

**COMMUNITY GLEANING, FOOD INJUSTICE, AND THE ALTERNATIVE FOOD
MOVEMENT IN KELOWNA, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

by

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Abstract

This thesis applies a food justice lens to explore the inequities within Kelowna, B.C.'s emerging alternative food movement (AFM). This lens is further used to examine the practice of gleaning and its opportunities for food access and inclusivity. By drawing on critical race theory and post-structural feminist theory, under the broader umbrella of community based participatory research principles, this study challenges the existing discourse of 'local food' in Kelowna.

The primary research question focuses on the lived experience of food injustice in Kelowna's AFM to investigate the often-invisible realities of individuals at the margins of this movement. A secondary question focuses on how a community-gleaning project in Kelowna is making issues of food injustice more visible in the AFM. Findings suggest that, although Kelowna is an affluent agricultural community with an aspiring AFM, it is not exempt from the structural causes of hunger; rather, it tends to overlook issues of food inequity because it prioritizes local, healthy, and sustainable food without acknowledging the systemic challenges to accessing this type of food. This study also finds that Kelowna's gleaning project is harnessing the issue of food waste to create an opportunity for engaging with food justice across diverse populations.

This research is not representative of a majority of individuals experiencing food injustice, but instead focuses on a few in-depth experiences that act as a starting point for understanding and contending with food injustice. The participatory and praxis-centred approach used in this thesis emerged as a pragmatic tool that shows how a food justice approach can re-create a foodscape that acknowledges those at the margins and is inclusive, participatory, and enables all people to access healthy, local food.

Preface

In accordance with UBC College of Graduate Studies policy, this preface provides confirmation of ethics board approval, and details my work from relevant publications used in this thesis.

- Ethics board approval for this study was issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board – Okanagan. Certificate Number: H14-03024.
 - Parts of Chapters Two, Three, and Six are based on a paper I co-authored with my supervisor, Dr. Jon Corbett. I conducted all of the research for this paper; I carried out a literature review, drew on my experiential data gained through my community work, and, with ethics board approval, used preliminary findings from my Master’s research study. I was responsible for the majority of the writing.
- Beischer, A. & Corbett, J. (2016). “Food justice as a response to hunger on our Canadian Foodscapes: How a community-gleaning project is addressing depoliticized food insecurity through a food justice praxis.” *Justice Spatiale – Spatial Justice*. (Special Issue, 8). <http://www.jssj.org/>.

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Dedication

To my mom: you are a truly remarkable woman who single-handedly raised all three of us in the garden and taught us dignity, resilience, and the value of community. My Master's degree is the culmination of your constant encouragement to reach for more through education. This thesis is my testament to you and all you have taught me.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The focus of this thesis grew out of a need to pragmatically address social inequities in my hometown of Kelowna, B.C. within the context of increasing food poverty. A systemic pattern of injustice became apparent during my work as the Coordinator for the Okanagan Fruit Tree Project (OFTP), a non-profit organization that gleans unused fruit to donate to community organizations, as well as through my position as a board member with the Central Okanagan Food Policy Council (COFPC). I draw on community-based research and participatory methods within a broader qualitative methodology to look at the embedded disparities inherent throughout the emerging alternative food movement (AFM)¹ in Kelowna and how inequitable access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food remains a largely invisible social issue. I also focus on how gleaning might align with food justice principles, and use the model of the OFTP to explore how community gleaning makes issues of food injustice more visible. Throughout this thesis, I intentionally use the term food poverty to describe the more systemic causes of hunger.

In discussing food access, I also made a distinction between equality and equity. The dominant construction of equality as fairness tends to gain the most traction as a discursive and popular framework. Fundamentally, this concept equates fairness with the uniform distribution of resources and advances the idea that every person is entitled to the same level of access or opportunity (Kranich, 2005). This interpretation is problematic because it does not account for the historic and systemic injustices that impede access to begin with. Equity, on the other hand, aims to eliminate these barriers by developing resources and institutions that facilitate access to

¹ The alternative food movement stems from food activism that critiques the global industrial food system and its associated impacts on the environment, health, and on the treatment of workers. This movement promotes the development of localized food systems by facilitating connections between producers and consumers and prioritizes an understanding of how food is produced (Guthman, 2008).

the benefits of society for marginalized or vulnerable citizens (Kranich, 2005). How a society upholds the conditions of access and opportunity is ultimately a measure of its fairness and justice. In Kelowna, injustice continues to be rooted in the inequitable access to the region's abundance despite the flourishing AFM.

Although I identified my research topic during my work at the OFTP and other volunteer activities, my interest in food justice began during my childhood. I grew up in a single-parent family where my mom struggled to meet the demands of caring for and feeding three children on a very limited income. It was during this time in the early 1990s that she started the first community garden in Kelowna. Looking back, the community garden was a profound and defining experience in my life. On our 15 by 40 foot plot of land we grew local, seasonal, and organic produce that we would eat both fresh or preserved throughout the winter.



Figure 1. The Westbank Community Garden overlooking Okanagan Lake, 1994.

At the community garden, people from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, faiths, ages, cultures, and abilities came together and a social support network developed. These social

connections in the garden transformed the land and it became a place of community and inclusion where my family and others could access food in a just and dignified way. Members shared seeds, gardening advice, and tools, offered carpools and childcare for single parents, or helped elderly members with weeding and harvesting. These informal arrangements later evolved into formal workshops offered by community garden members that focused on budgeting, food preservation, and educational sessions about seeds and harvesting. The transition to formal arrangements and the development of social connections helped build individual capacity and a sense of community.

Today, Kelowna has become a regional centre for emerging food trends. Following the growth of the wine industry, the city is “exploding with delectable concoctions made according to the gospel of eating” (Michaels, 2014). The Kelowna Farmers’ and Crafters’ Market has become one of the largest markets in B.C., showcasing the region’s abundance and variety of local fruits, vegetables, meats, cheeses, and more. Culinary creativity also plays key a role in further stimulating a growing appreciation for local food culture (Michaels, 2016). In the farm-to-table movement, chefs are forging relationships with local poultry, lamb, and beef owners, artisanal cheese and bread makers, and organic farmers to offer unique culinary experiences and locally sourced dishes. This gastronomic shift reflects priorities from within the AFM that urge the consumer to seek out how their food is produced and the path it travels to their plate. Other driving forces in the transformation of Kelowna’s foodscape² include the Okanagan Foodie Tour, the Downtown Kelowna Foodie Fight, and the Canadian Culinary Championships. Events such

² The term foodscape originates in field of geography and is also used in urban studies and public health when referring to urban food environments. A foodscape is not fixed and its boundaries shift in response to changes in the food environment. For the purpose of this study, I also draw on the sociological understanding of foodscapes that includes “the institutional arrangements, cultural spaces, and discourses that mediate our relationship with our food” (MacKendrick, 2014, p. 16).

as Devour Kelowna further promote the local food scene by bringing together celebrity chef Vikram Vij with the city's finest creators in food and drink (Buchanen, 2014). A well-known local chef, Bernard Casavant, describes participation in this budding food and culinary culture in Kelowna as a step in "understanding your sense of place" (Michaels, 2014).

However, 'understanding your sense of place' might look different depending on your position in Kelowna's foodscape. As I witnessed the evolution of a new food culture in Kelowna and marvelled at its ability to promote a more local, sustainable, and healthy way of living, I wondered if this new food culture was reproducing exclusion and if it was equitably meeting the needs of a growing population of people experiencing food poverty. Through this practice of questioning and problematizing the status quo it became apparent that although "food can be a source of material and cultural empowerment, it can also reflect, and even create, social and economic hierarchies" (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011, p. 11). As such, I saw food as a medium through which issues of food poverty and social injustice could be made visible within our foodscapes.

When situated in a social justice framework, food poverty in my hometown becomes an issue of *food justice*. Rooted in the relationship between systemic oppression and food, food justice aims to transform the current food system³ – by challenging disparities in food access, exploitative labour practices, and environmental degradation that result from the global industrial food system and conventional agriculture (Alkon & Agyeman 2011; Gottlieb & Joshi 2010; Saadeh, 2015). Ultimately, food justice seeks to institutionalize equity in the decision-making processes and distribution of resources in a food system (Cadiuex & Slocum, 2015, Allen 2009;

³ Food systems encompass the chain of activities from food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999). Food systems can occur at different, and often overlapping, scales from smaller, local chains to larger chains part of the global industrial food system (Campbell, 2004).

Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Alkon and Norgaard, 2009; Hamm & Bellows, 2003; Holt-Giménez, 2009).

As a form of praxis, the active embodiment of theory, food justice offers practical direction for creating new systems predicated on justice, equity, and human rights (Food Secure Canada, 2014). To date, food justice has predominantly been applied in theory rather than in practice through tangible, community-based projects with concrete outcomes. Current literature specifies the need for food poverty to be explored more fully through a food justice praxis (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Dixon, 2014; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010; Slocum, Cadieux, & Blumberg, 2016). In my research, I applied a participatory and praxis-oriented approach to gain insight into the lived experience of food injustice. However, my implementation of CBPR faced certain limitations. The Behavioural Research Ethics Board at the University of British Columbia Okanagan had concerns about the privacy of individuals appearing in photographs in the photovoice project, and requested that I use multiple consent and assent forms to offset these perceived risks. These academic forms were often intimidating for participants to use, and ultimately became a barrier to carrying out participatory research with this population. Another limitation is the relatively small number of individuals who informed my findings around gleaning. The OFTP staff is limited to myself and the Executive Director, and it proved difficult to recruit gleaners who experience food poverty because the OFTP's volunteer system does not require people to disclose their financial or food circumstances. More community-based and participatory research might involve a broader population and diverse actors. It may also include a larger degree of community consultation. Despite these limitations, my methodological approach was key to discovering food justice strategies that opened up new spaces for dialogue and action.

This thesis is based on my research with five community stakeholders, who formed a research advisory team, and 10 participants who took part in a photovoice project and interviews. These 15 individuals were key to helping me understand food poverty and exclusion from participating in alternative or niche food initiatives as it relates to social injustice. They also informed my understanding around the social justice potential within the OFTP, a community-gleaning project. I purposefully grounded my research in the Kelowna community and drew on my experiences in the food security field to further my understanding this topic. A secondary objective of this thesis is to respond to the emerging body of literature that has identified social justice principals as a priority for addressing food system disparities (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010; Lang & Heasman, 2004; Community Alliance for Global Food Justice, 2013; Just Food, 2010; Loo, 2014).

I chose to carry out this research in my hometown based on my insider positioning and because Kelowna stands in stark contrast to other food access studies that focus on inequities within marginalized geographies such as low-income neighbourhoods (Kremer & DeLiberty, 2011), inner-city food deserts (Walker, Keane, & Burke, 2010), and communities with low-agricultural potential (Morton, Bitto, Oakland, & Sand, 2008). Kelowna is predominantly an affluent agricultural community with an emerging AFM fuelled by a cultural and economic emphasis on local food and the tourist industry. However, the focus on ‘all-things-foodie’ has the tendency to erase or (re)inscribe the realities of those who don’t have access to the region’s abundance. While poverty is now widely recognized as the underlying cause of hunger (Riches, 2011; Tarasuk, 2001; Levkoe, 2014; Andree, Ballamingie, & Sinclair-Waters, 2014), the case of Kelowna demonstrates that even affluent cities with an aspiring AFM are not exempt from the structural causes of hunger; rather, they tend to overlook issues of food inequity by prioritizing

local, healthy, and sustainable food without acknowledging the systemic challenges to accessing this type of food.

To explore food injustice in Kelowna, I position space in my analysis as a physical location that becomes place through the influence of economic processes, culture, politics, history, and social relations. For example, the community garden that my family participated in was a large plot of land donated by a local farmer. This space became a place of importance through the social connections and practices that took place within in. Therefore, place is subjective and socially constructed by discourses and practices that, in turn, shape identities and realities (Peake & Ray, 2001). This conceptualization invites a phenomenological perspective that seeks to understand how people make meaning of their lived experience in these places, and simultaneously exposes mainstream assumptions about places (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

Valentine's (2007) work largely informs my understanding of lived experience. She calls on feminist geography to attend to the broader social structures that influence the production of space and the "material and everyday" (Valentine, 2007, p. 14). Specifically, she proposes that questions of power and social inequities should be examined through the lived experience. In my study, I focused on the lived experience of food injustice to understand how realities of food poverty and injustice are socially constructed and spatially located at the margins of Kelowna's AFM. I also used this as a tool to offer a counter narrative to the mainstream conversation about the AFM by exposing who can participate in shaping the foodscape and who is excluded. To do this, I positioned the lived experiences of individuals in this study in a broader analysis of how the privileged groups in Kelowna "systematically define ways of being, and to mark out those who are in place or out of place" (Valentine, 2007, p.18; Simonsen, 1996). This enabled me to investigate how the dominant discourses and practices in Kelowna are created, reproduced, and

challenged in the spaces of the AFM on the changing foodscape (Valentine, 2007; Kobayshi & Peake, 2000; Weedon, 1987).

My research seeks to answer one overarching question: what is the lived experience of food injustice in Kelowna's AFM? The motivation behind this question was to investigate the often-invisible realities of those who are not afforded a presence within the changing foodscape. I did this by positioning individual's stories of disenfranchisement, ideological and financial exclusion, ingenuity, empowerment, and resilience at the forefront of the gentrification of the food system. A secondary question focuses on how the OFTP is positioned within Kelowna's evolving food paradigm and if it's gleaning activities offer alternative opportunities for more dignified access to food and inclusivity as the community garden did for my family.

This topic is explored in-depth across seven chapters. Chapter Two is a literature review that contextualizes the invisibility of food injustices under a depoliticized food security framework. I argue that, while the AFM has emerged in response to growing food poverty rates (Heldke, 2009), its failure to negotiate a more socially just agenda maintains the invisibility of food access inequities and even creates new injustices. In Chapter Three, I situate my both my experience as an insider and findings from the literature review in the context of Kelowna's growing food movement and discuss how its current discourses and practices construct access to food. I also discuss gleaning within this alternative food paradigm and begin to explore its opportunities for facilitating democratic, participatory, and equitable food access practices in ways that a depoliticized food security framework cannot.

In Chapter Four, I describe my methodological approach. This includes a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that guided my project design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and final actionable results. I draw on critical race theory (CRT) and post-

structural feminist ideas under the broader umbrella of community based and participatory research principles (CBPR) and food justice values to frame my arguments. Chapter Five outlines the results of my first research question that highlight the lived experience of food injustice in aspects Kelowna's AFM. Chapter Six addresses my second research question and discusses opportunities for food justice within gleaning practices. The seventh and final chapter weaves together my experience, the literature reviews, methodology, and theory to summarize the findings in the thesis and offers suggestions for future research and action with an emphasis on a food justice praxis.

Chapter 2. Literature Review: The Depoliticization of Food Security & Invisibility of Food Poverty

Hunger is a largely unseen problem in Canada today. Commonly, hunger and malnutrition are viewed through the framework of food security, defined as “a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2014, p. 50). However, growing food poverty rates against the backdrop of neoliberal restructuring of the global food system, reductions in social security programs at the national level, the associated rise of charitable food relief, and emerging place-based niche food movements have eroded the political efficacy of food security.

My first research question aims to understand the lived experience of food injustice in Kelowna’s AFM. As part of this process of investigation, I undertake a literature review using conventional academic sources to explore the structural causes underlying food access inequities and ground my analysis in an emerging body of food justice literature. This allows me to later situate my research findings in a broader context of injustice in Chapters Five and Six. In Sections 2.1 to 2.5, I contextualize how inequitable access to healthy food has largely become an invisible societal issue as food security has become increasingly depoliticized. In Section 2.6 and 2.7, I further argue that while the AFM offers new avenues for accessing local, healthy food, it has yet to negotiate a more socially just agenda and remains complicit in reproducing inequities.

2.1 The Depoliticization of Food Security

The issue of hunger was first brought to international attention in 1933, though it was not until the global food crisis of the 1970s, characterized by unprecedented increases in the cost of

staple foods, that the term *food security* was coined (Allen, 2009). The act of defining food security at the 1974 World Food Conference was significant because it acknowledged the inalienable right to freedom from hunger on the international stage, and further identified the state's role in ensuring this right was upheld (Allen, 1999b). More recently, food security has been re-emphasized within the context of the post-2015 Development Agenda and Millennium Development Goals as a “right to adequate food” (FAO, IFAD, & WFP, 2015). Despite the declarations and rhetoric presented at world summits and international conventions, as well as governments' constant affirmation of the right to food, food insecurity has become increasingly depoliticized while hunger rates persist as a serious social problem and health concern (Riches, 1999; Jacques, 2015). Weak efforts to combat hunger and poverty over recent decades suggest that ensuring equal access to healthy food is not regarded as a priority in wealthy countries (Riches, 2011; Jacques, 2015).

2.2 Food Poverty in Canada

Deteriorating food poverty conditions since the 1970s can largely be viewed as a consequence of neoliberalism, an ideology that influences political-economic governance based on the continual expansion of market relations and significant reductions in government social security programs (Larner, 2000). These policies have disarmed the political nature of a food security framework by transforming people into individual, ‘me-first’ consumers as opposed to socially responsible, engaged citizens that hold their government accountable for addressing the food needs of each person (Riches, 2011). In Canada, the contemporary persistence of food poverty is rooted in the tenacious levels of poverty, hunger, and inequity created and maintained by neoliberal policies.

While affluent nations rarely experience large scale and protracted hunger crises (more commonly manifest through famine and drought), the “lack of access to food is a deep, prevalent, and serious threat to the health and well-being of the population as a whole, and of children in particular” (Heldke, 2009, p. 213). According to the *Household Food Insecurity In Canada* report, four million Canadians experienced food poverty in 2012, characterized by buying less, cheaper, and nutritionally-poor food, skipping meals or going days without eating (Tarasuk, Mitchell, & Dachner, 2014). In a mission to examine how the right to adequate food should be realized in Canada, the UN Special Rapporteur found that many of those who experience food poverty are likely to be members of vulnerable or marginalized groups: households with low-income⁴, individuals on social assistance⁵, those who don’t their own dwelling, female-headed single-parent households, Aboriginal populations living off-reserve, and new immigrant households (De Schutter, 2012). Perhaps one of the most troubling examples is that Aboriginal households in Northern Canada face rates of food poverty more than double (27 percent) that of the average Canadian household level (12.5 percent) (Council of Canadian Academies, 2014). These alarming food poverty rates are due in part to neoliberal restructuring of the global food system, which has consistently undermined the right to food and eroded the political efficacy of a food security framework. As a result this social injustice is often not reflected in the political discourse.

