financial resources. Where the citizen becomes a silenced client of the state, a crisis of legitimacy arises and raises the debate about process versus outcome. A Habermasian argument would point out that a just outcome could not occur without a just process.

#### *Limitations of the Theory of Communicative Action*

Healey (1992) agrees with Habermas' argument that inter-subjective arguments should integrate narrative storytelling and analysis, for the purpose of acting in the world. The 'process route' can bring about mutual understanding where communicative action is not an end outcome, but a flow. And this is where Healey departs from Habermas, stating that though "Habermas himself would clearly like to see stable consensus emerge", that singular agreements in time represent a "temporary accommodation of different, and differently adapting, perceptions" as communicative action trundles onward (p.152). Healey further notes the impossibility of a stable consensus due to "inherent localized specificity and untranslatability of the systems of meaning" (p. 152).

The notion of stable, and non-hegemonic consensus is debated in communicative planning and thus Habermas' assumptions are not taken without critique. TCA is criticized

for being unrealistic and failing to acknowledge the role of power structures in allowing discursive principles to further dominate rather than emancipate (Gualini and Bianchi, 2015). That is, discourse is only as powerful as its ability to undo power. According to Healey (1992), two major critiques of Habermas emerge: i) continued use of reason inherently maintains the dominatory potential of modernity; and ii) the deep divides of class, race, gender, and culture in contemporary social relations can only be resolved through power struggle, consensus will not come.

This problem of power struggle was raised during the interviews. Repeatedly, interviewees expressed that power and privilege are issues that may exist as an invisible, underlying phenomenon. Some participants stated that a major concern about community projects pertains to a lack of frameworks to protect vulnerable groups from potential exploitation. As mentioned, one resident explains that the community approached the organization with high expectations out of a historical need by Jane-Finch to feel “protective”. It is for this reason that BCCF is called to acknowledge existing power issues before pushing forward with a Transition plan. Another resident states, *“it’s responsible to take the time to do the personal and collective work”* of unpacking power in social relations.

The promise and limitations of the video project also relates to Gualini and Bianchi’s word of caution about the role of power in limiting the undoing of power. What is the tipping point to reach some translatability of individuals’ systems of meaning? When do power-holders joyfully step back to ensure other groups can take up space? Moreover, who has the power to influence the debate? Mouffe’s idea of

'agonistic pluralism' (2013) also rejects Habermas' assumption that rational argumentation can build consensus without exclusion. This assumption, Mouffe argues, is "precisely what the hegemonic approach reveals to be impossible" (p.92). Rather, Mouffe argues that antagonism is constitutive of the political, and that citizenship is an ongoing negotiation.

Rancière further critiques a 'postpolitical' approach to communication by questioning the impact of public spaces for argumentation when the effect may be "the mere filling of spaces left empty by power" (quoted in Gualini, 2015, p. 18).

In the case of BCCF, residents created space for themselves in an effort to insert themselves into a process that invited their inclusion in limited ways. As argued by Miraftab (2009) the routinization of community participation in designated, allowed spaces serves to maintain the status quo. Regardless of the good intentions of the NGO, a deliberative democratic approach to community empowerment requires grassroots movements to speak for themselves.

Ahmed (1998) also critiques Habermas' theory for regarding conflict as irrational and as a phenomenon to be eliminated. Positioning the 'rational' subject in conversation can foster marginalization, particularly of those groups who are seen by political norms to "'lack' rationality", namely women (Ahmed, 1998, p.50). Ahmed follows by arguing that though the value of rationality should not be discarded, there should be a "giving up of its status as a criteria *in itself* for adjudicating between competing values" (p.50). Moreover, Ahmed argues in *the Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) that emotions have affective power; they create meaning in words and symbols

through repetition. Emotions can power social movements and generate collective identities. They can motivate the questions necessary to understand what inspires alternative realities and social mobilization. Video as a tool for visual narratives may be one way to capture the affective power of emotions.

