PEOPLE SYSTEMS IN SUPPORT OF FOOD SYSTEMS: THE
NEIGHBOURHOOD FOOD JUSTICE NETWORK MOVEMENT IN
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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List of Acronyms

COV – City of Vancouver
CSA – Community Supported Agriculture
DTES – Downtown Eastside
DTES RTFN – Downtown Eastside Right to Food Network
GWFC – Grandview Woodland Food Connection
NFJN – Neighbourhood Food Justice Network
NFN – Neighbourhood Food Network
RCFSI – Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute
SGSC – South Granville Seniors Centre
TLCCFSN – Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Food Security Network
VCH – Vancouver Coastal Health
VFPC – Vancouver Food Policy Council
WFSC – Westside Food Security Collaborative

Preface: A Story of Stories

This is a story of stories about neighbourhoods in Vancouver, British Columbia and how they are taking part in the global movement to transform our relationships with food. But even more fundamentally, this story is about transforming relationships between people as our sustenance is really an intermediary for our expressions of love, fear, and everything in between. As I go ahead and tell the story of Vancouver's Neighbourhood Food Justice Networks (NFJNs) I do not want to lose sight of this larger view of food, all that it is capable of, and all that it represents.

Moving forward in telling this story of stories, I acknowledge those who have been writing it with the quill of their daily actions, in some cases over the course of decades. I am constantly humbled that so many people have been doing this work for longer than I have been drawing breath. Several of these movers and shakers kindly allowed me to prod them in conversations otherwise known as 'the research interview' and an even greater number have accepted me as a collaborator and friend in Vancouver's movement towards a better food future.

Although relatively new to the story, I am admittedly now one of its characters as I have become embedded in Vancouver's food movement in capacities far beyond that of a researcher. I am incredibly grateful for these opportunities and above all, the relationships I entered into because of them. The deeply experiential nature of how I came to understand the NFJNs—and the even larger plight for food system change in this city to which they contribute—is the richest source of my sense of belonging, purpose, community, and passion in Vancouver, not to mention some of my learning grounds for what it means to be a planner, community organizer, and movement builder. And so, although the larger story of the NFJN movement has become intimately intertwined with my own ongoing journey and is being shared in my voice, I want to honour that it is really an amalgamation of the many experiences and conversations I have been trusted with over the past two years in a city hungry for change.

Intentions
My intentions in authoring this work are that it will:
1) Be one form of documenting and communicating Vancouver's NFJN movement including its context, evolution, accomplishments, and dilemmas;
2) Situate the NFJN movement in some relevant food systems, community organizing and development, as well as movement building thinking and practice;
3) Share ideas for the future of NFJNs in Vancouver and other places which may want to (or are already) exploring a similar model of activating change;
4) Capture some of my own journey, learning, and reflections from my experiences in the NFJN movement; and,
5) Catalyze conversation among those involved and help convene and hold the space for deliberation on how to best keep forging ahead.

SECTION A - BREAKING GROUND

Chapter 1: Introduction

Where Do Problems Come From?

> Solving justice problems in food and agriculture begins with recognizing that problems are created by people and thus resolvable by people (Allen, 2008, 158).

Allen's conviction seems simple and self-evident enough. Putting it into practice and negotiating the people systems in support of food systems—specifically food system change underpinned by justice—is another matter altogether.

I conceived the notion of *people systems in support of food systems* upon reflecting on my experiences within Hamilton, Ontario's permutation of the contemporary food movement. Although the words coming out of the movement were normative aspirations for the food system: 'just', 'sustainable', 'resilient', 'equitable', 'accessible', 'culturally-appropriate', 'affordable', 'healthy', 'organic', 'local', 'community-based', and so on, I realized that underneath this language what we were really talking about are *systems of people* and how they choose to care for the city, one another, and the Earth through the most sacred of all substances: food (Fodor, 2009).