⁴ According to the *Household Food Insecurity in Canada 2013* report, wages, salaries, or self-employment are the main sources of income for 61.1 percent of those who identify as food insecure (Tarasuk, Mitchell, & Dachner, 2015).

⁵ The *Household Food Insecurity in Canada 2013* report also indicates that 18.3 percent of food insecure individuals rely on social assistance as their main source of income (Tarasuk, Mitchell, & Dachner, 2015). Note: In 2013 and 2014, the Household Food Security Survey Module was optional, and B.C., Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Yukon chose not to measure food insecurity and are not represented in the report’s statistics.

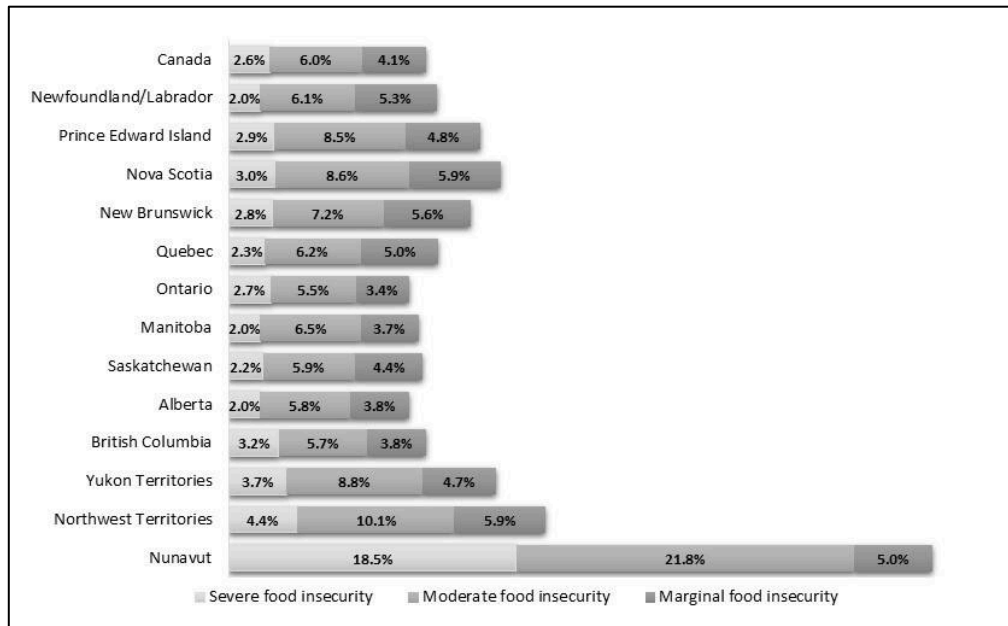


Figure 2. Household food insecurity in Canada, by province.

(Source: Tarasuk, Mitchell, & Dachner, 2014).

2.3 Neoliberal Restructuring of the Global Industrial Food System

Barriers to accessing sufficient, safe, and nutritious food have been linked to a unique phenomenon in the neoliberal restructuring of the global food system – too much of the wrong kind of food (Holt-Gimenez, 2012; Jacques, 2015). Rapid technological developments in agriculture over the last 70- 80 years have meant that the world currently produces one and a half times the amount of food to feed every person on the planet (Holt-Gimenez, 2012). Yet, growing numbers of people are malnourished and overweight due to the overproduction of cheap food full of sugar, salt, fat, starch, artificial coloring and preservatives, and pesticide residues (Rosset, 2006). This nutritionally poor food is made readily accessible through what Jacques (2015) calls the “lax, often corporate-designed, regulatory environment of neoliberalism” (p. 432) that privileges big agribusiness, subsidies, and transcontinental trade agreements (Slocum, 2007; Morales, 2011; Donald & Blay-Palmer, 2006).

Current statistics outlined in the *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015* report show that worldwide hunger has been reduced by 147 million people in the last decade (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2015). On the other hand, these statistics do not account for the systemic malnutrition, namely the widespread epidemic of obesity in some areas (and ironically the disproportionate hunger in others), heart disease, diabetes, and cancer (Rosset, 2006; Slocum, 2007). Undoubtedly, global food insecurity has been recognized as a defining issue in the 21st century (Riches, 2011; Food and Agriculture Organization, 2015; Jacobson, 2007). However, arguments for increased food production (BASF Agro, 2010; Foley, 2011: Foley *et al.*, 2011; John Deere, 2012; Monsanto, 2009; Patel, 2011 in Cadieux & Slocum, 2015, p. 3) mean that the ongoing issue of access to good food remains invisible and does not gain traction in the political discourse. As Vandana Shiva (2008) notes, “the tragedy of industrialized, globalized agriculture is that while commodity markets grow, people starve” (p.127).

2.4 State Retrenchment & the Rise of Emergency Food Relief

Drastic cuts to social assistance programs at the state level have further sanitized the food security framework. Specifically, the right to food has been eroded through the privatization of welfare administration, increasingly strict eligibility criteria, the reduction of benefits that are already inadequate to begin with, and, in British Columbia, the denial of benefits to those convicted of welfare fraud (Riches, 2002; Mirchandani & Chan, 2005). Instead of ensuring constitutional or legal protection of the right to food, policymakers have transferred responsibility to the emergency food sector, relying on volunteers and charity to fill the gaps while providing little funding (De Schutter, 2012; Allen, 1999a; Alkon, 2013). As a result,

emergency food relief programs have become “secondary extensions to weakened social safety nets” (Riches, 2002, p. 648).

Food banks – centralized warehouses where surplus food is collected, stored, and distributed free of charge to hungry people – are perhaps the most common form of food relief in North America (Wakefield, Fleming, Klassen, & Skinner, 2012). The first Canadian food bank opened in Edmonton, Alberta in 1981 with the intention of being a temporary relief operation during the recession of the 1980s (Tarasuk, 2001). Since then, the number of food banks has grown steadily and demand for food assistance is “occurring on a scale not witnessed since the Great Depression of the 1930s” (Tarasuk, 2001, p. 488). According to the *HungerCount 2015* report, over 852,000 Canadians rely on food banks each month (CAFB, 2015). Approximately 30 percent of food banks in Canada reported that they are unable to meet growing demands for food because social assistance benefits have not increased with the cost of living in the past 20 years (CAFB, 2014). For example, the cut-off for a basic standard of living for a single adult is estimated to be \$18,000 annually and social assistance benefits fall nearly \$10,000 short (CAFB, 2015). A study conducted by Goldberg and Green (2009) also found that a 10 percent cut in social assistance benefits increases food bank usage by 14 percent, indicating that neoliberal cutbacks to the welfare state are directly correlated to food poverty. In British Columbia, food banks have reported that individuals on social assistance and disability income make up 65 percent of their client base (CAFB, 2015).

While food banks have become a normal and accepted form of hunger relief (Riches, 2002), they come up short on addressing the underlying causes of food poverty and have been criticized on the nutritional inadequacy of the food being offered, the inability to cope with growing demand, and the lack of dialogue with food relief users over their needs and desires

(Poppendieck, 1999). Critics further argue that those most likely to volunteer for anti-hunger initiatives are the middle-class and that this denies the possibility of equity because it divides participants into dichotomies such as the donor and the recipient, the powerful and the powerless, the competent and the inadequate, the proud and the shamed, and those who define the conditions or rules and those who conform (Poppendieck, 1999; Wakefield et al., 2012; Welsh & MacRae, 1998). The stigma associated with food bank use implies that this is an emotionally taxing way to access food; yet for donors and volunteers giving cans of food has become both culturally and publicly celebrated amidst the decline of the welfare state (Riches, 2011).

More pointedly, both Poppendieck (1999) and Riches (2002, 2011) argue that food banks have assumed the task of feeding the hungry during an era of state retrenchment and have thus become a primary component of the *shadow state* (Wakefield et al., 2012; Mitchell, 2001). The shadow state entails the replacement of publicly provided services by private or non-profit initiatives in an ongoing neoliberal attempt to de-emphasize or ‘roll back’ the state and withdraw from the provision of government provided social services (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Undoubtedly, emergency food relief plays an important role in mitigating some of the serious consequences of hunger and in preventing social unrest. However, the 26 percent increase in Canadian food bank usage since 2008 (CAFB, 2015) indicates that food banks have been unable to adequately address food poverty and are ultimately an expression of the state’s failure to respect, protect, and fulfill the right to food (Riches, 2002). The consequence is that unequal access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food remains a largely invisible social justice issue on our foodscapes.

2.5 The Alternative Food Movement

In recent years, critiques of the global food system have identified longstanding injustices perpetuated against the working poor, indigenous communities, minorities, and other marginalized groups (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). The literature further reflects that a food security framework has been unable to equitably meet the nutritional needs of all people (Heldke, 2009; Tarasuk, 2001; Wakefield et al., 2012; Riches, 2011). These discussions have given way to a profound shift in contemporary food systems as producers and consumers seek to re-claim food from the global industrial food system through an emerging array of ‘alternative’ food initiatives under a broader AFM (Coles, 2016; Alkon, 2013). This shift purports to reject the inequities of the global food system by acknowledging the role of geography in food access (Coles, 2016). Often conceptualized as a progressive way of challenging the dominant food system, this movement encourages consumers to choose food that is local, sustainably produced, and organic over industrially produced and processed food (Guthman, 2011; Heldke, 2009; Bellows & Hamm, 2003).

Although a broad and diverse movement with many subsets (Alkon, 2013), the AFM emerged with the core purpose of establishing “regenerative food system[s]” to help people “control, understand, and influence the food they eat” (Werkheiser & Noll, 2014, p. 202). In an effort to unlink from the global food system, food in this context is re-framed within a uniquely place-based paradigm (Levkoe, 2014) where special emphasis is given to the places and spaces surrounding food (Coles, 2016). Adjectives such as ‘alternative’, ‘specialty’, ‘quality’, and ‘local’ have also formed a new conversation around understanding our foodscapes. Within this discourse, the emerging narratives of ‘we do have choices’, ‘it’s a choice we have to make’, and ‘vote with your forks, three votes a day’ have become standard slogans of the AFM (Donald &

Blay-Palmer, 2006; Dixon, 2014). However, this ‘food-is-a-personal-choice’ narrative is inadequate because it assumes that eating healthy, local food is a dietary choice that can be enjoyed by anyone (Werkheiser & Noll, 2014; Slocum, 2007). By ignoring the structural constraints to accessing food embedded in our landscapes and the lived realities of food disenfranchisement of those who don’t get to ‘buy local’ or ‘vote with [their] fork’, the AFM has failed to address deeply embedded disparities in the food system and even perpetuates unequal access to food in some cases (Levkoe, 2014; Werkheiser & Noll, 2014). More explicitly, it has yet to address how it reproduces spaces of exclusion along the discursive lines of race, class, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, age, disability, and other marginalized peoples (Guthman, 2011; Slocum, 2007).

Critics suggest that calls from within the AFM to “shape up and eat right [...] obscure the fact that not everyone has access to the produce aisle” (Spicher, 2004). Meanwhile, “the 21st century wealthy are dieting, exercising, and buying locally grown [food], while the poor bear the brunt of a food and agriculture system gone awry” (Spicher, 2004). Despite the advancement of this movement, those with limited incomes typically rely on cheap, nutritionally poor food to meet their dietary needs. While the AFM emerged in opposition to the neoliberal global industrial food system and inadequacies of the food security framework, it continues to equate social change with consumer market behaviour (Alkon, 2013). As a result, this movement has only adopted a limited interpretation of the multifaceted and intersecting disparities in our food systems at both the global and local level.

2.6 Food Justice: A Response to Food Poverty

To frame my argument, I draw on Young's (1990) concept of social justice, which is based on the degree to which a society supports the "institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation" (Young, 1990, p 39). This differs from the more common definition advanced by Rawls' book, *Theory of Justice* (1971), which has become one of the primary texts used for understanding social justice. Drawing on liberal ontologies, Rawls' concept of social justice is based on the principles of fairness, equality of opportunity, and mutual obligation through societal relationships that strengthen responsibility for one another (Rawls, 1971). However, liberal notions of rights tend to be inadequate for achieving social justice because they are often "grounded in [the ideals of] autonomy and freedom and [deny] historical-geographical relations of power and the deep structural conditions which perpetuate inequality" (Peake & Ray, 2001, p. 184). From a critical geography standpoint, Rawls' social justice is based on a fragmented view of place that does not take into account realities on "uneven geographies of oppression" (Peake & Ray, 2001, p. 184). Instead, social justice should acknowledge these inequities (race, class, gender, age, and more) and attend to how geographies of marginalized communities are represented and pushed to margins of justice (Peake & Ray, 2001; Young, 1990) on our foodscapes.

In the context of food poverty, social justice becomes *food justice*, which creates a new and more comprehensive language for understanding the places of marginalization and exclusion on our foodscapes (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). Food justice defined by the Community Alliance for Global Food Justice (2013, n.p.):

the right of communities everywhere to produce, distribute, access, and eat good food regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, ability, religion, or community.

Good food is healthful, local, sustainable, culturally appropriate, humane, and produced for the sustenance of people and the planet.

One of the key influences in the development of food justice was the environmental justice movement (EJM), which points out that those living in marginalized geographies are disproportionately exposed to economic and environmental burdens (Sbicca, 2012). As early as the 1980s EJM activists began connecting concerns around discrimination, place, and exclusion from decision-making in development projects to food hardships (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Conceição & Mendoza, 2009). Around the same time, community food groups were negotiating issues of equity, empowerment, and social change in an effort to define their role among a diverse collection of food advocacy groups (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). Food justice movements and theories emerged at the intersection of these critical discussions to advance a broader vision of the right to food. This vision builds on the concept of community food security that seeks to ensure access to safe, sufficient, culturally acceptable, and sustainably produced food (Alkon, 2013). More radically, food justice developed to ensure that vulnerable and marginalized populations are positioned at the centre of discussion regarding how, by whom, and to what ends the food system can be transformed (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010; Alkon, 2013).

Food justice critiques neoliberalism, colonialism, exploitation, systemic racism, and patriarchy through the linked concepts of food sovereignty, food democracy, food solidarity, feminist food justice, and fair trade (Slocum, Cadieux, & Blumberg, 2016). Arguably, it most strongly articulates with the concept of food sovereignty developed by La Via Campesina, an international peasant movement rooted in the global south that positions food as a fundamental human right, and promotes the rights of local people to define their own food systems (Alkon, 2013). In doing so, it actively resists neoliberalism and the global industrial food regime.

While food justice focuses on the inequities that occur along the discursive lines of race, class, gender, disability, and other categories of marginalization, it has been critiqued for its role in reproducing neoliberalism by locating social change in economic action, assuming responsibility where the state has made rollbacks to welfare, and re-producing neoliberal subjectivities that promote individualization and personal responsibility. Alternatively, food sovereignty pairs local and regional food systems with large-scale organization of international campaigns to challenge these pervasive inequities (Alkon, 2013).

Food sovereignty's struggle against the 'market as movement' where individuals 'vote with their forks' also has implications within the context of the AFM. Where neoliberal and other dominant discourses continue to locate alternative food system change in market-based approaches, food sovereignty offers a critical understanding of how power and wealth operate in this movement to reproduce inequities (Giménez and Shattuck, 2011). While not used as a direct lens in this study, food sovereignty informs my critical food justice analysis. Mares and Pena (2011) propose that food sovereignty's bottom-up approach, as well as a focus on power inequities, uniquely position this paradigm as the starting point for engaging with food justice. Based on their studies, they suggest that food sovereignty enables people to conceptualize food not as a commodity, but as a medium that reflects deep-seated social and cultural relationships and place-based identities.

Food justice is a response to deeply-embedded food and income inequity that stems from weak policies. It seeks to transform the social, economic, and environmental inequities in our food systems by asking where, what, and how food is grown, produced, transported, accessed, and eaten (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). Situating these questions in a justice framework creates a space for engaging in "a more radical critique of capitalism, racism, and patriarchy [...], while

simultaneously proposing a set of alternatives that may build economically viable and just agrifood systems” (Sbicca, 2012, p. 457). Food justice is critical of the neoliberal corporate food system, as well as the AFM, and calls attention to the inadequacies of a food security framework in this context.

As an emergent idea, food justice continues to be subject to multiple definitions, including as a theory or framing device, a symbolic or political tool, an ideal, or a claim made by different groups and social or political forces with multitudes of goals or interests (Lang & Heasman, 2004; Community Alliance for Global Food Justice, 2013; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010; Just Food, 2010; Loo, 2014; Slocum, Cadieux, & Blumberg, 2016). Gottlieb and Joshi (2010) point out that food justice has the capacity to open new channels for social and political change, and to play an important role in advancing a broader vision of food as a human right. In a opposing critique, some academics point out that food justice often perpetuates neoliberal practices by re-inscribing middle class, bourgeois, and corporate cultural norms (Guthman 2008; Alkon, 2013; Garzo Montalvo, 2015). Critics like Garzo Montalvo (2015) suggest that this partly has come to fruition through “a confusing overemphasis on race and anti-racism and an almost complete erasure of other systems of domination [...], like class (neoliberal capitalism) and gender (heteropatriarchy)” (p. 128). To avoid reproducing these inequities, food justice must engage with and challenge neoliberal constraints and contend with issues of equity and power in order to re-imagine its role in advancing socially just food systems.

Given this understanding, I believe that a *critical food justice praxis* is the most effective means of employing this idea. Praxis refers to “the melding of theory/reflection and practice/action as part of a conscious struggle to transform the world” (Wakefield, 2007, p. 331). In critical geography, it aims to uncover socio-spatial inequalities between people and places and

challenge the status quo (Fuller & Kitchin, 2004). As a reflexive and situated dynamic, praxis offers the tools to collaborate with marginalized groups and create a collective research experience that addresses their specific needs (Wakefield, 2007). Therefore, this thesis seeks to understand if, when integrated in the community in a concrete way, a food justice praxis may be able to establish democratic and equitable food systems.