### *Reflections from the Residents' Council video screening*

At the Residents' Council meeting on June 30, the video was screened to an audience of a dozen RC and RAC members alongside the facilitator. The video drew a telling combination of laughs, silence, and tears. Interestingly, over half of the audience had already seen much of the video due to the collaborative nature of the project. Yet in the context of a group screening, the responses by RC and RAC viewers were rich in reflection and often distinct from the feedback provided when those same individuals acted as an administrator of the project.

By the end of the video, one RAC member remarked, *"That was exhausting, but it was real"*. Referring to the gap at BCCF between expectations and reality, another member observed, *"I thought I knew how everyone felt about the project, but to see it all together like that puts things in perspective... everyone [management, staff, residents] felt let down"*. Two viewers spoke on the use of video as a tool for investigating a community development project. They observed that the visual representation evocatively reflected the emotional context and the state of relationships, even during video clips without the accompanying audio.

These video clips of a BCCF meeting depicted who was in the room, when people felt the need to step outside, moments of debate, and even tenderness, as reminders that the meetings are about community work and love for the community. An undercurrent of the initial responses was the acknowledgment that though the video was long (an hour of running time, at the request of the RAC) and the perspectives were emotionally heavy, the voices were important to share. Notably, RC members expressed that the challenges at BCCF extend beyond the farm field, and out to the history of institutional violence that has left trauma in Jane-Finch. Even at this point in the process, suggestions were made at the screening to add even more context to the previous loss of community spaces, in order to pay tribute to the people and organizations involved.

Speaking on the emotionally charged video, one participant stated: *“People were trying to hold back [during the interviews] because they’ve given so much. It’s real, people were hurt, it impacted people’s relationships. This was not just work, it was also taken home.”* The challenge of this video project was to portray people’s experiences accurately and in a way that allowed the work to continue in a constructive way.

Habermas’ conception of rationality and an elimination of conflict in TCA therefore must be reworked. The emotional debate that is constitutive of a deliberative democracy in the ‘ongoing negotiation of citizenship’ should be leveraged for social mobilizing. Another limitation to the liberatory power of TCA is that effective dialogue requires resources. Grant (1994) explains, “Participation is a luxury” and “it requires skill (e.g., in public speaking), resources (e.g., for child care), money (for legal advice), and

time” (pp.205-206). Thus it is argued that space for communication and dissent can be powerful insofar as expressing sources of tension, but it must be structured around a presumption of redefining power relations (Gualini and Bianchi, 2015).

The struggle to co-create a Transition model with limited resources was raised repeatedly during interviews. *“The compensation question is huge,”* said one resident pointing out that *“to ask a community who already has their double or triple jobs, and responsibilities, beyond that to come and take over a farm, that’s a huge commitment”*. However, the resident also notes that most actors in alternative agriculture carry economic burdens, management included, and so *“it’s important to recognize that this is intricately connected to bigger pictures of whether we can have food sustainability in a system where food is just produced for profit”*. The community farm dynamics are imbedded within a wider, exploitative economic system that facilitates inequality and trivializes the value of education and labour-intensive agriculture.

### *Role of Conflict in (Postmodern) Planning Theory*

Conflict pertaining to the politics of space can be linked to the relationships between power, space production, and knowledge production. In postmodern planning debates, the notion of what constitutes legitimate ‘knowing’ presents an ongoing challenge, where *“postmodernism is difference, fluidity, indeterminacy”* (Ahmed, 1999, p.12). A restructuring of valid knowledge is particularly pertinent in food justice discussions implicating the marginalized groups struggling to gain sovereignty against a backdrop of external organizations seeking to *help* or *plan for* people.

Moreover, planning may not only intervene in conflict by mediating between groups, but it can itself act as an instrument of conflict based on a Western cultural framework premised on a particular worldview of expertise, land use, and human-environment relations (Porter, 2008). Generalizing an “unbounded postmodernism” is also an arm of hegemony, as Ahmed cautions (1998, p.6). In the search for the plural and just societies discussed in post-modern planning, Ahmed’s critique of postmodernist conceptions and explicit claims of postmodernism is essential. Ahmed argues that the assumption of a stable post-modernism should be undone, and that naming instances of postmodernism actually contradicts the role of evaluating postmodernism by continuously reordering fluidity and difference. Ahmed explains, “while postmodernism constructs itself as an object, that object remains an impossible one” (p.12). Referencing Steven Connor’s *Postmodernist Culture* (1989), Ahmed demands a recognition of postmodernism as a construction that *does something*, rather than simply signifying something (p.7).