Box 1: The Food Movement

The food movement is "arguably one of the most important social movements of the early twenty-first century in the global north," (Morgan, 2009, 343). It has been defined in the Canadian context as:

A diverse and dynamic network of organizations and individuals working to build a healthy, ecological, and just food system for Canada [including] city organizers, farmers and fishers, indigenous people, entrepreneurs, nutritionists, public health professionals, policy analysts, academics, workers at food banks, non-profit and community organizations, gardeners, cooks, and others who care about food (People's Food Policy Project, 2011, 1 & 4).

A decentralized network of diverse, self-organizing, interconnected initiatives with no identifiable beginning or end (Levkoe, 2011, 2).

What Are Our Food System Problems?

The problems in food and agriculture underpinning the food movement are as diverse, dynamic, and interconnected as the responses to them. This is an incredible strength of the food movement as it is a people system with, "processes that match or mimic the diversity and complexity of the [problems]…they are attempting to solve," (MacRae, 1999, 189). Bouris (2005) credits four groups in particular with the surge of the food movement in North America: community nutritionists and educators, grassroots sustainable agriculturalists, anti-hunger advocates, and anti-

globalization activists. This begins to motion at the food movement's heterogeneity, even in its more nascent phase, as well as the diversity of ways in which food problems appear.

As for what the problems with the food system are which provoked and continue to stir the movement, they are firstly multi-scalar, abundant, and complex. Some examples at multiple scales from the global to the local are given in Table 1 below with two caveats that most food system problems have causes and effects at different scales, and that these examples only begin to scratch the surface.

Table 1: Example Food System Concerns at Multiple Scales

Scale	Food System Concerns
Global	• Food and agriculture is responsible for up to 57% of greenhouse gases worldwide* • Climate change is having adverse effects on food and agriculture • Proliferation of genetically modified organisms in food • Loss of biodiversity in the food system • Global concentration of wealth and power • Global hunger and malnutrition epidemics • World food price crisis in 2008 • Food is treated as a commodity left to the market rather than a universal human right
National (Canada)	• Canada does not have a national food policy* • Canada is the only G8 country without a national school food program* • Loss of farmland and fisheries throughout the country* • Two and a half million Canadians are food insecure* • National increase in food bank usage by 28% from 2008-10*
Provincial (British Columbia)	• BC has a very high proportion of agricultural migrant workers compared to other provinces who are often unjustly treated (Globe and Mail, 2011) • BC's population is rising without enough farmland to maintain current levels of food self-sufficiency (BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, 2006) • Erosion of the Agricultural Land Reserve † • Lack of adequate food system infrastructures e.g. food hubs, processing facilities, abattoirs, storage, and coordinated transportation networks †
City (Vancouver)	• Uneven distribution of food retail and accessible food throughout the city ‡ • Several marginalized populations facing income, physical, and other barriers to acceptable food access ‡ • More demand than supply for community gardens and urban agriculture opportunities in the city • Widespread dependence on the charity food system

*From *Resetting the Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada*, People's Food Policy Project, 2011
† From *Every Bite Counts: Climate Justice and BC's Food System,* Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2010
‡ From the *Vancouver Food System Assessment*, Forum of Research Connections, 2005

This compilation begins to make evident that food system problems are in many ways inseparable from other realms of public concern whether these are related to the environment, labour, economics, equity, public policy, immigration, poverty,

planning, and onwards. In the same vein, responses to these problems cannot exist in isolation of other contemporary social movements ranging anywhere from the labour movement's struggle for farm workers' rights, to the environmental movement's advocacy of pesticide bans. Food's intersections with other progressive movements are rampant as are the "multiplier effects" (Mendes, 2008, 944) of food when it is used as an instrument for achieving other desired benefits whether these be community capacity building, participatory governance, local economic improvements, environmental benefits, and on (ibid). Or as Holt-Gimenez (2011) succinctly puts it: health and happiness.