Chapter 3. Literature Review: Food Poverty & Waste in Kelowna, B.C. & Gleaning

As discussed in Chapter One, my research questions emerged out of my experiential findings as a community member engaged in food security work and associated conversations with other community members. After turning to the literature to substantiate the gap that I had identified, I re-situated my experiential and academic knowledge in Kelowna to discuss food poverty and food injustice. In this chapter, I first begin by discussing food poverty and food waste in Kelowna, B.C. as forms of food injustice. I then begin to explore my second research question by discussing how the practice of gleaning can illuminate social inequities and facilitate more equitable food access practices in ways that a depoliticized food security framework cannot.

3.1 Food Poverty in Kelowna, B.C.

Kelowna is a mid-size city in the Okanagan Valley that is historically and culturally rooted in agriculture. Since the mid 2000s, Kelowna has become a regional centre for alternative food initiatives and a “full-fledged foodie destination” (Michaels, 2014). This transformation is evidenced by the increasing number of specialized grocery stores, small businesses, and farm gates selling expensive local and organic fare, the steady rise of wine culture, and the farm-to-table concept in which diners can indulge in higher-priced dishes made from ingredients traced back to local farms and orchards (Michaels, 2014). While these emerging food trends indicate the growing presence an AFM offering new ways to access food in Kelowna, they cater to a niche demographic: the palates of white, middle and upper class citizens and tourists.

Historically, Kelowna was a small rural community that specialized in ranching, forestry, and fruit production (Aguiar, Tomic, & Trumper, 2005). With a legacy as an enclave of the

British Empire, the region has strong colonial roots, a history of Aboriginal displacement, and a noticeable distain toward non-white groups. Since the 1980s the city has been re-imagined and re-designed as an ideal retirement location, a vacation destination, a site for technological development, and finally, a place of “whiteness”, “sameness”, and “familiarity” (Aguilar *et al.*, 2005). The City of Kelowna website exemplifies some of these trends as it boasts of fine-dining, unique downtown shops, orchards, vineyards and wine-tastings at internationally-acclaimed wineries, a competitive business industry, a growing high technology sector, golf courses, ski hills, and boating, swimming, and fishing activities (City of Kelowna, 2009; City of Kelowna, 2015). On the other hand, Kelowna is infamously known for its “urban clean-up campaigns and gentrification aimed at purifying public spaces” in order to erase difference (Holmes, 2012, p. 225). With just six percent of the population identifying as a visible minority (compared to the national average of 19 percent, and 27 percent in B.C.) and only 4.5 percent identifying as Aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2013a; Central Okanagan Foundation, 2013), the city’s intolerance to difference is especially evident. Therefore, it is the discourses of conservatism, white colonial attitudes, and the promotion and privileging of middle and upper class social norms that construct entitlements and exclusions to the benefits of society in Kelowna (Holmes, 2012).

When projected onto local foodscapes, these discourses and practices make food poverty an invisible issue that is noticeably missing in the public or political dialogue in Kelowna. Therefore, despite the overt and ostentatious rise of the AFM in Kelowna, access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food continues to be a critical issue for many: food bank usage grew by four percent in Kelowna and West Kelowna in 2014 alone, meaning that nearly 4,000 people accessed its services (Jeffery, 2014). A more recent *HungerCount* survey from March 2016 shows that

2,916 people from these communities (with a combined population of 154,392) rely on the food bank to meet their dietary needs and over one-third of those users are children (Central Okanagan Community Food Bank, 2016)⁶. In January 2016, job losses in the Albertan oil sands industry translated to a 33 percent spike in West Kelowna's food bank usage from the previous year (Seymour, 2016). Growth in demand for the Kelowna food bank sat at 20 percent over this same period (Seymour, 2016).

While food bank statistics help convey the state of food poverty in and around Kelowna, they are by no means an accurate representation. Actual food poverty statistics are likely higher because some food insecure individuals do not use the food bank. Instead, they might use alternative strategies such as gleaning, dumpster diving, and gardening to meet food needs⁷, are not eligible (temporary foreign workers, persons with no fixed address), or use other local food relief organizations. No official food poverty statistics exist in Kelowna, but 14.6 percent of the population lives below the poverty line compared to 8.8 percent nationally (Provincial Health Services Authority, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2013b).

3.2 Food Waste in Kelowna, B.C.

The fact that food poverty is a growing problem in Kelowna is particularly unsettling given the agricultural abundance of the region. Renowned for its grape and apple production, Kelowna grows plenty of other fruits like cherries, apricots, peaches, pears, and plums. It is also

⁶ Statistics appear lower than normal because the West Kelowna and Kelowna Food Banks have recently amalgamated and switched to a new client tracking system that does not account for partner agency usage, emergency visits, bread pick ups, anyone who does not go through intake process, etc. The Executive Director of the Central Okanagan Community Food Bank stated that, although the result is the appearance of decline in usage in March 2016, they know that is not the case (L. Perry, personal communication, April 17, 2016).

⁷ See Chapter Six, Section 6.1 & 6.2.

home to many local farms and there is no shortage of fresh food throughout the Okanagan (City of Kelowna, 2009). Perhaps more disconcerting than the unequal access to this abundance is the large quantity of produce that goes to waste in the city's fields and orchards. While there are no official estimates on food waste for the region, the BC Tree Fruits Cooperative in Kelowna estimates that only 85 percent of the apples grown in the area are brought to the packinghouse (Anonymous, personal communication, March 25, 2015). From there, a further 10 percent, or one million kilograms, are culled. This means that an approximate total of 25 percent of all apples grown in the region go to waste (Anonymous, personal communication, March 25, 2015). The packinghouse also estimates that the percentage of wasted fruit is likely much higher for softer fruits such as cherries, apricots, and peaches (Anonymous, personal communication, March 25, 2015).

Outside of the well-established tree fruit and farm industry, a significant number of private homes have one or more fruit trees on their property. Anecdotes from fruit tree owners show that wasted fruit is a concern, but many do not have the time, ability, or desire to harvest their trees. As one owner put it, "I wasn't sure what we were going to do with [the apples] and it felt terribly wasteful to just let them fall on the ground" (Smith, 2014). Evidently there is a concern about wasted produce, but there is often a disconnect in how it could be used to help those struggling to access healthy food. In combination with the privileging of middle and upper class social norms, the food poverty rates and food waste occurring in orchards, farms, and backyard fruit trees illustrates some of the embedded and systemic inequities that persist in Kelowna.

3.3 Food Policy Councils & Gleaning Initiatives

Inequitable access to food continues to be rooted in the neoliberal global industrial food system, state retrenchment, emergency food relief, and the AFM. However, there are a growing number of initiatives that demonstrate how a food justice praxis, though not always explicitly articulated in this way, is being used to make food poverty visible in communities. Food Policy Councils (FPCs) strongly exemplify the effort to transform local systems through citizen participation and a commitment to equity and sustainability (Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011). In Canada, the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) stands as one of the most successful examples to date; as a sub-committee of Toronto's Board of Health, it is the only FPC in North America to be integrated into a city department and have its Food Charter adopted and used by the city as a guideline for planning, policy, and program development (Wekerle, 2004). As a result, it is strategically situated to influence policy and bring together stakeholders from diverse food sectors to create long-term, sustainable, and socially just solutions to ensure the right to food. The unique positioning of the TFPC and the municipal endorsement of its Food Charter has exclusively enabled it to carve out a new political space to carry forward food justice initiatives in Toronto.

FPCs act as intermediaries between the community and policymakers, so it is becoming increasingly understood that they have the ability to amplify the voices at the margins and improve equity in the community's food system (McCullagh, 2012). Furthermore, they often recognize that action and activity within the community has the capacity to influence policy (McCullagh, 2012). The Central Okanagan Food Policy Council (COFPC) based in Kelowna aims to engage its citizenry in local food issues and advocate for political change in the food system (COFPC, 2008). Unlike the TFPC, the COFPC receives little support from local

government and food security has only recently been recognized as an important issue by the municipality.

The organization began as a grassroots initiative called the Healthy Food Council, which was identified as important by the community food security forum held in 2006 (COFPC, 2008). With representation from local dietitians, activists, the Central Okanagan Community Gardens Society, the local food bank, and concerned citizens, the group aimed to cultivate a more just and sustainable food system by addressing three key issues identified in the forum: high levels of poverty; under-resourced community food programs; and barriers to local food production and food access (COFPC, 2008). One of the COFPC's successful projects is a gleaning initiative that has recently become a separate non-profit organization called the Okanagan Fruit Tree Project (OFTP). It was started by a group of dietitians and the COFPC in 2012, in response to the linked issues of food waste and growing food poverty in Kelowna. In the next section, I discuss the food justice potential within the OFTP's practices by exploring the historical roots and contemporary implications of the practice of gleaning.

3.4 Gleaning & Social Inequity in a Historical Context

Gleaning, an ancient practice rooted in Christian biblical teachings and contemporary humanitarian ideals, involves gathering surplus produce from fields and orchards after the harvest is finished (Almquist, 2012). Biblical narratives from the Old Testament situate gleaning in a theological context. One such example is the story of Ruth harvesting leftover crops during times of scarcity. While modern conceptions of charity have added a secular approach to the practice, both influences have imbued it with important moral values. Because gleaning has historically been done by the poor and vulnerable or on their behalf (Hoisington, 2001;

Marshman, 2015; Badio, 2009), it can also be interpreted as a practice that makes social inequities visible. An early example of this is Jean-François Millet's 1857 painting, *Des Glaneuses* (See Figure 3), which portrays three peasant women stooping to gather leftover stalks scattered across a barren field. In the background, male labourers bundle, stack, and cart the initial harvest back to the farmhouse for storage while the landowner observes the scene from his horse. The image illuminates the stark contrast between “wealth and poverty, [abundance and scarcity], power and helplessness, and male and female spheres” (Vardi, 1993, p. 1426). This painting captured heated debates of the times concerning gleaning. While some felt that the poignant bleakness “seemed to cry out for redress” and expose social inequities, others saw the peasant women as a threat to the social order (Sensier, 1881 in Vardi, 1993, p. 1425).



Figure 3. Painting of female gleaners. From *Des Glaneuses*, by Jean-François Millet (1857).

(Source: *Des Glaneuses*, J.F. Millet, 1857, <http://www.musee-orsay.fr>. Copyright 1890 by Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Reunion des Musées Nationaux. Reprinted with permission).

The history of gleaning reveals a contentious relationship between food and social inequity. Up until the 16th century, gleaning was considered an essential part of landowners' harvests in France and had not yet been recognized by the state as a form of charity (Vardi, 1993). During the Renaissance period, the French government removed gleaning from the harvesting process and legislated that gleaning rights belonged solely to a newly designated category of poor: the old, infirm, and widowed with children (Vardi, 1993; Badio, 2015). To instill landowners with a sense of moral obligation, the state drew on biblical narratives and religious rhetoric such as Leviticus 19:9: "when you reap the harvest of your land, [...] do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and alien." This legislation exacerbated tension between social groups because landowners viewed it as an invasion of private property and a loss of income (Vardi, 1993).

England enforced similar regulations in the 18th century with harsher penalties for those who did not leave their gleanings for the poor. This allowed the Church to transfer its charitable responsibility for the poor to landowners (King, 1992). Despite the theological and allegedly moral underpinnings, the Church's divestment and transfer of responsibility created a disconnect between the social classes, which further fractured society along the divisive lines of class, gender, and ability. Gleaning and its social tension dwindled in the middle of the 19th century with the improvement of real wages and advances in harvest technology, but more recently re-emerged in North America as a humanitarian ethic (Maclas, 1996), and is closely aligned with the principles of food justice.

3.5 Contemporary Gleaning Projects

Today, gleaning programs exist across North America from the Society of Saint Andrews network across the United States, where 20 million pounds of fresh food are harvested each year (Hoisington *et. al.*, 2001) to the over 25 urban Fruit Tree Projects across Canada such as those in Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton, Victoria, Vancouver, Kamloops, and the Okanagan. As a form of food recovery, gleaning is a growing trend with much variation in the practice: post-harvest gleaning; foraging and gathering; dumpster diving through commercial or residential waste for edible food; and intercepting food from grocery stores or restaurants before it is thrown out (Marshman, 2015). Contemporary gleaning differs from its historical roots because volunteers participate in an effort to harvest unwanted food on behalf of, or in collaboration with, those experiencing food poverty. This marks a shift away from gleaning solely as an individual practice and towards a more participatory and community-based approach (Marshman, 2015). These volunteer efforts take place on rural farms, urban backyards, orchards, community garden plots, and public spaces where fresh produce is available.

Studies that examine the use and utility of gleaned produce provide insight into some of the current implications of this collective form of harvesting. Hoisington's *et al.*'s (2001) study of 29 participants from a gleaning project in Washington, USA found that 48 percent of the harvested produce taken home was preserved through canning, freezing, drying, and pickling to create a year-round supply of food, while 9 percent was eaten fresh. A further 43 percent was given away to neighbours, friends, and family members in need. This suggests that gleaning plays a significant role in community building by fostering a sense of sharing and goodwill.

Other benefits of gleaning include reciprocity around sharing knowledge of recipes, gardening, and food preservation tips, stretching food budgets, feeling a sense accomplishment,

gaining a social support network, and physical fitness (Hoisington et al., 2001). The study also found that this particular gleaning project is likely to facilitate opportunities for empowerment because it associates gleaning with open workshops on food preservation, nutrition, and gardening (Hoisington et al., 2001). Given these findings, gleaning programs that assume a humanitarian goal and work at the community level may have the ability “to empower or enhance people’s capacities to control their own lives by acting on their health and nutrition to their own satisfaction” (Hoisington et al., 2001, p. 46).

Similar studies reflect findings regarding how the fresh produce is used, skills gained by participants, and other outcomes of gleaning projects. Kimberly Drage’s study (2003), examines two gleaning projects in Oregon, USA, and situates them within human and social capital frameworks. Another study done by Cook, Gallagher, Holzman, Neracher, and Miotke (2015) focuses on a specific organizational need like financial sustainability, whereas Badio (2009) provides an overview of gleaning and its use as a strategy to achieve food security. Marshman (2015) builds on this idea by exploring volunteer motivations and perceptions in relation to community food security.

Thus far, existing studies on gleaning have not been situated within a food justice framework. However, in combination with the historical and contemporary implications for making social inequities visible, these studies contribute to understanding the opportunities within gleaning for creating democratic, participatory, and socially just food systems. While gleaning projects function as a form of emergency food relief by harvesting unused produce and reallocating it to those in need, they often, though not explicitly articulated, draw on food justice principles. This helps build community capacity around food poverty.

Chapter 4. Methodology

The focus of my Master's research evolved in response to growing social inequities in my hometown in Kelowna, B.C., and was especially influenced by increasing food poverty rates. Approaching this issue as a researcher did not render my community experience irrelevant in the context of this study. Because I am rooted in the community in varying capacities, and am an intrinsic part of ongoing conversations and actions around food security and food justice, it was important to me that my methodology reflects this. To design my project, I drew on the principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR)⁸ to form a guiding methodology for conducting qualitative research. Over the past 10 years, CBPR has “evolved as an effective new research paradigm that attempts to make research a more inclusive and democratic process by fostering the development of partnerships between communities and academics to address community-relevant research priorities” (Flicker, Travers, Guta, McDonald, & Meagher, 2007, p. 478).

⁸ The terms Action Research (AR), Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), Community-Based Research, Community-Engaged Research (CEnR), Community Engaged Scholarship (CES), Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR), Participatory Action Research (PAR), and Participatory Research (PR) are often used interchangeably to refer to community-based research. For the purpose of this study, I use and often replace other terms with the term Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) to reflect the two streams of research methods that I draw on.



Figure 4. Engaged in ongoing food security conversations. Brainstorm of how to improve food security at the COFPC Annual General Meeting, 2014.

This methodological approach enabled me to look at some of the deeply embedded disparities and invisible realities of those who are not afforded a presence on Kelowna's changing foodscape. Within the context of the AFM and gentrification of local food, I explored my overarching research question: what is the lived experience of food injustice in Kelowna's AFM? This approach also allowed me to focus on my secondary question around how gleaning might align with food justice principles and how the OFTP is making issues of food injustice more visible in the AFM. In follow up to my questions, I was able to assess the feasibility of a food justice praxis and make recommendations for future research and community action. In this chapter I discuss how my methodology evolved, the epistemological framework that anchors it, my methods, the details of how the research was carried out, and my own positioning as an insider.

4.1 Epistemological Framework

According to Park (1993), participatory projects emerge in response to a problem and are ideally initiated by the people experiencing marginalization. This is partially the case of my own research; the problem was identified through my positions with the OFTP and COFPC where I was actively involved in conversation with community members about their experiences of food poverty and sense of disenfranchisement or exclusion from some of the city's emerging alternative food initiatives. These conversations inspired my research, but my photovoice and interview participants did not execute the research themselves. Because this population faces multiple and complex challenges in daily life, I believed that placing a high-level of responsibility for the overall research project on them may be an additional burden. Instead, I drew on the expertise of service providers in the food security field and employed participatory methods with my participants.

I chose to draw on CBPR principles within a broader qualitative methodology to offer a framework and techniques that support “the voices from the margins in speaking, analyzing, building alliances, and taking action” (Hall, 1992, p. 22). CBPR advances an alternative form of qualitative inquiry that re-positions the less powerful at the center of knowledge creation (Hall, 1992). It achieves this by placing the tools of research in the hands of the excluded and vulnerable so they can transform their lives to create a more socially just world (Park, 1993). As a social action process of collaborative empowerment, CBPR raises questions about the nature of knowledge (What is it? Whose knowledge counts? Who produces it? What for? By whom?) and power (What is power? How does one get it?) (Hall, 1992). By asking these underlying questions and assumptions throughout the research process, I found they became a tool that allowed my research to be both purposeful and reflexive.

CBPR is methodologically congruent with critical race theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Goldberg, 2009; Peake & Kobayashi, 2000) and post-structural feminist theory (Torre, 2008; Varcoe, 2006) that together form the epistemological framework of my research. As a guiding theoretical approach with roots in critical, feminist, and postcolonial theories, CRT places methodological emphasis on counter-stories. In combination with CBPR it expands the notion of what counts as expert knowledge, imbuing storytelling, local knowledge, oral histories, parables, testimonies, and biographies as forms of truth (Torre, 2008). While CRT values the experience of those at the bottom or the margins, it draws on feminist theory to acknowledge fluidity and social construction of identity as multiple, overlapping, and often conflicting (Torre, 2008; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Slocum & Saldanha, 2013). Together, CBPR and CRT oppose hierarchal, traditional, closed methods of research (Torre, 2008).