This problem is reminiscent of the overall project of building a *community farm*. Though the name itself implies that the farm project seeks to serve the community, as raised in the video, the definitions and values associated with this idea must constantly be adjusted and redefined by the community if local agency is ever to manifest in a community development project model. BCCF must not only be symbolic, it must act and react in a reiterative process.

Planners are therefore called to continuously restructure knowledge claims and practices that may claim the identities of political subjects on their behalf, tokenizing

marginalized subjects as *different* and serving to paternalistically speak *for* others.

Planners have a responsibility to question “which differences matter?” while being mindful of how this process can both include and exclude (p.192).

It follows that the role of planner as neutral mediator is under debate. Whereas planning has historically been perceived as linking disparate groups, i.e. government and citizens, and acting “outside of the realm of power” (Forester, 1982), Donald Leffers (2015) takes a Foucaudian approach and argues that planning has a role in both producing and resolving conflict by actively contributing to knowledge production. For example, planners define the meaning of *just* urbanism and *good* planning practice, legitimate particular sources of knowledge in policy recommendations, and both shape and advance discourse on sustainability narratives (Leffers, 2015). Therefore planning theory tends to regard planning as both “an institutional instrument of power” and a conflict resolution tool (Pizzo and Di Salvo, 2015, p.113).

Drawing on the role of planning, then, Leffers investigates “how the urban public-often through conflict- exercises its citizenship” (p.127) and further interrogates when do these acts serve the status quo, and when are they meaningful political acts of citizenship?

#### *‘Radical negativity’: Building possibilities through dissent*

Scholars engaging in the role of conflict in planning argue that the goals should not necessarily be to ‘transcend’ conflict (Gualini, 2015; Leffers, 2015). Rather, conflict opens up avenues to (re)politicize urban planning and planning theory. Conflict adds

meaning to politics and becomes a transformative change agent. Thus the role of planning is not necessarily to erase conflict in favour of consensus, but through a communicative lens enable debate as a constitutive part of deliberative democracy. Debate is an activation of urban citizenship, it lights up the 'differences that matter' noted by Ahmed (1998). Gualini echoes this sentiment by noting that agonistic pluralism is "inherently transformative" when the discourse is continuously re-negotiated (2015, p. 21).

Following, Leffer (2015) argues that a reconceptualization of power and conflict is in order; the role of planning is not necessarily to 'resolve' conflict, and power is not solely about domination. A 'power to' engage, resist, dialogue, and participate provide an interpretation of Foucault that opens up a "politics of hope and possibility" (p. 140).

### *"No justice, no peace"*

It is fitting in this discussion, of the role of conflict to disrupt social meanings and policy discourse, to address the words of Arundhati Roy. In the author's acceptance speech for the 2004 Sydney Peace Prize, Roy self-identifies as a "troublemaker" and "a person who spends most of her time thinking of strategies of resistance and plotting to disrupt the putative peace". Roy continues, noting that it is a falsehood to identify her as a 'voice for the voiceless', since "there's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced or the preferably unheard" (2004). Acknowledging this demand by communities to speak for themselves, film and digital ethnography may have a role in policy to force a space for discursive politics and provide a platform for

argumentation and struggle. To demand power to step aside in acknowledgement of others' voices is one step towards transforming hegemonic policy, to both learn and unlearn through meaning-making, to dismantle the political invisibility (or suppression) of political subjects.

The affective power described by Ahmed (1998) and the disrupting nature of dissent described by Roy (2004) constitute how the medium of video may be useful in mobilizing new understandings and shared meaning. After screenings of the video with both the RC and the project partners, viewers commented that the emotions worn on the faces of those pictured spoke just as effectively as the verbal stories. Whether expressing excitement about current farm programming and the BCCF's potential, or anxiety about earlier trials and issues, these experiences leapt from the screen.