This gets to what is striking about the food movement—in all its varied iterations— and what ultimately drew me in to it which is that it is a connective movement with the power to build relationships between people and efforts that might not otherwise find common ground. At the same time, such a diverse movement raises questions about how to foster this desired unity when interests conflict (Buttel, Foster & Magdoff, 2000). This being so, the movement holds deep significance and power when these relationships do breed since, "the job of creating a just and environmentally sound food system cannot be separated from the creation of a just and environmentally sound society," (ibid, 20). If we want a future with better conditions for life on this planet, we have no choice but to focus on food and do so in an integrative and relational way. As one interviewee put it:

> I think to me the situation we're in, whether you call it the environmental crisis, the food crisis, [or any other crisis], whatever's happening, we no longer have the luxury of working independently.

So, we move forward together.

Addressing Food System Problems with People Systems

As I began to unpack above, what I was coming to understand during my participation in Hamilton's manifestation of the food movement is that in order to change the food system, what needs to firstly change are its systems of governance or 'people systems'. Food governance entails the modes of power, control, and decision-making that determine a food system. Echoing Allen, if the current processes of governing food consist of people responsible for problems, we need reinvigorated systems of people that are capable of solutions. And so, I began to wonder, *what does a human landscape in support of food system change look like?*

My journey to answer this question took me to Planning school in Vancouver, British Columbia. It has been through directly participating in the human landscape of Vancouver's food movement that I came across many networked systems of people working to resolve some of the many justice problems in food and agriculture. One of these people systems, the NFJNs, are doing so by incubating a social infrastructure that is working towards food justice at the neighbourhood level. I got hooked on NFJNs not long after arriving in Vancouver as a unique approach to food

system change and community development that I wanted to both actively participate in and know more about.

Though only one of many responses to some of the aforementioned food system woes, the NFJNs are growing in number and significance within Vancouver's diverse human landscape of food system activity. What is captivating about the networks is the potential they hold as a different kind of people system, or form of alternative food governance, working towards a different kind of food system, and their multiplier effects insofar as they foster community connections and build neighbourhood and city-wide capacity to do this work. The next chapter presents some literature to help situate the NFJNs in the relevant concepts of dominant and alternative food governance, food justice, and food democracy.

Chapter 2: Getting Grounded in Food Governance, Food Justice, and Food Democracy

The Dominant Food Governance Culture

> The enormous power exerted by the largest agribusiness/food corporations allow them essentially to control the cost of their raw materials purchased from farmers while at the same time keeping prices of food to the general public at high enough levels to ensure large profits. It is no accident that the food industry is the second most profitable one in the United States, following pharmaceuticals! (Buttel, Foster & Magdoff, 2000, 11).

The dominant food governance culture is responsible for creating and maintaining the conventional food system[1] from which the global north derives most of its sustenance, also recognizing its dominance in the global south. It is a globalized, yet multi-scalar (Barling, Lang & Caraher, 2002) consortium of decision-makers that is disproportionately powerful and relatively small, described as, "an oligarchy ruled by a handful of multinational corporations," (Hassanein, 2003, 83). Its key players include heavyweight institutions such as large agri-businesses, food regulatory bodies, as well as food distributors, retailers, and traders. They govern food alongside governments, "lapdog policy makers" (Winne, 2010, 42), who more often than not align their policies with the interests of food industry players (Lang, 1999; Riches, 1999; Marsden, 2000; Barling, Lang & Caraher, 2002; Lang, 2003; Sonnino, 2009).

Lang (1999) laments that this dominant food governance culture is primarily motivated by greed and that food is used within it as a tool to support proponents' private interests rather than the common good. This is enabled by a world in which trade liberalization, neoliberal logic, capitalism, economic competitiveness, commoditization, globalization, and the continual accumulation and concentration of wealth are considered acceptable (Buttel, Foster & Magnoff, 2000; Barling, Lang & Caraher, 2002; Lang, 2003).

Under this paradigm, the people occupying these almighty institutions make decisions that transcend the entire food system. They determine everything from what crops are grown, produced, and processed, where, and how; the wages and working conditions of food labourers; what marketing schemes will entice consumers to purchase food products and at what cost; where grocery stores are located, and what is on their shelves. Even seemingly minute details like which products get preferential placement on grocery store shelves are political and decided at a high level within the dominant food governance culture; it was not the

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[1] The conventional food system here is understood as the food system characterized by globalization, industrialization, commoditization, and neoliberal logic.

stock person's idea to put the big brand cereal at eye level and the lesser known brand just out of shoppers' reach (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010).