This commitment to re-envisioning reality and research in this way is an explicitly political agenda that requires a praxis-centered approach to transform theory into action (Peake & Kobayashi, 2000). In more recent years critical feminist geographers such as Linda Peake and Audrey Kobayashi have been instrumental in advancing the use of CRT to identify injustices in our landscapes. In the case of Kelowna, the landscape has been shaped by the ideals of beauty, utility, or harmony associated with white, middle and upper class practices (Holmes, 2012). Therefore, analysis cannot take place without first recognizing the power of whiteness as a location of social privilege and a standpoint of normalcy and moral superiority (Peake & Kobayashi, 2000). It is precisely this location from which the AFM has been constructed. As a critical geographer drawing on CRT and post-structural feminist theories, I designed my research to address issues of food injustice within a place-based context. This analysis was essential for understanding who is afforded a presence in the emerging AFM in Kelowna and the lived

experience of those who are pushed to the margins. It also enabled me to identify food justice strategies.

4.2 Study Region: Kelowna, B.C.

My research took place in my hometown of Kelowna, B.C on the traditional unceded territory of the Syilx Nation. Kelowna developed from a small rural community that specialized in ranching, forestry, and fruit production in the early 19th century, when European fur traders began to arrive in the area and displaced the local Syilx people (Aguiar, Tomic, & Trumper, 2005). Missionaries, gold miners, and settlers were quick to follow, and the introduction of irrigation agriculture in the early 20th century led to the proliferation of the tree fruit industry and the rapid growth of the community (Wagner, 2008). Land developers then sought to recruit agricultural settlers from England, Eastern Canada, and the Eastern United States by advertising the area as “the land of fruit and sunshine” and a “new found earthly paradise” (Vernon News, 1905, Grand Pacific Land Co Ltd, 1912 in Wagner, 2008, p. 26). Ultimately, these agricultural and discursive practices transformed the landscape and continue to shape it today. In recent years, Kelowna’s agricultural heritage has helped position the city as a regional centre for alternative food initiatives. However, conservatism, white colonial attitudes, a legacy of Aboriginal displacement, middle and upper class social norms, and an elitist cultural focus on local food and food tourism, have worked simultaneously to gentrify the foodscape. With this understanding, I sought to explore the lived experience of those positioned outside of these discursive boundaries and entitlements as it pertains to food access and social justice.

4.3 Sampling & Recruitment

Because transparency is fundamental to methodological rigor (Richards & Morse, 2013), I have made explicit the context, procedures, and ethical considerations involved in my sampling and recruitment strategies. My positioning as an insider and professional knowledge of food poverty informed this aspect of research design and implementation.

4.3.1 Photovoice Project and Interview Participants

According to Richards & Morse (2013) sample size in qualitative studies depends on five criteria: the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the quality of the data, the study design, and the use of shadowed data (when participants speak of others' experience as well as their own). CBPR studies can span from a relatively short time frame to over a couple of years. The number of participants may be relatively small, like the nine women in McIntyre's (2003) study or the fourteen women in Maguire's (1987) study. Alternatively, some studies use a large number of participants as exemplified in Torre's study (2008), where over 100 youth took part in a three-year study. For my study, 10 participants took part in both photovoice and semi-structured interview components of the research. This ensured the scope of the study was broad enough to generate sufficient data, but not so large as to exceed the time constraints of a Master's research study. Furthermore, a larger study does not necessarily mean a richer one (Krueger & Casey, 2000), and my methodological emphasis was on counter-stories and the lived experience of food injustice.

During the interview process I situated myself as the listener and asked probing questions when necessary. This meant that interviews were often long in length; most took between one hour and one and half hours. Because individuals can generate hundreds or thousands of

concepts (Starks & Trinidad, 2007), this process created ample data that covered a wide breadth of ideas, themes, and dichotomous views on related topics. My data collection techniques drew on some ideas from phenomenology that aim to avoid taxonomizing and classifying data (Richards & Morse, 2013). The goal was not to quantify data or discover a single theory to draw broad conclusions across the entire community. My aim in considering participant inclusion was to focus on lived experience to gain insight into multiple truths as they are lived each day.

To begin recruiting participants, I attended the COFPC board meeting on March 24th, 2015 and the OFTP board meeting on March 25th, 2015 to present my research and recruitment proposal. Both boards passed a motion to support the study and to allow recruitment through their volunteer, member, and community partner organizations email lists. This addressed the ethical issues of obtaining data from a third party and avoiding coercion (TCPS2, 2014, Section 3.1). The email sent to these groups included a brief description of the research study, contact procedures for individuals interested in participating, a letter of invitation, and copy of the consent form. Participants were made aware that their decision to participate would not affect their relationship with either organization. They were also informed that their decision to participate could not be kept confidential from the organizations if they replied to the email rather than contacting the investigators directly. The partner organizations sent a reminder email after two weeks containing the same information as the original email. This recruitment technique is similar to another study conducted by McFarlane and Hansen (2007) in which disabled participants were contacted through five partner organizations. Recognizing that sampling participants can be problematic when focusing on individuals or groups who are not validated by society or are ‘hidden’, I also employed a snowball sampling technique to recruit

food insecure individuals. This technique allowed some of the participants to nominate other individuals (Browne, 2005).

Purposive sampling, a technique within non-probability sampling, was used to recruit participants who had particular characteristics (Richards & Morse, 2013). Participant inclusion in was largely based on relevance to the study (Horsburgh, 2002). Specifically, this was the individual's potential to contribute to understanding the relationship between exclusion and food insecurity as it relates to food injustice. Participants were also required to be over the age of eighteen. The age criteria ensured that participants had the capacity to understand the significance of the research and potential risks and benefits (TCPS2, 2014, Section 3.2). To be included, participants did not need to own a camera for the photovoice portion of the study. I did not have to exclude any participants due to my recruitment design and clear communication of the criteria. However, three individuals expressed strong interest in participating, but were unable to due to personal health issues. These health barriers became a finding that will be discussed in Chapter Five.

My positioning as an insider gave me a heightened awareness of ethical issues that may occur when working with participants experiencing food poverty; these individuals often face multiple challenges based on their race, gender, and class among other non-dominant groupings. Although my methodology draws on CBPR principles, I consciously chose not to invite these participants to take part in a large degree of participatory research (i.e. asking participants to carry out data analysis). I believe this would have likely been an additional challenge among the time, transportation, and health barriers that many of my participants faced and would ultimately have been an impediment to participating. Minkler (1978) states that "placing the burden of organizing for change on the poor and/or minority groups in our society provides an excellent

example of [. . .] ‘blaming the victim,’ implying that these groups need to change” (p. 203). To avoid further marginalizing the participants, I ensured each participant understood their right to free, informed, and ongoing consent by reviewing the consent forms, allowing time to ask questions, and emphasizing their right to opt-out or retract any of their materials without consequence at any point in the study. Participants also received an honorarium of 20 dollars worth of Market Bucks for the Kelowna Farmers’ and Crafters’ Market out of respect for their time and contribution. Bus tickets were provided to compensate some travel costs.

4.3.2 Advisory Team Members

Five advisory team members were recruited from within my contacts associated with my community food-related work. This number was small enough to address the time constraints of a Master’s research project, but also large enough to achieve rich data through a focus group discussion (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Advisory team members were recruited through a verbal explanation of the study, a written letter of invitation, and a consent form. Inclusion as an advisory team member was determined by the individual’s experience working in a sector related to food insecurity or injustice. Additionally, individuals were required to be over the age of 18 and living in or around Kelowna. Community stakeholders were included in the advisory team to ensure representation of those who have the power to influence new practices and policies (Evans, Hole, Berg, Hutchinson, & Sookraj, 2009).

4.4 Data Collection: Photovoice

Data collection, which included photovoice, interviews, and a focus group, took place between July and November 2015. I chose to use photovoice with participants because its three

central theoretical positions are congruent with my own paradigmatic positioning: the visual image is an important tool for enabling people to think critically about their lives and their community (Wang, 1999; Cooper and Yarbrough, 2010); from the standpoint of feminist theory, photovoice is a means of challenging the power accrued by those who have a voice, determine language, make history, and participate in decisions (Maguire, 1987; Wang & Redwood, 2001), and it “provides participants a voice and language through which to voice salient concerns” (Hergenrather, Rhodes, Cowan, Bardoshi, & Pula, 2009, p. 695); and community photography is a “way of thinking about how ordinary people could appropriate the camera for social change” to challenge normative stereotypes (Wang & Redwood, 2001, p. 561). When paired with CBPR, photovoice creates an opportunity to expand the representation and diversity of voices in an ongoing dialogue aimed at identifying and improving problems faced by community members (Hergenrather, et al., 2009).

Participatory methods such as photovoice are not benign, but are “tool[s] of power” that can represent unreality and reality (Wang, 1999; Songtag, 1977, p. 8). Careful consideration was given to the following ethical issues that privacy laws protect against: 1) the intrusion into another person’s private space or even one’s privacy in a public space; 2) the disclosure of true but embarrassing facts; 3) the misrepresentation of individuals; and 4) the appropriation of an individual’s likeness for commercial benefit (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001).

To avoid these legal and ethical issues, I met with participants prior to initiating the photovoice project to discuss the ethical considerations of photovoice and set mutually agreed upon rules for photo-taking (Wang, 1999). I also made it clear that all photographs will remain the property of the participants and will not be used outside of specified publications and public presentations unless given permission. Participants were then asked to take pictures at their

leisure over a two week time period, spending no more than two hours. After two weeks, many asked for more time due to health challenges and other related barriers. During the initial meeting, we discussed taking pictures that illustrated their story of food poverty and food injustice. Photos of positive experiences were also encouraged. I gave a list of guiding questions to act as prompts for taking pictures (See Appendix B). For example, I asked, “How do you access food?” and one photo response was an image of a city bus. In another example I asked “Have you gleaned food?” and the participant took a picture of the dumpster she used to glean food from. Participants were asked to take brief notes on the photos, including the location, time, a brief description, and any personal reflections in notebooks provided as part of the study (Gahman, 2014; Palibroda, Krieg, Murdock, & Havelock, 2009).

I was required to have five consent forms for the photovoice project due to concerns from UBC Okanagan’s Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) around the privacy of individuals appearing in the photographs. If participants in the photovoice project took a photo of another person or child, they were responsible for selecting the appropriate consent or assent and parent/guardian form based on the person’s age. The participants would then have to explain the form and obtain signed consent. Unfortunately, this became a significant impediment to the photovoice project, as many participants felt intimidated using the academic forms with which they were unfamiliar. As a result, the majority of photos taken were images of food and gardens and ultimately did not produce the images and participatory process I had originally hoped for. This issue reflected the ongoing need within the academy’s institutional review process to critically examine how it can accommodate CBPR as a legitimate research paradigm. More specifically, it demonstrates the academy’s need to work with community in a way that is inclusive and dismantles barriers to participation.

Some researchers point out that a major limitation of using photovoice is that it stops short of action and does not effectively support participants in taking the steps to address identified concerns (Cooper & Yarbrough, 2010). For this reason, I believe that the use of multiple critical methods in a research study can facilitate praxis. Because CBPR is inherently action driven and methodologically congruent with theories committed to praxis, it provides the framework for carrying out transformative change at the conclusion of this research project.

4.4.1 Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews

The systematic use of social science methods and participatory techniques within a CBPR framework can facilitate the active engagement of marginalized individuals whose voices are often eclipsed by standard survey instruments (Opondo, Dolan, Wendoh, & Ndwiga Kathuri, 2007). To further engage participants, I paired semi-structured interviews with photovoice. One in-depth, audio-recorded interview was conducted with each photovoice participant at his or her convenience and in a location of their choosing (McFarlane & Hansen, 2007). As per semi-structured interview guidelines, some preliminary open-ended questions were prepared ahead of time with some of the questions emerging from the initial focus group with the advisory team members (Richards & Morse, 2013). I also collected the images from the photovoice project and created questions and probes to enrich and extend the interview method (Cooper & Yarbrough, 2010). I found that this format gave participants an opportunity to reflect more deeply on the photos and connect their experience to broader phenomena (Gahman, 2014).

Given the partial flexibility of this interview technique, unplanned and unanticipated questions and probes were also used to delve more in-depth into the root-cause of participant experiences. Questions were designed to validate the expert knowledge of the participants'

experiences and elicit their food story. For example, I asked what each participant's vision is for a socially just food system. While the researcher plans the structure of the interview and sets the agenda, I also understand the interview process as emergent. As such, interviews were adapted to the needs of the participants, which included changing the pace, discussing specific questions, topics, or photos, taking breaks, and addressing emotional reactions that came up during the process (Richards & Morse, 2013).

A key consideration in designing my methodology was that individuals who are food insecure may face heightened vulnerability in daily life and this may extend to the research study. The study did not involve major risks, but I reiterated throughout the process that each participant has the right to not answer any question they aren't comfortable with, stop the interview, opt-out of the study and retract their materials, or discuss how they are feeling. Consent was renegotiated at the conclusion of the semi-structured interview to give participants another opportunity to retract or omit any photos or information they did not want included in the study, other publications, or in public presentations. Certainly there are inherent risks to dealing with sensitive subject matter, but I sensed that the photovoice project in combination with the interviews may have benefitted some of the participants by serving as a catharsis, providing self-acknowledgement and validation, increasing self-awareness, and providing a space in which to voice their concerns or troubles (Hutchinson, Wilson, & Wilson, 1994). Some participants expressed that food injustice was an important topic to them and that they were eager to contribute to understanding it. My aim was not only to achieve richer data through semi-structured interviews, but also to more actively engage participants in the research and create a space for dialogue.

4.4.2 Data Collection: Focus Groups

Focus groups are a popular technique used in CBPR as a way of discovering diverse perspectives and priorities (Cooper & Yarbrough, 2010; Torre, 2008). I employed this method with the advisory team, and before data collection with participants, to elicit their insights and expertise on food poverty in Kelowna. Ultimately, the focus group was formative in the rest of my data collection because it allowed me to gather information that confirmed and added to my knowledge of food poverty in Kelowna as an insider and framed the interview questions with participants.

My supervisor, Dr. Jon Corbett, facilitated the focus group while I took field notes and participated in the discussion. To maintain confidentiality, advisory team members were reminded on the consent form and verbally before and after the discussion to not share information outside of the focus groups. I took several steps were taken to ensure rigor and accuracy of the results: pilot tested questions, listened to advisory team members carefully, made observations on how they answered questions or asked for clarification, and concluded the session by asking the advisory team to verify our summary comments and add additional details (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

We used an open-ended interview technique and probes with the advisory team members to facilitate the sharing of their unique perspectives on the topic. To further elaborate on themes in the study, some of the questions were similar to those posed to the participants. The two-hour audio-recorded discussion ensured optimal sharing time for each person and helped maintain focus around the purpose of the sessions (Krueger & Casey, 2000). I also drew on the team's expertise throughout the study. Using the focus group questions, I interviewed and audio-recorded one member of the advisory team who was unable to attend the discussion. In addition,

I carried out a semi-structured audio-recorded interview with another one of the advisory team members to gain more insight into gleaning and food justice as it relates to her role as a dietitian and Executive Director of the OFTP. I met with another team member and his daughter to informally discuss social justice from her perspective as the Executive Director of the Ontario Justice Education Network. I took field notes to record this meeting. Lastly, I asked another advisor for additional information and statistics on food poverty from their organization.

In combination with the multiple methods used this study, this small focus group and additional meetings generated sufficient data that added breadth and depth to the research (Shaha, Wenzle, & Hill, 2011). Beyond the parameters of this study, an additional purpose of the focus group was to create a space to exchange, discuss, identify, describe, analyze, and create action plans (Shaha, Wenzle, & Hill, 2011; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Richards & Morse, 2013) around food justice in Kelowna. This action outcome is discussed in Section 4.7.

4.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is “an iterative and ongoing feature of [CBPR’s] cycle of action and critical reflection” (Cahill, 2007, p. 181). Similar to a CBPR study conducted by Fossey, Epstein, Findlay, Plant, and Harvey (2002), I divided data analysis into a participatory and individual process. By using this design, I aimed to avoid placing additional burden on the participants who may view data analysis as an arduous and frustrating process contradictory to the therapeutic and emancipatory practice of CBPR (Cooper & Yarbrough; 2010; Cahill, 2007). Data analysis took place concurrently with data collection, and I used QSR NVivo software throughout this process to transcribe, organize and review the data set, develop initial codes, and create themes.

Wang and Burris (1997) outline specific techniques that informed how I carried out participatory analysis. After the photovoice project, participants were asked to select photographs that reflected their strengths and struggles to include in the study (Wang & Burris, 1997; Palibroda et al., 2009). Participatory analysis was also integrated into the semi-structured interview process when I prompted participants to contextualize their photos by explaining what the images mean to them and how they connect to their experience (Wang & Burris, 2007; Cooper & Yarbrough, 2010). These two techniques reflect CBPR's methodological commitment to producing counter-stories that challenge the status quo (Cahill, 2007).

Next, I used thematic analysis to search across the data set, in this case the focus group transcript, interview transcripts, and all formal and informal field notes, to sort the data into categories of issues, themes, and theories (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Wang, 1999). I chose this flexible method to achieve similar goals to those in a PAR study conducted by Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, and Aoun (2010). These goals included investigating an under-researched area with participants whose views are not known on the topic, and creating an understanding of the topic that is accessible and useful to the broader community and key stakeholders who have the ability to influence action outcomes.

Throughout the data analysis stage, I adapted basic guidelines proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), and Attride-Stirling (2001). I began by transcribing all audio-recordings. I consider this an important step in my analysis because I had already begun to develop and note initial patterns at this point. I further familiarized myself with the data by reading and re-reading it, and noting ideas. Next, I developed a coding framework based on a combination of my theoretical interests and recurrent ideas that arose in the data set. I then used the framework to systematically code notable features across the entire data set and

generate initial text segments that were discrete enough to avoid redundancy, but also broad enough to capture a range ideas. These 24 codes became my basic themes (BT), which were then clustered into six groups of similar issues called organizing themes (OT) (Attride-Stirling, 2001). These refined themes were neither interchangeable nor redundant. As I continued to work inward, themes were collated into small groups and tested against the codes and entire data set. After, I defined and named the themes I was left with four Global Themes (GT). I then returned to my original research questions and theoretical interests and addressed the arguments based on the patterns that emerged in the text (Attride-Stirling, 2001). To achieve rigorous data analysis, I referred to the 15-point checklist for criteria outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006) (See Appendix C).