It is also notable that responses to the video screenings by the two groups differed markedly. While the RC felt affirmed in their experiences and how they drew meaning from the course of events, some project partners felt that the video predominantly reflected the tensions that surfaced in Winter 2014, despite the existence of progress that has been made since then, according to some RAC members and project partners.

As such, the video project continues to evolve with the ongoing Transition process, and the status of future video screenings and facilitated meetings is still under discussion. Evaluation remains a challenge for the project. Though the general consensus in both screenings was that the views shared were legitimate and important to hear, how the video's content will help the Transition Plan remains to be determined.

Unfortunately, evaluating the progress of acknowledging trauma and moving through it with accountability and optimism is difficult at this stage due to the infancy of the project's facilitation stage. As the videographer, I made an effort to practice this philosophy of 'looking alongside' and sought to follow the guidance of the RAC to ensure that the video empowered subjects to tell their own stories through participatory action.

An additional question that surfaced, however, is whether advocacy content can bridge differences and mediate healing. The RAC intended the video to highlight their perspectives- the project partners were not invited into this process- and therefore the video is primarily a platform for community voices with less of an emphasis placed on the perspectives of others. During the semi-structured interviews, some participants prioritized sharing their understandings of community hurt over celebration of instances of progress. Therefore the major challenge I experienced with this advocacy piece was the potential to alienate. Dedicating the majority of the space to exploring the pain and historical tension in the community resulted in some project partners voicing that the video did not provide clarity on how to proceed.

Due to the ongoing nature of the Transition process and the video project itself, it is too soon to measure the pain tolerance required for healing to take place in a community project. For now, the video has highlighted a collection of experiences that must be addressed in order to build bridges/ The video has also sparked further debate on how multiple 'truths' can inform decision-making moving forward.

### *Am I the Right Person?*

At times during the project, I experienced self-doubt, asking myself whether I was the right person to be documenting this process as interviewer, videographer, and editor. I feared replicating the all-too-common practice of outsiders entering a space to research a group that has already been exhaustively analyzed under the academic microscope. I shared my feelings with some members of the RAC and with a few professors. They all asked, are you taking up space that would have otherwise been filled by community? Did anyone else have the capacity or resources at the time? Are you taking the emotional and intellectual responsibility to commit to the community's needs? These conversations helped me to recognize that I was trying to leverage my privilege as a graduate student to contribute to a project that would not have happened otherwise at a critical juncture, the Transition process. And because the project was informed by a participatory action approach, community was involved as they saw fit, whether by determining the grant budget and interview questions, making comments on the video edits, or by suggesting whose voices should be given a platform.

### **Conclusion and Future Directions: Who Decides and Who Benefits?**

Cicacci (2010) studies the uses of film in the history of planning and regards film as an old, 'precious' tool for new and necessary participation (p.13). Ciacci argues that the language of film is based on emotional mechanisms that take facts and situations and provides a narrative to trigger viewers to become involved and make judgements.

Arguably, this use of emotional capacity for decision-making responds to Ahmed's debates in the *Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

Also recognizing the affective power of digital ethnography, Sandercock (2010) notes that the aim of this approach is "both to evoke and to provoke" (p.76). That is, multimedia can represent the sounds, feelings, and moving images of urban life while also stimulating local conversation about the content. Film, and specifically participatory video, in contemporary urban planning fits within the communicative planning framework. It seeks to produce another dimension of space, a language that centres on the agency of people as planning actors. The medium is the method. For food justice, closing the gap between conventional 'experts' and the many actors that continuously remake the urban fabric is critical to creating shared meaning and addressing redistributive equity.

Nevertheless, participatory video and filmmaking still face challenges in meaningfully disrupting power relations and being careful not to recreate hegemonic practices. The acts of deciding what makes the cut and whose stories are told, by whom, and how are exercises in power (Cizek, 2005). This means that for video to address these structural limitations, the production must be imbedded in a clear and mutually agreeable process, according to Sandercock and Attili (2012).