4.6 Protection of Participants & Data

A number of measures were taken protect the identities and confidentiality of those who participated in my study. Participants were given pseudonyms and I removed any information or descriptive characteristics that may reveal their identity to others. In addition, I advised participants that if they chose to include photos of themselves, their house, or other similar photos, their confidentiality could not be guaranteed. All data, which includes audio-recordings, coded transcripts, digital photos, and field notes, are stored on a UBC password protected laptop and files. Paper documents have been anonymized and are kept in a locked drawer in Arts 368a (PI's office) in the Institute for Community Engaged Research at UBC Okanagan. Consent forms have been stored in a separate locked drawer.

4.7 Summary

Practices to ensure transparency and rigor have been embedded throughout my methodology. This is an audit trail that clearly explains my theoretical, methodological, and analytic decisions (Horsburgh, 2002). In addition to the procedural ethical issues outlined by the BREB, I engaged in a practice of critical reflexivity to address “ethics in practice”, or the everyday ethical issues that arise during research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Horsburgh, 2002). This practice also helped me understand my social location as an insider and the complex ways that my identity influenced the research process. For example, my insider position granted me access to certain individuals, while my identity as a white, female, and once food-insecure individual influenced what people chose to tell or withhold from me. I was additionally aware of how my own interpretive lens and theoretical positioning influenced my research design, data collection, transcription, and analysis process (Tilley, 2003). While I recognize that my interpretative lens has shaped this research in a subjective way, I endeavoured to accurately represent the experiences, and stories of participants, partner organizations, and advisors in the study, and value all shared knowledge as expert knowledge.

Fals-Borda (1987) emphasized that researchers have a commitment to use knowledge generated during the CBPR process to transform the world⁹ (p. 332). Beyond academic requirements, CBPR necessitates that the findings are written in an accessible language and returned to the community (Park, 1993). My original intent was to add the photovoice images and excerpts from the interviews to Dr. Jon Corbett’s Geolive map program. These entries would then serve as starting points for a participatory mapping project, which would allow other users (outside of this study) to enter their own experiences as a dialogical method. However, the

⁹ Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach: “Philosophers should not be content with just explaining the world, but should try to transform it” (in Fals-Borda, 1987).

research restrictions on the photovoice project did not result in outcomes that would work well in this format. Instead, the flexible and emergent framework of my methodology made it possible to re-evaluate this plan, which I reconsidered within the context of the current research and action taking place around food security, food justice, and agriculture in Kelowna.

Working in collaboration with the COFPC board, I helped plan and host an event titled “From Field to Fork to Research” showcasing current local research about food in Kelowna. Drawing on the South African concept of Ubuntu as a form of collaboration, presenters returned their research findings to the community by pitching an idea, concern, or problem that emerged from their research. The evening then featured an opportunity to continue conversations and connect with the presenters and audience of policy makers, community members, service providers, and participants from the studies over a networking hour. Another goal of this event was to continue the work being done to promote university-community collaboration and make research more accessible to the community. The event was free and sponsored by the UBC Okanagan Institute for Community Engaged Research, the Community, Culture, and Global Studies Unit from the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, and Interior Health.

The COFPC used this event to launch their Food Quilt, which promotes action by creating a platform for sharing ideas, networking, and discussing how to link resources to move into capacity building and policy change. This movement aims to create lifelong social networks around food with an access point for every person. The COFPC sees my research as well as others’, as an important piece of the patchwork quilt of food security. My intention with this event was to work collaboratively to create a space for developing a shared vision of what a local food system based on food justice looks like, and to offer a model that can be used in other communities.



Figure 4. Field to Fork to Research presenters.

(Left to Right: Mary Stockdale, Linda Trepanier, Ailsa Beischer, Jill Worboys, Ed Grifone, Lindsay Harris, and Karen Vandergaag)

Chapter 5. Results & Discussion: Food Injustice in Kelowna's AFM

This study on food justice and gleaning in Kelowna presents a unique case study given the city's relative lack of racial and ethnic diversity. While I did not include a large number of participants in my study, all were visibly white, with only three identifying as having some Aboriginal heritage and one of those being actively engaged in the culture. For this reason, my findings related to food (in)justice predominantly take place along the discursive lines of class and gender, with a smaller focus emerging around age and disability. Nevertheless, when examined in combination with Kelowna's demographic data outlined in chapter three, this "absented presence" (Walcott, 1997 in Peake & Ray, 2001, p. 180) of significant racial or ethnic diversity in this study can be interpreted as a finding that reflects the invisibility of this population. More pointedly, this finding reifies how the social, economic, and political construction of Kelowna continues to shape who is afforded a presence in the community.

These constructed entitlements also extend to the city's foodscape. For example, the Okanagan Valley hires approximately 1, 200 Latin American and Caribbean temporary foreign workers through the seasonal agricultural workers program (Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture, 2016). Fruit picking is an undesirable job for most local citizens given the low wages, long working hours, and physical difficulty of the task in the hot and arid Okanagan climate. While temporary foreign workers play an important role in sustaining the area's food economy, they are often made to feel unwelcome in the community and are geographically isolated in segregated living and working arrangements (Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture, 2016). When they do appear in the public eye, they are often subjected to criminalizing and racializing stereotypes (Justicia for Migrant Workers Collective Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture, 2015). In this study, the lived experiences of my

participants offers further insight into the exclusion and representation of those living in the margins of society.

This chapter addresses my overarching research question that sought to understand the lived experience of food injustice in Kelowna's AFM. Interview questions were divided into general categories: 1) challenges to accessing healthy food, 2) a change comparison that allowed participants to discuss how their access to food may have changed over time in Kelowna or across communities, and 3) experiences of exclusion/inclusion and inequitable access to food. Probing questions within the semi-structured interview format complemented these categories. Participant responses and photovoice images provided the substance of the themes that were developed. The advisory team data primarily guided how I carried out the research with participants, but also added substance and validity to the overall data. In this chapter, I explore the range of experiences of food injustice in Kelowna through an analysis of how the social location of participants acts as a barrier to accessing healthy food within the AFM, and a discussion of its physical and immaterial consequences. I also analyze experiences of exclusion and cultural pressure amidst the gentrification of Kelowna's foodscape to show how they are linked to stigma.

5.1 Invisible Demographics: Social Location of Participants on Kelowna's Foodscape

I did not originally collect demographic information from participants as a measure to protect their confidentiality given the additional BREB concerns with the photovoice portion of this study. However, participants tended to vocalize their social location and identity of their volition in the interview conversation. While I aimed to achieve a diversity of participants of different ages, races, and gender among other characteristics, recruiting for some of these

variations proved somewhat challenging and are, again, indicative of Kelowna's construction and its intolerance to difference.

From the email invitations, one participant was recruited from NOW Canada¹⁰ and another one from the Karis Support Society¹¹. A further three participants were recruited from the Canadian Mental Health Association – Kelowna branch¹². Four were recruited through the FTP volunteer list and one was recruited through snowball sampling.

Of the 10 participants, nine were female and one was male. Two were under the age of 40, two were middle aged, and six were seniors. Six women identified as being single parents; another did not have a family of her own yet, but had grown up in a single parent family. All of the participants were visibly white, with only three identifying as having some degree of Aboriginal heritage. Nine of the participants identified within the low-income bracket and one identified as being on the brink of low-income. Not all participants disclosed why they chose to participate, but many expressed that they felt very strongly about the importance of this topic and articulated their interest in the outcome. A smaller, but significant, number indicated that they needed the Market Bucks honorarium as an extra source of food income.

In exploring these demographics, I aimed to interpret how the participants' identities might be expressed and spatially located on Kelowna's transforming foodscape under the emerging AFM. Often, multiple and complex challenges and forms of marginalization occur for

¹⁰ NOW Canada is a non-profit organizations that provides programs and services for women and youth who have experienced addictions, abuse, sexual exploitation, and mental health challenges.

¹¹ The Karis Support Society is a non-profit organization that provides safe housing, support, life skills, and training for people caught in life altering addictions and mental health issues.

¹² The Canadian Mental Health Association is another non-profit organization that aims to improve mental health and community integration, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness.

individuals who are single parents, women, seniors, Aboriginal, as well as persons with mobility/ability barriers and chronic health issues. Drawing on CBPR principles, CRT, and post structural feminist theory, I located this information in the “multiple and varying relationships of power and privilege” (Torre, 2008, p. 112) that construct differences and entitlements within the foodscape. Looking at these disadvantages and privileges through a spatializing lens reveals the place-based mutability (Price, 2010) of Kelowna’s white, conservative, colonial attitudes, and middle to upper class values. These values are then reproduced in Kelowna’s AFM because those involved in alternative food initiatives are typically the economically and/or socially middle class who can afford organic, local food, have inherited or learned knowledge about nutrition, and are often politically liberal to centre-left (Slocum, 2007). Meanwhile, individuals, like the participants in this study, remain socially located at the margins of the changing foodscape. This suggests how the lived realities of inequity and exclusion among those struggling to put food on the table continues to be overlooked and, in turn, reproduced through a changing geography of food in Kelowna.

The invisibility of food injustice was a key issue discussed by the advisory team: Sometimes [it’s] not the stereotypical face that you see. There’s a lot of people that are working really hard and working multiple jobs and they are making ends meet but at a really hard cost, like time. And it’s just not always obvious that they are hungry or not having enough food to eat. And a lot of them probably don’t access the food bank.

Building on the idea of invisibility, another advisory team member spoke about how her organization shares their clients’ stories widely on the radio, TV, social media, their website, and every day in December leading up to Christmas. Despite the efforts of social service agencies and non-profits, the advisory team felt that food injustice remains an invisible issue in Kelowna because of the focus on food tourism, local wineries, and local produce, and the promotion of the Valley as a region of abundance. Further to this point, the advisors noted that many of their

clients are isolated due to barriers such as physical ability, geographic location, transportation, and stigma and are often not visible in public or actively involved in the community. As a result, they felt that food poverty and injustice isn't a community or political priority. Given this understanding, I aimed to create a platform through my research design and analysis that would help make experiences of food injustice visible. While I recognize that the stories shared as part of this study are interpreted through my own lens, I've endeavoured to accurately represent them to create a counter-narrative to the status quo.



Figure 5. The abundance of the Okanagan.

(Photo Credit: Melanie).

5.2 Lack of Agency: Social Location & Barriers to Food Access

A food justice lens illuminates the relationship between food poverty and the discourses and practices that determine social location and access to the benefits of society. This lens further reveals the consequences of food injustice on Kelowna's transforming foodscape. In this context,

the barriers to accessing safe, sufficient, healthy, and personally acceptable food identified by the participants and advisory team members are emblematic of a broader theme around the lack of agency¹³ among those at the margins of the emerging AFM.

Individuals living in food poverty often face heightened physical and emotional hardships that are closely linked to compromised health and wellbeing (PROOF Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2013). Barriers to accessing healthy food are often complex, multifaceted, and the result of cumulative disadvantages (Hodgins, 2014; Levkoe, 2014; SPARC BC, 2014). One of the advisory team members works with individuals experiencing food poverty on a daily basis and recounted the multiple challenges she sees among her clients:

When you're in the constant state of hunger and food insecurity and not knowing where you're going to be living and all these compounded issues... people are exhausted. You know, and then people go 'oh, well they should participate more!' Well, they're doing the best they can and they're working three jobs [...]. They're exhausted. They don't know if they're going to have to move, they don't know if they're going to be evicted, they don't know where they're going to be sleeping.

Anne's experience also reflects the cumulative nature of food poverty. During our interview, she discussed the limited social income she received and shared recent news that she could no longer afford to insure her assistance car even if she added up even penny she had. For her to have to divest herself of her vehicle as a senior living with a disability adds to her food insecurity because she does not live near a grocery store and public transportation is not reliable or consistent in her neighbourhood.

Underlying these the complex and compounding hardships is the systemic issue of poverty. Financial constraints pose among the biggest challenge to adequate or secure access to

¹³ My understanding of agency (the capacity to act) is informed by Britzman's (1995) notion that it is "fashioned in practices" (p. 235) and that "subjects spring from discourses that incite them" (p. 236). In this study, I understand that individual agency, related to food access, is influenced by relations of power created by certain discourses and practices in Kelowna.

food (Tarasuk, Mitchell, & Dachner, 2015). In Canada, food poverty is exacerbated by inadequate social assistance rates (Riches, 2002; Mirchandani & Chan, 2005; De Schutter, 2012; CAFB, 2015), rising food prices, a declining Canadian dollar and the subsequent loss of purchasing power, the normalization of food poverty by emergency food relief (Riches, 2011; Poppendieck, 1999; Wakefield et al., 2012; Welsh & MacRae, 1998), and the lack of a coordinated national food strategy and policy (Andree, Ballamingie, Sinclair-Waters, 2014). In addition to the advisory team, all 10 participants named income as a barrier to food access in Kelowna. This included statements about the higher cost of healthy food, underemployment and unemployment, and social assistance falling short of meeting the costs of living. Gwen, a senior participant, shared her experience: “Any pensioner, anybody on limited income starts out with as much groceries as they can afford. As the week goes by you eat those up and the closer it gets to payday, the less you have to eat.” This statement speaks to the direct correlation between income and food access. Interestingly, one participant who was not in the low-income bracket related that, as a single parent with significant debt and a recent health issue that prevented her from working, she always felt she one was one paycheck away from poverty.



Figure 6. Limited financial resources lead to hard choices: "With five dollars and some change what do you buy?"

(Photo credit and quotation: Margaret).

Beyond income, the research participants identified other significant challenges to food access. Six participants discussed transportation, which included not having a vehicle to get to the grocery store or community garden and an inadequate and unreliable transit system that especially underserved seniors and persons with disabilities (PWD). Related to transportation, many participants also felt that they could not take advantage of bulk discounts or buy as much food as they would like because they were limited by how much they could carry. Access to land was another barrier named by six participants who vocalized that they would feel more secure if they had garden space to grow their own food. This issue ties in closely to the lack of affordable and adequate housing, a current and pressing concern in Kelowna (Hume, 2015; Zielinski, 2014). Out of the five participants that indicated housing as a barrier, statements were made concerning the lack of adequate cooking or storage facilities, leaky roofs, mold, unaffordability and instability (having to move often as a renter), and cramped or crowded shared spaces.



Figure 7. Example of low-income housing in Kelowna.

(Photo credit: Anne).



Figure 8. Lack of affordable housing in Kelowna.

(Photo credit: Margaret)

Health was another significant barrier mentioned by four participants: one mentioned living in addiction, another noted that having a disability prevented her from working, and two mentioned that they could not afford the types of food, medicines, and vitamins they needed for their illnesses and dietary intolerances. Health was also a barrier to participating in this research project. Three individuals expressed interest, but were unable to participate due to the chronic illnesses and mental illnesses that they faced. A number of participants had to re-schedule or

postpone meetings and interviews due to health issues as well. In addition to health, three participants noted that their physical ability played a role in their food access. Time was a factor for the younger participants. Julie mentioned that she had limited time to get to the grocery store and make healthy meals because she is a single parent, commutes to work in another town, and has to rely on a city bus that does not run frequently in her area. Lack of knowledge around cooking and gardening skills were noted as a barrier for one participant.

On the surface, many of these barriers might appear to be the result of situational circumstances. For example, Gwen discusses how a recent accident left her jobless and carless and landed her on social assistance income. However, when looking at her struggle with food access earlier in life as a single parent and her current low-income housing situation, it becomes apparent that individuals living in marginalized or vulnerable situations are more prone to multiple and aggregating barriers. These barriers indicate a direct correlation between social location and the systemic lack of agency among low-income individuals, seniors, single parents, women, and those with disabilities. This theme around agency circles back to a comment made by another one of the advisory team members who said, “Our whole system is engineered for exactly that situation. People will never -- it’s almost a never situation. They can never get ahead. It’s an unjust scenario.” Conflating these barriers as a consequence of limited agency within social location allowed me to explore how inequity gets reproduced on Kelowna’s changing foodscape.

5.2.1 Lack of Agency: Intangible Effects of Food Poverty

“It’s not just about the food, it’s about some of the choices you have to make.” This quote from Jane captures the immaterial or incorporeal consequences of food poverty. All 10

participants discussed their food access in the context of the limited and often difficult choices or sacrifices they had to make. One of the more prominent examples five participants gave was choosing food they knew was unhealthy or would make them sick because it was less expensive. Examples were also shared around having to choose between buying food or spending money on transportation, clothing, rent, paying off debt, medication, celebrating the holidays, gifts for children, or personal care and health care. Jane shared other difficult choices she had to make as a single parent:

I can feed the kids, but I can't fix the roof because that money would have to come from the grocery money. So I'm going to sleep on a bed with a bucket next to me catching the water because I have to feed everybody. So I don't think people think about all those things when they think about food insecurity. Things you choose. Eat or this. Eat or that.

Only one participant spoke pointedly about difficult choices in the context of the moral dilemmas individuals living in food poverty have to face on a daily basis. Discussing her own experience with gleaning, a practice she's done most of her life to supplement her food budget, she said "If I take these nuts that are lying in somebody's yard, that are perfectly good food, that are going to waste, am I stealing?" These choices substantiate a comment made by one advisory team member that food, while one of the most intrinsic needs to human life, becomes an elastic expenditure for individuals on a limited income; in other words, it becomes a choice to buy food or pay for other living costs.



Figure 9. Choosing between food and medicine.

(Photo credit: Gwen).

Participant experiences also revealed the pervasiveness of choice in the context of food poverty. As Melanie put it, food underlies almost every decision in her life. As a single parent, she related how so many of her conversations and decisions ultimately revolved around food. Expressing this idea through the photovoice project, Gwen took a picture of her apartment building, a low-income seniors housing unit, to give a glimpse into the struggles she and her friends and neighbours face everyday. For Anne, her struggle with food poverty led her to understand that food touches every decision. Jane talked about how she always had to keep careful track of how much money she had and save coupons to be able to afford groceries.

The pervasive nature of complex choices or sacrifices further indicates the lack of agency among those living in food poverty. Invariably, limited agency poses constraints on material or physical access to food and these barriers are well documented in the literature (Tarasuk, Mitchell, & Dachner, 2015; CAFB, 2015; Wakefield et al., 2012; Alkon & Agyeman, 2011). However, it can also lead to emotional and psychological hardship. In speaking about choice and

sacrifice, many participants became visibly emotional, lowered their tone, or took longer to respond. These responses reflect a “more-than-food” dynamic (Goodman, 2015, p.2), where food, and how we talk about it, has a visceral, or emotional response to our material and discursive environments (Jessica and Alison Hayes-Conroy, 2013 in Goodman, 2015). In the context of this study, the visceral nature of food is a strategic concept for understanding the intangible consequences of inequitable access beyond physical and material barriers. I also aimed to validate these emotional and psychological responses and hardships as part of CRT’s emphasis on stories as a way to engage with difference, identity, and social justice.

These findings around the intangible effects of food poverty on agency are a further iteration of the inequities that result from marginal social locations that have not yet been addressed by current alternative food initiatives in Kelowna. Because food is a central factor in many, albeit limited, decisions and choices, it can be seen as an entry point for engaging with food injustice. One advisory team member felt that anytime an individual is faced with the option of eating it becomes a matter of injustice. Understanding the systemic barriers to food access as a consequence of limited agency and their effects allowed me to investigate how these inequities remain invisible and are reproduced in Kelowna’s AFM.

5.3 Exclusion & Cultural Pressure in Kelowna’s AFM

Alkon & Agyeman (2011) have proposed that food systems can further fracture existing social divides and create barriers that prevent certain demographics from accessing certain kinds of food. Drawing on the post-structural feminist scholarship concept of positionality helps understand how lived experiences, particularly those relating to race, class, and gender, influence our worldviews and construct entitlements and access (Rose, 1997; Haraway, 1988). Further to

this point, food justice illuminates the socio-spatial organization of food systems by calling attention to underlying inequities (Slocum, Cadieux, & Blumberg, 2016).

Looking at the AFM through these lenses reveals how this movement has largely been created by, and functions for, white and middle class individuals (Guthman, 2011, Slocum, 2007; Alkon & Agyeman, 2011). Furthermore, its emphatic rejection of industrial agriculture and individual/market-based response ('vote with your fork') "marks a particular set of foodways (organic, local, and slow foods) as right and proper, and condemns what Michael Pollan (2006) calls 'industrial eaters' as less worthy of others" (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011, p. 12). From this viewpoint, individuals embedded in this food movement may not be aware of the socially constructed exclusivities that marginalized citizens have to negotiate in the food system. One advisory team member's statement about an aspect of the AFM reflects that Kelowna is not exempt from this trend:

I think that if you are someone who is part of the foodie movement and isn't in this more marginalized population [...], you don't think of the foodie movement as a bad thing. You think of the farm-to-table movement as a great thing.

In the second half of this chapter, I explore the crosscutting and simultaneous experiences of exclusion and cultural pressure. I then discuss these experiences as repercussions of stigma, and position them as a reification of Kelowna's discourses and practices that determine access to food within the transforming foodscape. Socio-spatial inequities in Kelowna's AFM are also considered through the participants' lived and visceral experiences of indignity, guilt, and shame.

5.3.1 Exclusion & Inaccessibility

During the focus group, a discussion emerged concerning the merits and shortcomings of Kelowna's AFM in relation to food access. This quotation captures the general tone of the conversation:

And I think in Kelowna, there's affluence as we can all recognize. And I think there's a very large portion of the population who don't recognize that this is an issue. I think the outside perspective of Kelowna: affluence. They might not recognize there are big issues related to food access in Kelowna. It's the basket of abundance. It's the Okanagan Valley. It's so much wine and food and cherries. And people in Alberta who are buying Okanagan cherries at the Farmers' market might not realize there's a big food injustice issue in the community.

The advisory team agreed that this movement was promoting local, healthy food and food systems. One example given was the farm-to-table movement that showcases the importance of local food through delicious, artisan dishes and wine sourced from local farms. The team felt this was a perfectly legitimate use of the city's agricultural land reserve. On the other hand, they discussed its inherent exclusion, noting that this shift in focus around food in Kelowna primarily benefits privileged people and that "it's a luxurious thing to [participate in] and it romanticizes food and beautifies food." Further to this point, an advisory team member spoke about how these new initiatives are out of reach for underserved or marginalized citizens: "There's probably a whole world of [our] food system that they don't even know exists because that door is never open to them. They could never walk through that door".



Figure 10. Kelowna has an abundance of fresh, local food.

(Photo credit: Anne).

Eight participants and the advisory team discussed ideas concerning the inaccessibility of the AFM amidst the gentrification of Kelowna's food system. Exclusion emerged as a dominant theme across these conversations and photovoice images. As someone who has been politicized around social justice and food most of her life, Anne talked about her discomfort with the gentrification of food politics and food consciousness which she sees as not only financially inaccessible, but also ideologically. Anne is well-read and a grassroots food activist. She was able to connect her individual experience to broader neoliberal phenomena. Other participants did not explicitly make these connections, but discussed their experiences of exclusion.

Gwen articulated her frustration at living in an abundant agricultural community, yet not being able to afford the local, fresh, or organic food that she needs for her health issues. Nester's

Market, whose tagline “where the locals shop,” reflects the changing cultural emphasis on food localism. Although the store is walking distance to Gwen’s apartment, she doesn’t shop there – she can barely afford the rising food prices at Wal-Mart. Faced with a recent mobility challenge from an accident, she shops at the 7/11 convenience store across the street from Nester’s because she cannot travel the longer distance to other stores. Julie and Sarah also communicated how they could not afford to shop at local grocery stores given that their prices are typically higher.

Exclusion was also expressed by Melanie, who spoke about specific examples such as *Dîner en Blanc*, an elite global event where people dressed in all white meet for a chic picnic and practice the upmost elegance and etiquette as they dine on fine food and drink. Melanie felt that while these events are gaining momentum in Kelowna, they are not accessible to her as a single, middle to lower-income parent. For her, “food should be community, and [because its not] that’s the exclusionary thing.” Laura and Charley both identified that finding information about local food initiatives hasn’t been easy to access. Charley discussed a specific example about how she did not know where to find information about community gardening opportunities. This again suggests how alternative food initiatives are being marketed to a certain demographic in Kelowna.

Jane’s experience also indicates alienation within this new food paradigm despite the emphasis on local, sustainable food systems. She felt that being a low-income, single parent, with a disabled child often prevented her from taking part in the community or being included or welcomed. Interestingly, she discussed how food access has not changed in the 24 years she’s lived in the community: “Nothing has changed in all these years. They have different words [...] and different people saying I’m going to do this different and that different, but nothing has changed.” She explains this through an example of her son with a disability, saying, “Nothing

has changed for him. He's excluded from everything and he was then and he is now.” Looking at Jane’s story in the context of Kelowna and the AFM puts a spotlight on the emerging discourses and practices that seek to transform food systems by encouraging individuals to choose local, alternative, organic, and healthy food. Certainly, the emphasis on creating local food systems is necessary and an effort worth celebrating, but Jane’s story suggests that a gap remains in how marginalized individuals can be accommodated and included. In discussing the changing emphasis on local food in Kelowna, Gwen also shared, “us people are getting left behind”. ‘Us people’ is evocative of the systemic injustice experienced by those in marginal social locations and invites a critical conversation about the role alternative food initiatives play in reproducing inequitable access to food, despite its purported social justice intentions (Guthman, 2008).

5.3.2 Cultural Pressure to Participate

During my research an inherent contradiction became apparent. While much of the discussion focused on exclusion and the inaccessibility of food, six participants and the advisory team discussed an emerging cultural pressure to buy and eat local and/or organic food, and to adopt healthy diets and lifestyles. Gwen captures this contradiction in her statement “they want us to be healthy, but they’re charging us so much to be healthy.” Anne’s comments elaborate this theme as she discussed how the capitalist design underlying the AFM puts pressure on people to pay more for what’s not in their food – specifically, food that is organic, gluten-free, and non-GMO. Melanie talked about how the farm-to-table movement was promoted in her office and how staff were encouraged to investigate a few local farms. She also discussed the Masterchef competitions and local Top Chefs in Kelowna as pursuits for fame and money rather than social

causes like feeding hungry people. This sentiment was further articulated by Jane who talked about how many local restaurants have gardens because it's the 'in' thing to do.

The pressure to 'vote with your fork' compelled some participants to overspend on their food budget. Julie talked about how she strives to follow the local diet directive of knowing where her food comes from and that she often doesn't pay her bills so she can buy this type of food. One advisory team member mentioned that the pressure to participate is often combined with statements such as 'you're lazy, why aren't you working harder', which reflects a 'pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps' neoliberal discourse. This idea was evident in Sarah's interview because she felt that it was her own fault that she could not afford to buy healthy, local fare, and that it was something she was "working on". Her statement speaks to the internalized neoliberal subjectivities (Alkon & Mares, 2012) that position food access as a personal responsibility, rather than a community, provincial, or federal one. These reflections shared by participants outside of this cultural food shift suggest that they did not feel as though there was a strong moral or social cause underpinning aspects of the AFM.

From a food justice perspective unique to this study, cultural pressure points to the shortcomings of the AFM in Kelowna, which has not adequately acknowledged or addressed the social and economic constraints on participation. This is reflective of how (neo)liberal concepts of social justice (Rawls, 1971) create an epistemological space that position all individuals on a level playing field while ignoring the political, economic, social, and cultural advantages of liberal whiteness (Berg, 2012; Baldwin, 2009; Guthman, 2008), or in Breeze Harper's (2011) words, "the white-middle class individuals that dominate the alternative food movement" (p. 221). Therefore, cultural pressure is a form of universalism that assumes the values held by the hegemonic group are widely shared by everyone (Guthman, 2008). This implicates how the

unique social construction of Kelowna continues to be a determining factor in access and privilege. It further exposes how the foodscape is embedded in, and continues to be shaped by, these social relations.

5.4 Stigma and the Socio-Spatial Construction of Kelowna's Foodscape

Exploring the experiences of exclusion and the simultaneous cultural pressure to participate in alternative food initiatives through a food justice perspective exposes the socio-spatial inequities in food systems. Specifically, it reveals the consequences of food localism and consumer-driven food system change when it remains embedded in neoliberalism (Andree, Ballamingie, Sinclair-Waters, 2014; Guthman, 2008). While alternative food initiatives oppose neoliberalism in theory, they inadvertently reproduce neoliberal narratives or mentalities, spaces, and practices (Guthman, 2008; Andree, 2014). In the context of my findings, the emphasis on personal responsibility, self-improvement, and individual empowerment (Alkon, 2013; Guthman, 2008), alongside the exclusion faced by participants, indicates a broader issue of stigma.

Stigma was a concept largely expressed by members of the advisory team who spoke about the challenges they see among their clients in their daily practice. One of the more significant examples discussed was that for every one person in line at the food bank there are likely three more that would never use the food bank, given the negative stereotype associated with it. Reflecting on comments made to him as director of a volunteer-based community farm project that grows fresh produce for the food bank, one advisory team member said,

The first question that comes out of their mouths is 'So are you getting people who are accessing the food bank to come out and help? Because they should be doing that.' And it's just an assumption in our society that anyone who is using the food bank is a free loader.

This statement speaks to how food access is highly stigmatized among those who are a “have-not” as another advisory team member phrased it.



Figure 11. Negative stereotypes attached to food bank use lead to feelings of shame and indignity among participants.

(Photo credit: Sarah).

Based on my findings, stigma functions to penalize individuals for not participating in creating a healthy food system, but also prevents them from participating in initiatives that might improve their food access. This was contextualized by one advisory team member through the example of mental health that she sees in her practice:

Stigma is so much of the barrier to be able to take part in things that are available. You know, for example a community garden. Would someone with an addiction or substance-use issue or mental health issue just go and take part in a community garden? Because it's low-cost and many people still actually have knowledge of gardening, but it's often the stigma that stops them. Feeling like they don't fit in. Feeling like, you know, the system has sort of pushed them out of the mainstream. And so they've become marginalized and feel that way and feel like they can't take part, and that mainstream activities wouldn't include them.

While three clients from the Canadian Mental Health Association participated in my study, none discussed their mental health during the interview, which may be further indication of the

associated stigma. Sarah's experience also captures the dual marginalizing force of stigma. In her interview, she spoke about her desire to shop at places like the Farmers' Market because she wanted to be seen as an equal among the people purchasing local food and to be able to afford it to address her own dietary needs. Additionally, she spoke about not wanting to have to stand in line at The Central Okanagan Community Food Bank. David also shared his experience, saying that those with a lower education level might not take part in initiatives or ask for help out of fear of the stigma they might face.

Consequences that result from stigmatized food access were prevalent across interviews. Indignity, guilt, and shame were central concepts that came up in nine interviews. Speaking about her experience having to use a food bank to access food, one participant said,

It's very challenging to one's dignity. I mean... it left emotional scars. Even still, as I'm talking to you about it I'm having a physical reaction remembering that first time I went and stood in a food bank line up. There's horrible, horrible, horrible feelings of shame around that. And they don't really go away. Like 10, 15 years later when I'm going to the food bank because its the only way I know how to keep my child well fed and myself healthy enough to take care of him. Same feelings of shame and self-criticism.

Echoing this experience, another senior participant shared that, while it was less difficult for her to accept a hamper of food for her children when she was a single parent, she would have to be in desperate circumstances before she went to the food bank for herself. Three senior participants and one middle age participant talked about the indignity around asking for help. Said Gwen, "My generation never asked. Because it's a pride thing. You will go hungry before you ask somebody for that [...]. And I just feel like I'm imposing on people if I ask."

Speaking about guilt, Melanie discussed that people who are hungry shouldn't be made to feel ashamed about asking for help. Both of the younger participants talked about the guilt they felt around taking free food by gleaning or buying discounted day-old food at grocery stores.

Another three participants spoke about guilt and shame in regards to the type of food they could afford, knowing that they might be judged for eating unhealthy, processed food. While not explicitly stated, David's guilt about getting free food from The Food Bank seemed to be evident in his desire to gather and trade empty cardboard boxes for a hamper box of food. Lastly, in an emotional response, Anne again shared deep feelings of shame about living in food poverty: "I remember questioning... do I actually have a right to take up space on this planet. Or should I just go kill myself because I am such a drain on society." Through a food justice lens, stigma and the associated visceral responses indicate the gravity of the injustice that persists in Kelowna's AFM.

In this chapter I have endeavoured to position participants' stories of struggle and adversity at the centre of my analysis in an effort to offer a counter-narrative amidst the gentrification of food in Kelowna. Certainly, the AFM is not a cohesive entity in Kelowna and there are various currents, aims, and actors within in it. Nevertheless, my research findings relate how some of the alternative food initiatives have yet to put the AFMs' social justice intentions into practice and negotiate their complicity in reproducing the inequity within the depoliticization of food security that it sought to overcome. When these initiatives emphasize transforming the foodscape through behavioural economic-driven transformation (Saddler, Gilliland, & Arku, 2015) and personal responsibility, they negate the limited agency of those in marginal social locations and reproduces food injustice.

Chapter 6. Results & Discussion: Gleaning as an Alternative Strategy to Achieve Food Justice in the AFM

In the previous chapter, I wove together the literature review, advisory team discussion, and the participants' photovoice images and interviews to illuminate the persistence of food injustice in aspects of Kelowna's AFM. My second research question sought to understand if there are links between gleaning and food justice principles, and how the OFTP is positioned within Kelowna's evolving food paradigm to make food injustice a visible issue. My findings offer an alternative perspective to existing studies on gleaning, which focus on pragmatic elements of the practice such as amount and uses of gleanings, organizational structure, and volunteer motivations. Instead, this chapter presents insights into how gleaning can offer an alternative and more socially just food access strategy practiced by those at the margins of Kelowna's AFM, and a practice that uses the momentum of the AFM to create spaces of critical engagement that actively involve a broader and more diverse population around issues of food justice. Other alternative food strategies emerged in this study and will also be discussed in terms of their opportunities for food justice, though gleaning will be the focal point. To explore the food justice possibilities within gleaning, I draw on data from participants and the advisory team as well as my own experience as the Coordinator of the OFTP.

6.1 Gleaning as an Alternative Food Access Strategy

Amidst the inherent exclusion and inaccessibility of healthy food from within Kelowna's AFM, participants articulated their engagement in what I call 'alternative food access strategies' to meet their dietary needs. These findings emerged from both the photovoice project and questions concerning how the participants accessed food. All 10 participants spoke about the

different ways they access food outside the more conventional means (e.g. buying from a grocery store, using a food bank) and market-based alternative food initiatives. Gleaning was, by far, the most common alternative food strategy mentioned. Nine participants spoke about their experiences gleaning various types of food from different sources as an individual and group practice, while one participant has not gleaned before. Of the nine, six discussed harvesting wild berries, nuts, windfall apples and other fruits, and produce from community gardens outside of organized gleaning programs. Anne and Jane both gleaned on their own as single parents to supplement their food budget and they continue to glean today.

One of the ways that I have survived through various forms of living poor has been to keep an eye out for what resources are available and take advantage of whatever resources presented themselves. So whether that be hand-me-down clothes or a grapevine that's untended and growing over a fence on a back alleyway that I happen to pass by as I'm walking to work or class.

Adding to her own statement, Anne shared how she and her son would search for overgrown, neglected hazelnut trees around Kelowna and that the nuts became a primary source of protein for them over the years. Jane also talked about her experience gleaning 15 to 20 years before the OFTP started:

There were a few people who had orchards and we [...] went to places ourselves and asked for the best deals. A couple of times we went places where it was five cents a pound to go and pick windfalls, which would be the bruised, rotten apples lying on the ground.

Jane felt that people were more willing to help out single mothers, but she also related that people typically wouldn't give away food for free and that she would still have to pay a small amount in most cases. Every once in awhile a friend or church member would invite her to pick excess fruit from their tree, but most of the time she would knock on a farmer's door and negotiate a low price to pick their windfalls.

David also shared how he used to look forward to picking wild blackberries in Peachland with his daughter each year and how his wife would make jam for the family with their gleanings. Melanie, Laura, and Sarah both spoke excitedly about gleaning wild berries, rhubarb, apricots, and grapes on their own, while Charley talked, albeit somewhat sheepishly, about taking produce from what she called a “midnight garden”, or community garden plots, out of hunger.