On creating a responsible process, video was only one component of the research. The facilitation process we had built into the dialogue to involve multiple parties was a critical component of the methodology and, without it the project would have been insufficient to address the complexities of the farm. It became increasingly

evident through interviews and the project itself that a community video on a highly charged issue required someone with both capacity and third-party legitimacy that was dedicated to listening, mediating, and making recommendations. Using video without a clear mediation process could actually cause harm by opening up community traumas without steps for closure. In retrospect, the research project design would have additionally benefitted from extending the role of the facilitator beyond the video screening. Due to the differing responses of each audience, a clear process for follow-up would have demonstrated prudence after uncovering wounds. Certainly, creating space for dissent and debate have been a major focus of the project for the RAC. One project partner expressed that, realistically, “weeks of facilitation” would be necessary to address the video content, not only an individual gathering. On the other hand, members of the RAC are interested to bring the video to the public through future community screenings.

Addressing the future direction of BCCF remains a challenge, even with a hired consultant. Funds and time are limited. And to manage the farm’s ongoing operations and programming while grappling with these internal debates places stress on already finite capacities and strained relationships. Yet, project partners and community members remain at the table and are willing to engage in conflict and debate out of passion for the project and the community. One resident states that *“We keep pushing down a path of building something without unpacking the actions that have happened. I think we're getting to a place now”*, emphasizing the importance of confronting challenging topics. A former farmer opines that though mistakes have been made that

created rifts in the community, if sincere efforts are made, *“there has to be an opportunity for Everdale to be right again”* in order to take next steps in good faith.

The fact that our video project came to feed into the facilitator’s work, as it provided momentum to the overall transition process, speaks with clarity to the BCCF project as a whole in how the farm is nestled in much deeper social questions. This facilitator was the right person to facilitate a conversation around the video project having already dedicated several months as a consultant to understanding BCCF through an anti-racism and anti-oppression (ARAO) approach. Moreover, as he conducted research and interviews to feed into his recommendations for the transition, the facilitator acknowledged that many of his observations were echoed in the themes of the video. That is, the farm- and its opportunities and problems- are about more than the act of growing food. BCCF connects issues of race and class, NGO dynamics in marginalized communities, funding mechanisms for local projects, meaning-making in interpersonal dynamics, and the insidiousness of power.

Ultimately, the use of the video as a tool within a larger process was a major strength of the project. Given the power of the views expressed, BCCF will require a deeper, longer-term facilitation process moving forward. The project partners have invested in this process by inviting a consultant to guide the necessary work, bringing RC members on to the Everdale board of directors, and even participating in the video project. As communicated repeatedly during interviews with community members, the conversation surrounding a governance transition is a long-term process that involves

breaking down the ethics of who has power over decision-making and how benefits are distributed. This process involves a wide body of actors, whom are not yet all defined.

Notably, the TRCA was missing from this video project. Though tensions bubbled from perceptions of the project's quick initiation that sought to set up a farm in order to create something tangible that could inspire community support, conversations did not rest on any role of the TRCA in facilitating the conditions for the initial project challenges. A next step could be to work with the TRCA on building collaboration into future land use projects based on sustainability and community development criteria.

A major theme that surfaced repeatedly is whether the community farm model can or should be for-profit. A number of interviewees expressed that paying farmers a living wage while subsidizing the costs of food creates a gap in the finances. Yet, another voiced that small-scale farming can be profitable and liberate the farmer from the global capitalist agricultural system. Clearly, the idea of a community farm embodies the notion of an ongoing negotiation, the unstable consensus that rocks between shared meaning and continuous knowledge production.

In a sea of uncertainty and courage, the participatory action video revealed both pain and hope in a community's determined work towards food justice. Given the complexity of people's layered experiences in socio-economic oppression, engaging with conflict in order to unravel power and social location may be a critical stepping stone for the farm's future. Moreover, using participatory action video as a planning tool to harness narratives may be critical to informing land use decisions for a just food system.

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