Five participants have also gleaned with the OFTP and described their experiences as largely positive, noting that they were able to take fruit home while contributing to the community by picking fruit for others. As Julie put it, “Everybody wins. Everyone gets helped”. Julie, Melanie, and Jane also talked about the benefits of meeting new and like-minded people in an environment that brings people together over food and encourages new conversations about how to grow community around food. Charley picked golden plums with the OFTP as part of the Collaborative Harvest program and brought them back to her shared accommodation where she processed and shared them with the other tenants in her program. Anne talked about gleaning with the OFTP in the sense of connecting with tree owners and sharing the harvest.

Two participants also access food by dumpster diving, another gleaning practice. Anne admitted that she would go on Tuesday evenings to a dumpster behind a local grocery store and find post-dated or nearly post-dated organic food in good, edible condition. Gwen also shared that she gleans from dumpsters as an alternative strategy to access fruits and vegetables:

I would rather eat fruit and veggies. Fresh veggies. Well, sometimes you go to the dumpster and you can find these things. Rather than going to the food bank where you don't get it, you know [...]. Once in awhile you'll see someone throw out a bag of carrots because the carrots have gotten a little old and have grown some hair. Well, who cares? I'm going to peel it anyway.

Laura said, while she doesn't dumpster dive, she sees people gleaning from the dumpster at her place of work and that "It's not just who you might think, like someone off the street. It's a lot of different walks of life". Only one participant mentioned that she gleans the damaged, unwanted produce from the grocery store she works at, while another shared that she gleans free food from the 7/11 convenience store at the end of the day.



Figure 12. The dumpster Anne gleans from often has good, edible food on Tuesdays.
(Photo credit: Anne).

6.1.1 Gleaning Through a Food Justice Lens

In the previous chapter, I explored the experiences of indignity that result from inaccessibility of healthy food and reliance on the food bank or other such services or programs. In discussing the pragmatics of where and what participants gleaned, it became apparent that accessing to food in a dignified way, and on their own terms, was a primary motivation. In one vivid example, Anne shared why she chooses to glean:

Interestingly enough, dumpster diving and gleaning from alleyways and stuff like that feels way more dignified than standing in a line at the food bank with people who are

struggling really, really desperately with addiction issues in particular and mental health issues. And, also standing there with people who seem to have the attitude that it's their right to have a handout free for nothing. Where I would much rather bust my butt to turn over the soil and plant the seeds and tend the seeds and go and patrol the alleyway [for gleanings].

When speaking about gleaning, many participants changed their tone and body language and talked with enthusiasm about it. This suggests how gleaning can be an empowering experience for some people. Another specific example comes from Melanie, who spoke about gleaning with the OFTP for the past two years, and how it was empowering for her to participate in what she considered a “good deed” while getting to take fruit home. David’s statement also indicates the significance of gleaning activities from the perspective of someone experiencing food injustice:

It definitely makes you feel better because you're involved in the activity. You're the one that's helping to produce it, you know. Though you feel pretty good about the food bank because you know people have contributed and they want people to share it, but its not the same when you've done the thing yourself. When you've helped or contributed to it, it's a whole different story. You have more value. There's more value to it.

These perceptions of gleaning reflect how dignity and empowerment can stem from an increased agency and self-reliance in food choices (Hoisington et al., 2001).

Laura and Jane shared similar experiences as they discussed feeling empowered when they could glean food and preserve it by freezing, canning, or making jam and then sharing it with others. Laura also said that gleaning is “Very exciting! Because you know it’s fresh. You know it's not been sprayed. You know it's not been processed [...]. What you're picking is what you're getting.” This sentiment was echoed by Anne who said, “You get pretty grungy. So there's that. [...] But there's a feeling, especially when you're getting stuff that's not even to its due date yet.” These findings around the implications for more dignified and empowered access to food suggest a correlation between gleaning and opportunities for food justice.



Figure 13. Laura buys discounted tomatoes to make big batches of canned salsa.

(Photo credit: Laura)

Even though gleaning is a strategy used to access cheap or free food, there are multiple barriers that may prevent individuals living in food poverty from gleaning. In a contrasting view from the majority of participants, Sarah felt that the challenges she faces to accessing food on a daily basis also prevent her from gleaning:

It's also the fact that you have to figure out where those trees are and, when you do, how are you going to get that stuff home? Because you don't have a car. Right? Like how much can you actually carry? And if you did have a car then you're spending that money [on gas] to go and find food [and] then it might feel like its a little more pointless. [...] Is something ever really truly free?

Sarah's statement was also evident outside of this research study. After the interview, Sarah signed up as a volunteer gleaner with the OFTP as a way to access more fresh fruit. Despite my attempts as the Coordinator to arrange carpools on several occasions, she was unable to participate, often because she ended up having to take on extra shifts at work last minute. Outside of the scope of this study, further research is needed to understand the physical, social,

and economic barriers unique to Kelowna that may prevent individuals from participating in an organized gleaning project.

6.2 Other Alternative Food Access Strategies

Participants noted additional strategies that also show how individuals experiencing food injustice access food outside of Kelowna's AFM. In total, seven participants discussed their strategies for accessing inexpensive, healthy food. These included buying culled, imperfect produce from the BC Tree Fruits Cooperative, spending less on clothing to increase their food budget, buying day-old and discounted bread or produce, buying cheaper cuts of meat and organ meat, collecting coupons for significant savings, and bartering or purchasing produce from local farmers.

Seven participants also discussed using resources or services as a strategy to access food in the community. This included using the Central Okanagan Community Food Bank, eating meals at the Gospel Mission homeless shelter, participating in a low-income cooking program, and eating meals prepared by the Canadian Mental Health Association. A final means of accessing food, noted by three participants, was through friends and family.

6.2.1 Alternative Food Access Strategies Through a Food Justice Lens

A food justice lens reveals how participants experiencing injustice employ alternative food access strategies outside the spaces of the emerging AFM. I chose to include these findings because they may have pragmatic implications for understanding how gleaning, as another alternative strategy, can be a tool for furthering food justice in the AFM. Across all 10 interviews, the concepts of dignity and empowerment were present in discussions around

learning from others how to grow and harvest food, self-education, getting politicized around food, developing relationships with local farmers, pooling resources with other low-income parents to provide for their children, starting community gardens and an edible landscaping project, being able to preserve and can food, donating to the Gospel Mission, volunteering at the food bank or the Okanagan Gleaners Society, providing transportation to help others access food, and sharing food.

When asked more in-depth about the root cause of these experiences around dignity or empowerment, self-sufficiency and altruism emerged as dominant concepts. All 10 participants vocalized a desire to grow, glean, develop reciprocal arrangements, or buy their own food without relying on emergency food services. Dignity and empowerment were also evident in the desire to share food and help others. In fact, sharing food was such a significant concept that it was also evident during the interview process. When I met with Melanie, she served me some gleaned salad from a potluck she had recently attended, and made a batch of cookies she used to make with another single parent when their children were young. While Anne and I talked, she shared fresh fruit and we nibbled on nasturtiums from her yard. She also encouraged me to glean raspberries from her property to take home after the interview. When possible, I brought fruit from the OFTP to interviews with participants.



Figure 14. The raspberries picked and eaten from Anne's backyard during our interview.
(Photo credit: Anne).

In summary, gleaning was the dominant alternative food access strategy employed by the participants, and it had implications for more dignified access to food and individual empowerment due to increased agency and choice. I also found dignity and empowerment at the intersections of self-sufficiency and altruism across all alternative food strategies discussed. In the next section, I will explore these intersections as opportunities for food justice to take root in the OFTP's gleaning activities and build on the momentum of the AFM to create a foodscape that is inclusive, participatory, and enables all people to access healthy food.



Figure 15. Growing food is empowering for some participants.

(Photo credit: Margaret).

6.3 Potential Impact of Gleaning

“We have lots of food and lots of land and there's no need for people to be hungry if we could figure out how to share and be just.”

This statement from Jane reflects points to the potential impact of gleaning given Kelowna's abundant foodscape. Among the advisory team there was consensus that “handing someone a box of food doesn't make them food secure,” and that further work is needed to move beyond emergency food relief and into capacity building and system change to more adequately address inequities on our foodscapes. In addition, there was significant discussion with both the advisory team and participants concerning the injustice around the enormity of fresh produce that goes to waste and is inaccessible to those experiencing food poverty in Kelowna. For Gwen, this was part of what she considered a “me-first” attitude: “[People] are like ‘oh I can't use it’ and then they've got a blinder past that. They don't know how to give something they can't use to somebody else.” This demonstrates that, despite the city's agricultural abundance and positioning as regional centre for alternative food and food tourism, food waste is a common, if

not growing, concern. Yet, there is a disconnect between wasted fruits and vegetables and hungry neighbours. In the next section, I will explore how the OFTP has aimed to address food poverty by harnessing the easily understandable issue of food waste and, by doing so, has created a new space for engaging with food justice with the Kelowna's AFM.



Figure 16. Apples going to waste.

(Photo credit: Charley)

6.4 The Okanagan Fruit Tree Project

The OFTP is a non-profit, secular organization that aims to increase the availability of fresh and nutritious produce for those in need, reduce food waste, promote participation and inclusion, and provide dignified access to food. It achieves this through harvesting otherwise wasted fruit from backyard fruit trees and also orchards, vegetable gardens, farm plots, and nut trees, and redistributing it among tree owners, volunteer pickers, and local social service agencies or community organizations, to help alleviate hunger in the community. Fruit tree owners with excess fruit contact the organization, and the Coordinator recruits gleaners through a volunteer email list. To date, the organization has over 450 volunteers, and there is often a wait-

list to volunteer with the project. Since its start in 2012, OFTP volunteers have picked over 51,000 kgs of fruit and shared it with 40 social service agencies and their clients. In 2014, the project expanded beyond the Central Okanagan region and into the South Okanagan in the community of Penticton.

Typically, contemporary gleaning programs use the thirds model, giving one-third of the harvest each to the tree owner, volunteers, and social service agencies (Marshman, 2015). During the first picking season in 2012, the dietitians leading the project decided with the support of the COFPC board members, that division of fruit amounts should be flexible in order to cater to the needs of the most vulnerable members of the project. The Executive Director of the OFTP noted that the organization has kept this principle in place due to the growing number of new volunteer sign-ups who identify as food insecure. A few volunteers have expressed concerns about the decision not to employ the thirds model, and this was noted by one participant in my study. The Executive Director believes that the flexibility allows gleaners in need to take more fruit and solves the problem that most homeowners ask to keep less than one percent of the fruit gleaned. She also shared that, while the OFTP has a large volunteer base, the organization has not collected official statistics on the number of food insecure volunteers or other demographic information, because it aims to erase divisive practices and create an atmosphere of inclusion and equality.



Figure 17. Fresh apricots Melanie helped harvest with the OFTP.

(Photo credit: Melanie).

6.5 Reducing Stigmatized Food Access Through Gleaning

I began working for the OFTP in 2013 in its second year of operation, and soon realized that the practice of gleaning was addressing a gap in the food system in an unanticipated way – the need among some of the gleaners and recipients of fruit donations for inclusion in the food system and, more generally, the community. Both groups articulated their experiences of food poverty and sense of exclusion from various alternative food initiatives in Kelowna. Commonly, these individuals rely on low-priced, nutritionally poor food and emergency food assistance. They may have limited access to healthy produce due to barriers outlined in the Dietitians of Canada’s *Cost of Eating 2011* report: income level, purchasing power, proximity to places where food is sold, mobility, and lack of knowledge or space for food preparation and storage (2012). My findings in Chapter Five position this trend as a form of food injustice in Kelowna’s changing foodscape.

One of the OFTP’s primary goals is to bring together diverse actors from across the community over the harvesting and redistribution of local food. Fruit tree owners are offered an

opportunity to give back to the community by donating their excess fruit for picking. Social service providers and community organizations help distribute gleaned fruit among their clients, or bring small groups out to pick fruit with the OFTP. Volunteer gleaners, who may be working professionals, retirees, children, low-income individuals, at-risk youth, single parents, or those living with mental health issues among others, all partake in an effort to recover food that would otherwise be wasted.

In speaking about the volunteer system, the Executive Director discussed how the OFTP strives to offer a less stigmatizing way to access food:

It's food insecure [individuals] mixed in with people who aren't. Everyone is just picking together. Nobody knows each other's life circumstances. You can be completely anonymous and just do your thing and nobody is going to think anything. We've had a couple of people self-identify with us and we keep that really private and it's just totally laid back and non-judgemental. And yeah, I think it is a way less stigmatizing way.

The goal of reducing stigma and providing more organized opportunities for individuals to participate in their own food procurement is realized through the creation of a non-discriminatory environment where all people, regardless of age, race, gender, income, or disability, work alongside each other to harvest fruit for others and themselves without having to disclose their personal food circumstances. One OFTP volunteer shared her experience in harvesting her own food and having enough to share with others:

The gift that you gave us with the extra apples we had picked (getting to take it home) enabled us to bring some to a local family - a single mother of 4, as well as a couple who have just moved here after having been flooded out of their home in Calgary. We ourselves also benefited - we have been trying to survive on one income and a backlog of bills and the apples were much needed for ourselves as well, thank you.

Based on this learned understanding about the way inclusion and community-building can lead to less stigmatized food access, I helped design and implement the Collaborative Harvest Program. An outgrowth of the OFTP's gleaning project, this program works with clients

of social service agencies and community organizations to provide opportunities to take part in harvesting produce and food preservation workshops. The program is specifically designed to cultivate community and engage citizens who are marginalized or face barriers to participation by adopting a flexible framework, celebrating diversabilities (promoting equity and inclusion), and to offer opportunities to learn new skills and participate in the community in a meaningful way through volunteerism. The OFTP has worked closely with CMHA, the Karis Support Society, Cool Arts – a local charity that provides community art experiences for adults with developmental disabilities, Freedom’s Door – a treatment program for men struggling with alcohol and drug addictions issues, and NOW Canada. The Métis Community Services Society and Westbank First Nation Youth Program also expressed interest in participating in the program, which indicates a growing desire to among service providers and community organizations to involve their clients in the community while accessing fresh produce.

Practice-based findings that emerge from my experience as the Coordinator, and from the interview with the Executive Director, point to the potential impact gleaned. The act of harvesting fruit for personal use and participating in the Collaborative Harvest program can empower individuals, improve mental and physical health, facilitate a sense of belonging and community, work to address food poverty, and enable citizens to access food with dignity. Reflecting similar findings identified by participants in the previous section, the Executive Director shared that volunteers can build their sense of pride and self-efficacy by harvesting healthy food on their own terms. Such opportunities for more empowering and less stigmatized food access build community across social divides, and connect to ideas within food justice that seek to advance dignified food access among marginalized individuals.

6.6 Creating Critical Spaces of Engagement with Food Justice

By galvanizing the community through what would initially appear to be relatively benign acts of volunteerism and charity, the OFTP creates spaces of critical engagement to actively engage a broader and diverse population around issues of food poverty in Kelowna. The success of this community-gleaning project has garnered much media attention from Okanagan communities and elsewhere in the province in recent years (Smith, 2014; Everitt, 2014; McLeod, 2014; Shore, 2014). This attention has contributed to putting food poverty back into mainstream discussion. More recently, this shift is evident within the municipal government's work towards a Healthy City Strategy that recognizes and promotes the importance of healthy food systems (BC Healthy Communities, 2015).

Critics like J. Poppendieck (1999) point out that efforts to alleviate hunger through emergency food relief efforts have undermined movements that seek to end poverty because they focus the attention, energy, and funding on food. While gleaning is a form of food relief, the OFTP has received little to no criticism on this aspect. The Executive Director believes that this is due to the organization's focus on capacity building through its programs and close partnership with the COFPC. Furthermore, the OFTP recognizes that food poverty is framed and addressed through government policy often born from grassroots initiatives. Developing citizen awareness and participation through volunteerism, as stated in The City of Kelowna Social Policy 360 is an initiative of the project (City of Kelowna, 2013). Facilitating this community engagement can help ensure hunger and poverty remain issues of high importance for policy makers as well as the broader community. Undoubtedly, the OFTP recognizes its own limitations in solving the systemic issue of food poverty as a single organization. As the advisory team put it, initiatives like these all play an essential role in building community capacity and creating a more socially

just food system. In combination with the ongoing food poverty work carried about by the COFPC and other non-profits and groups, the OFTP continues to play a role in moving towards a more participatory and equitable foodscape.

6.7 Kelowna's AFM as a Platform for the OFTP & Food Justice

In Chapter Five, I discussed how aspects of Kelowna's AFM remain embedded in a neoliberal paradigm that locates improved food access and food security in consumer-based change and personal responsibility. I also showed how Kelowna's unique social, economic and political construction determines who can access food within these emerging alternative food initiatives, and who experiences food injustice at margins of this changing foodscape. While these initiatives have reproduced inequity in some instances, they have also positioned local food as a topic of conversation and created new ways to connect with, enjoy, and access it. In the context of food justice, it is prudent to focus on "the progressive possibility in alternative food practices" (Slocum, 2007, p. 522). The increasing attention brought to local, healthy food in Kelowna through tourism, unique culinary experiences, foodie events, the farm-to-table concept, the growth of the Farmers' and Crafters' Market, and the growing number of specialty stores focused on local and organic food has created a platform for the OFTP to gain momentum.

Given this understanding, I believe that the OFTP has an opportunity to expand current conversations and perceptions of local food through a food justice praxis. Food justice is not explicitly stated in the organization's mandate, but participant experiences and current OFTP activities suggest that gleaning closely aligns with the principles of food justice. By offering a unique opportunity for all people, regardless of social location, to access food in a way that is collaborative, dignified, and empowering, the OFTP provides an inclusive space where all

people can critically engage with issues of food poverty. This critical food justice praxis is essential to helping the AFM realize its social justice intentions to re-create a foodscape that acknowledges those at the margins and is inclusive, participatory, and enable all people to access healthy, local food.

Chapter 7. Conclusions

Reaffirming the right to food is “a profoundly political matter” (Riches, 1999, p. 203). Conceptualizing food as a right under a food justice lens invites critical analysis about the depoliticization of food security. It also offers a framework to ensure that vulnerable and marginalized groups are positioned at the center of the discussion regarding how our foodscapes can become more equitable. Against the backdrop of increasing food poverty rates, food waste, government retrenchment, institutionalized food relief, and the emergence of new forms of exclusions under the AFM, “food is a salient issue for everyone and thus a potential moment of politicization” (Allen, 1999a, p. 120). With this understanding, food is a medium through which issues of food poverty and social justice can be made visible in Kelowna, and elsewhere.

Through a food justice lens, I have endeavoured to show how conservatism, white colonial attitudes, a legacy of Aboriginal displacement, middle and upper class social norms, a cultural focus on local food and food tourism, and neoliberalism have gentrified Kelowna’s foodscape. By illuminating the lived experience of those positioned outside of these discursive boundaries and entitlements as it pertains to food access and social justice, I have also exposed how alternative food initiatives in Kelowna have not negotiated or addressed their own complicity in reproducing inequitable food access. Unquestionably, the AFM exists in opposition to the disparities and inadequacies of a depoliticized food security paradigm. Yet, some initiatives under its broad umbrella locate social change with consumer market behaviour, thereby offering a limited interpretation of the multifaceted and intersecting disparities on our foodscapes at both the global and local level.

Second, I discussed gleaning and other alternative food access strategies in terms of their possible intersections with food justice. I drew on my experience as the Coordinator of the OFTP

in combination with participant and advisory team data to consider the significance of the organization's gleaning activities within Kelowna's AFM. In doing so, I have identified the disconnect between food waste and food poverty, despite the city's agricultural abundance and positioning as regional centre for alternative food and food tourism. In this context, I was able to demonstrate how the OFTP's gleaning opportunities are harnessing the issue of food waste in local orchards, farms, and backyards, and, indirectly, creating a space for engaging with food justice. Gleaning projects might initially attract broader community interest through their volunteer opportunities, promise of fresh produce, and through the easily visible and therefore more understandable issue of food waste. Because the OFTP brings diverse individuals together and offers opportunities for dignified food access and empowerment through food procurement, it not only facilitates access to food, but also plays a role in advancing a democratic and participatory model that makes food poverty a visible issue.

In giving due credit, the AFM has provided an important foundation and initial starting point for re-envisioning alternative foodscapes. However, its inability to extricate itself from the depoliticized food security framework and its current existence as a predominantly white, middle-classed movement does not address how class, gender, race, culture, and ability, among other groupings, affect access to healthy food. I have endeavoured to show how food justice not only has the potential to re-orient the AFM, but that it also offers a framework to address immediate inequities, while simultaneously changing the system as a whole (Gottlieb & Joshi; Dixon, 2013). This is because food justice takes into account the multiple and interlocking challenges to accessing food: economic and social capital; a lack of time; transportation; accessibility of grocery stores; knowledge about nutritious food and preparation or preserving; physical ability; and ineffective public policies. I also draw on feminist theories to point out that

overcoming barriers to access requires addressing “the overlapping and conflicting dynamics of race, gender, class, and sexuality, and citizenship related to food inequalities” (Saches & Patel-Campillo, 2014, p. 409). Finally, food justice points out that the AFM must be created by and function for all people in order to ensure equitable access to the food resources of the community. Part of cultivating a healthy, just, and vibrant food system is ensuring that everyone, including the most vulnerable, can access its benefits and opportunities.

7.1 Limitations & Areas of Future Study

I had originally set out to expand on the discussion about the OFTP’s role in making food poverty a visible issue amidst the niche, alternative food initiatives taking place in Kelowna. Because the OFTP staff is limited to myself and the Executive Director, I could only draw on my own experiences, the one-on-one interview with the Director, and literature. In addition, it was difficult to recruit gleaners who experience food poverty because the OFTP’s volunteer system does not require people to disclose their financial or food circumstances. From my perspective as the Coordinator, much of the organization’s success in recruiting volunteers is due to the fact that it allows anonymity. These barriers, in addition to the OFTP still being in its infancy as an organization, mean that I was not able to gather sufficient data regarding the potential impact gleaning could have on making food justice a visible issue. Therefore, these findings are limited to the experiences of a relatively small number of individuals from more marginalized demographics.

Future studies could be done with a larger sample size across a broader demographic to understand more thoroughly how gleaning influences participation to transform foodscapes from within the AFM. Conversely, more focused research could be undertaken within targeted

populations. A majority of my participants were female single parents. Recent statistics from the Central Okanagan Community Food Bank *HungerCount Survey* (2016) also indicate that 345 single parent households access their services. This number is comparatively high across other household types with the exception of single adults. As a result, future research might also explore the gendered dimensions of food access in Kelowna through a food justice lens. Future studies might also explore injustices within the AFM through the integration of a food sovereignty approach. Specifically, food sovereignty could be used to investigate how the market continues to be the primary motivator for local food system change, and the subsequent inequities it produces.

Another limitation discussed in Chapter Four was the extent to which CBPR was implemented in this study. Due to concerns around the privacy of individuals appearing in the photographs and the subsequent restrictions on the photovoice project, my research did not have the participatory impact that I had intended. Participants were limited by what they could take photos of and the project ultimately did not produce a great variety of images, though the process still encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences in a different capacity, and provided an additional method of engaging with the issues. While I consulted with the advisory team during and outside of the focus group, I did not hold a second meeting to discuss the best means of disseminating the images and results to the broader community given the limited quality of the photos. For this reason, my research cannot be positioned fully within the CBPR paradigm. Instead, I have framed my methodology under a broader qualitative research framework that draws on the CBPR principles. Further research is needed to understand how CBPR can be better accommodated in the academy in such a way that does not reproduce marginalization within its ethics review process and instead acknowledges and makes provisions to accommodate the

barriers to participation faced by marginalized or vulnerable people. A social justice praxis would be good starting point from the perspective of this study.

7.2 Participant Visions for Food Justice

As part of my commitment to offering a counter-narrative to the status quo and positioning participants at the centre of knowledge creation, I also asked participants to imagine their ideal food system and contribute their ideas for improving access to food. These visions frame the following suggestions for improving food access and opportunities for food justice in Kelowna:

- 1) Communication: Charley, David, Laura, and Sarah all shared ideas about increasing the level of communication and advertisement around community food projects like the OFTP and community gardens, volunteer opportunities, and other initiatives. They specifically noted the need to reach those who may be less connected or more isolated in the community through community boards, newspapers, or a central resource such as a coordinator that could connect individuals to opportunities. For Sarah, access to information was important because “knowledge is power. Just knowing where those resources are [and being able] to have access to them”
- 2) Emergency food relief: Anne shared that emergency food needs to be reconceptualised based on two fundamental concepts: 1) getting healthy food to people who need it, and 2) “sustaining their spirits” or providing dignified/empowered means of accessing food. Jane expanded on this idea, highlighting the need to move away from the corporatization of food charity and into a more sustainable model.
- 3) Policy Intervention: Margaret thought that the government should step in to address systemic issues of poverty underlying inequitable food access. Anne suggested that

municipal governments should lower the policy restrictions on backyard poultry and beekeeping as well as provide incentives for people to grow backyard gardens and form neighbourhood cooperatives to grow, trade, and share food.



Figure 18. Less restrictions are needed on backyard poultry.

(Photo credit: Anne).

- 4) Education: Gwen suggested starting with children to encourage resilience and self-sufficiency by teaching them to grow their own food and learn “the love of gardening and feeling things in the dirt”. Melanie felt that there is lots of opportunity within the local culinary movement. She suggested that chefs could volunteer to teach basic cooking skills to individuals experiencing food poverty. This could include workshops focused on making delicious and healthy meals on a budget or lessons on how to preserve food. Julie reiterated the need for more community food projects where participants can organize themselves to buy food at a bulk discount because they are part of a larger group. This would then be followed up with cooking classes that teach the participants how to stretch

resources through big-batch cooking. Sarah shared a similar idea, pointing out that some individuals could benefit from learning how to use the fresh produce that is gleaned or given to them.



Figure 19. Learning how to cook big batch meals with fresh food would be beneficial to some participants.

(Photo credit: Julie).

- 5) Gleaning and growing: Jane noted the potential within the OFTP and suggested increasing its gleaning capacity and outreach by providing transportation to and from fruit picks for those who don't have access to a vehicle or have difficulty taking public transit. For example, she suggested that the OFTP could partner with a moms and tots group so that the women have childcare while they are picked up and brought out to harvest fruit for themselves. Afterwards, a canning and food-processing event could be arranged. Julie pointed out that there is lots of unused land in West Kelowna that could be used to plant gardens or edible landscaping projects to feed the community.

These ideas for improving the accessibility of healthy food suggest how the AFM could transform to include those on the margins of its foodscapes. In addition, they reflect a

commitment to a critical food justice praxis by offering pragmatic and praxis-oriented ways forward beyond the parameters of this thesis.

7.3 Summary

Through the participatory and praxis-centred approach used in this thesis, I endeavoured to challenge the existing discourse of local food in Kelowna by positioning participants' experiences at the centre of my analysis. The critical food justice praxis allowed me to explore the injustices that are reproduced on our foodscapes and also emerged as a pragmatic tool for addressing food inequities. This research does not purport to be representative of the majority of individuals experiencing food injustice, but instead focuses on a specific few in-depth experiences that are a starting point for beginning to understand and contend with food injustice.

Because this research was situated in a place-based context and is highly reflexive, I was able to draw on my social capital from the connections developed through my employment and volunteer activities. This thesis would not be possible without the advisory team's guidance or the participants who shared their stories of struggle, strength, and hope for a better food system, often discussed over gleaned fruit or other shared treats. Given my investment in this topic, this research was a personal learning experience as much as it was an academic and professional one. From my experiences growing up as part of a community garden, to the current evolving food paradigm in Kelowna, I have learned that food is a powerful influence to a community. Just as it can divide and exclude, it also has the potential to level inequities by bringing diverse groups of people together over a commonality.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

Advisory Team Focus Group Questions

- 1) Who are the most vulnerable people here in Kelowna in regards to the food system?
 - a. Who is excluded groups and why?
- 2) How can we support people to share their experiences of food injustice (other than photovoice)?
- 3) How can we co-develop this research project to support your organizations' needs?
- 4) Now that we've discussed the term 'food justice', do you think that it is a useful concept in your practice?

Appendix B:

Participant Semi-Structured Interview Questions

- 1) Have you experienced not having enough to eat, such as going days without eating, skipping meals, trying to get enough to eat by eating cheap/unhealthy foods. If so, what was/is this experience like?
- 2) What barriers do you face in making sure you have enough food to eat?
- 3) Are there certain foods you have to eat because of health, diet, allergies, etc?
 - a. Do the barriers you mentioned before impact your ability to eat these foods?
- 4) Where do you buy food?
- 5) Where do you access it?
- 6) Have you ever gleaned food before? Ex. picking fruit from a public tree, backyard fruit tree, orchard, picking veggies from a garden, picking up leftovers from a restaurant or grocery store, dumpster dived (picking food that's going to waste).
 - a. If yes, what was this experience like?
 - b. If no, why not?
- 7) Have you lived anywhere else besides Kelowna? Did food access change for you when you moved here?
- 8) How has food changed in our community?
- 9) As we discussed, my research is looking at access to food through a social justice perspective. So, food injustice happens when people are not able to grow, eat, or access good, healthy food because of factors due to their race, income, class, gender – for example a single mother, age, ethnicity, ability, religion, etc. Do you identify as someone who has experienced food injustice? If yes, how so?
- 10) We live in an abundant community here in Kelowna. We grow lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. We've also seen a food movement taking off here: growing Farmers' Market, expensive restaurants featuring local food, wineries have been growing, and foodie events featuring local food. What is your experience of this local food movement?
 - a. Are there certain spaces/places within this new food movement that you feel excluded from or are not able to access?
 - b. Where do you feel included?
- 11) What makes you feel empowered when accessing food?

- 12) How do you feel we could create a more inclusive food movement here in Kelowna where everyone has access to healthy, nutritious food?

Guiding Questions for Photovoice Project

- 1) What kinds of food do you like to eat?
- 2) What kinds of food do you have to eat (due to health reasons, diet, allergies, etc)?
- 3) What kind of food can you afford to eat?
- 4) What are your biggest obstacles to getting the food you need?
- 5) What's the biggest help to get the food you need?
- 6) What's your favorite memory associated with food?
- 7) How do you access food?
 - a. Bus?
 - b. Walk?
 - c. Bike?
 - d. Car?
 - e. Food from friends? Family?
 - f. Other?
 - g. What is this experience like?
- 8) Do you buy food directly from farms?
- 9) What are your options for buying food close to where you live or work?
- 10) How do you feel about some of the changes we've seen around food in Kelowna?
 - a. Farmers' Market growing
 - b. Expensive farm-to-table restaurants
 - c. Foodie events (ex. Feast of Fields)
 - d. Growing wine industry?
- 11) Have you ever gleaned food before? (Picked fruit or veggies from a public garden, dumpster dived, etc?)
 - a. If not, why not?
 - b. If yes, what was this experience like?
- 12) Do you grow your own food?
 - a. If no, why not?
- 13) Have you lived anywhere else besides Kelowna? Did food access change for you when you moved here?
- 14) How has food changed in our community?

Photovoice Legal and Ethical Issues and Expectations

Overview:

We are asking if you would like help us by taking photos of your daily life (photovoice). We want to get an idea of experiences of food injustice and food justice.

Here are some questions to help guide the photographs you take:

- 1) What is your experience of food injustice? Do you have difficulty accessing healthy food? Do you have enough food? Do you experience hunger/food insecurity? What does hunger look like to you?
- 2) What is your experience of food justice? What kind of food choices do you make? What makes you feel included in the food system/community? What does food justice look like to you?

You may choose to take picture with your smartphone or with a camera we will provide you with.

If you take pictures with your smartphone:

- 1) Please turn on the “location” setting to track where the photo was taken or,
- 2) Use the notebook and pen provided to note the location and time/date the photo was taken
 - a. This will be used place the photo on the online map in the general area where it was taken where appropriate. No exact addresses will be used in cases where individuals appear in the photographs.
 - b. Please turn the location setting off if you are taking images of children under the age of 19.
 - c. The researchers will delete, crop, or blur the location stamp on the photo before posting it to the map.
- 3) Please include any notes about the photograph. For example, why you chose to take the picture, background information, context, etc.
- 4) Please number the note page to match the number of the photo you have taken. Or take descriptive notes that can be matched to the corresponding photo.
- 5) You will have 3 weeks to take pictures. Please do not spend any more than 2 hours. If you spend less than 2 hours, that is okay.
- 6) When you are done taking photos, please email them to the Investigator, Jon Corbett: jon.corbett@ubc.ca

If you take pictures with a camera:

- 1) The “location” setting will already be turned on, which will track the location, date, and time.
- 2) Use the notebook and pen provided to make important notes about the photograph. For example, why you choose to take the picture, background information, context, etc.
- 3) Please number the note page to match the number of the photo you have taken. Or take descriptive notes that can be matched to the corresponding photo.
- 4) You will have 3 weeks to take pictures. Please do not spend any more than 2 hours. If you spend less than 2 hours, that is okay.
- 5) The Co-Investigator will collect the camera after three weeks. If you are done taking photos before the 3 weeks is up, please contact Ailsa Beischer to collect the camera early

Important Ethical and Legal Issues:

- 1) According to B.C.'s Privacy Act 1, it is illegal to violate another's privacy. You cannot photograph a person who has a '**reasonable expectation of privacy**'. This is someone who believes that they are in a private location and no-one is watching them, such as a person in a bathroom. Please be aware of other people's private space. People still have private space in public.
 - a. Example: A couple in an intimate embrace cannot be photographed from the sidewalk through their window. If the couple were outside and in the same embrace then they could be photographed legally" (Ambient Light, *Canadian Photography Laws*).
- 2) Although taking the photo may not be illegal, **what you are doing** while taking the photo can be. For example: illegally entering a building or property or misrepresenting yourself with a fake ID or name.
- 3) Do not take a picture of anyone who does not want to be photographed.
- 4) Any person you take a picture of **must first sign a consent form**.
 - a. Please spend a couple minutes explaining the form to them.
 - b. Do not take a picture of anyone you think does not have the ability to understand why their photograph is being taken and what it will be used for.
 - c. Each individual must understand that the images may be used in the Co-Investigator's Masters thesis posted on the UBC Okanagan Library website on cIRcle, articles, journals, books, presentations, and an online participatory map.
 - d. Please remind the individuals of the risks involved with posting the photographs online: images posted on the Internet cannot be kept secure, are likely impossible to remove, can be accessed by anyone, and other people may recognize the individuals appearing in the photographs.
- 5) If you take images of **anyone under the age of 19**, they must sign the assent form appropriate to their age (8-12 or 13-18) AND you must get the parent/guardian consent form signed.
 - a. Children under the age of 8 can give their verbal consent if they understand they study and a parent/guardian must also sign a consent form. Please make a note of verbal assent in your journal.
 - b. Do not take any pictures of children if they say no (even if their parent/guardian gives their permission).
 - c. It is important to tell the parent/guardian and child that we will not use their child's real name in the study.
 - d. Please also explain that the researchers will blur the face of the child before posting it on the Internet to protect their privacy.
 - e. Please turn off the location setting on the camera or cellphone before taking the photo.
 - f. Please delete all images of children from your personal device after you have sent them to the researchers.

Where can you take pictures?

A photographer can take a photo anywhere that the photographer is legally allowed to be. This includes but is not limited to:

- Your own property

- Public property (ex. a park, the street). You can take pictures of anything that anyone else could see from public property.
- Private property with permission of owner (ex. inside a grocery store, inside the food bank, etc. after asking the staff/manager if it is allowed)
- It is **not** illegal to take photos of buildings, public art, and permanently installed sculptures.

Please contact us if you wish to discuss any questions about taking photos. We are happy to discuss them at any time!

Co-Investigator, Ailsa Beischer: a.beischer@gmail.com or 778-363-5507.

Principal investigator, Dr. Jon Corbett: jon.corbett@ubc.ca or 250-807-9348.

Appendix C:

15-Point Checklist of Criteria for Good Thematic Analysis

Table 2 A 15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis

Process	No.	Criteria
Transcription	1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'.
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.
	4	All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
Analysis	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
	7	Data have been analysed – interpreted, made sense of – rather than just paraphrased or described.
	8	Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.
	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organized story about the data and topic.
Overall	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.
	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly.
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.
	13	There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – ie, described method and reported analysis are consistent.
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
	15	The researcher is positioned as <i>active</i> in the research process; themes do not just 'emerge'.

(Source: Braun & Clarke, 2006)