Out the other end, we have a food system rampant with injustices from the prevalence of hunger and health disparities experienced by low-income populations who do not have access to healthy foods, to the exploitation of farm workers—two of several examples (Allen, 2008). The dominant food governance culture also provoked the rise of charitable food systems[2] which are more often than not unhealthy, undignified, and unsustainable by creating a conventional food system that is not available to all.

Framing Food Justice

Proponents of food justice are critical of the dominant food governance culture and its track record of inequities. Food justice is one of several framings in food systems thinking and practice (Wekerle, 2004) used by those dissatisfied with dominant food systems. I use it in this work for the simple reason that it is how the NFJNs have chosen to identify themselves, recognizing that other concepts also resonate. Table 2 presents some of the more popular food movement concepts, including food justice.

An admittedly working definition from Gottlieb and Joshi characterizes food justice as "ensuring that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown and produced, transported and distributed, accessed, and eaten are shared fairly," (2010, 6), specifically capturing the human and social dimensions of food. Of particular interest to food justice advocates are marginalized, vulnerable, and socially excluded[3] populations that are most disadvantaged under the status quo as they experience more than their fair share of the risks in the food system and fewer of the benefits.

To help substantiate food justice, take the example given earlier of an exploited farm worker. This person is experiencing much more of the risk in the food system by working for a low wage and under inadequate living conditions, being exposed to harmful chemicals, and perhaps being separated from their support network and loved ones, particularly in the case of migrant workers (Liu & Apollon, 2011). Closer to the top of the hierarchy, an executive working in the upper echelons of a mega food retailer profits from the food grown by this farm worker and participates in the dominant food governance regime. They are resultantly likely to have a very comfortable middle to high income, the opportunity for a healthy lifestyle, and lives with privilege. They reap the rewards of the conventional food system, partially at

[2] The charity food system refers to the system which arose out of the Great Depression, and persists today, in which food is provided to those in need through food banks, soup kitchens, and other charitable means.

[3] Social exclusion is a broader term than poverty. Whereas poverty focuses on unequal distribution, social exclusion focuses on relational issues including lack of social participation and integration, interdependence, as well as power (Gerometta, Häussermann & Longo, 2005).

the cost of the farm worker's wellbeing, not to mention other indicators of planetary and social health.

Table 2: Some Concepts in Food Systems Thinking and Practice

Concept	Widely Accepted Definition *year in citation not necessarily the same as origin of concept	Distinctions from Other Concepts
Food Security	A condition in which all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2001).	• focuses at the level of an individual or household • ignores environmental considerations in food
Community Food Security	Community food security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally appropriate, nutritionally sound diet through an economically and environmentally sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance, social justice, and democratic decision-making (Bellows & Hamm, 2003).	• community is the unit of reference • acknowledges culturally appropriate foods, economic and environmental sustainability, self-reliance, social justice and decision-making processes/governance
Food Sovereignty	The right of nations and peoples to control their own food systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures and environments (Wittman, Desmarais & Wiebe, 2010).	• heavy emphasis on self-sufficiency at multiple levels
Rights-Based Food System	Democratic participation in food system choices affecting more than one sector; fair, transparent access by producers to all necessary resources for food production and marketing; multiple independent buyers; absence of human exploitation; absence of resource exploitation; and no impingement on the ability of people in other locales to meet this set of criteria (Anderson, 2008).	• takes a food systems approach by considering the entire cycle from production to waste • strong justice angle with anti-exploitation imperative
Food Justice	Ensuring that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown and produced, transported and distributed, accessed, and eaten are shared fairly (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010) as well as basic human needs, freedom from exploitation and oppressions, and access to opportunity and participation (Allen, 2008).	• heavy focus on social justice concerns for food chain workers and eaters

This comparison is certainly not universal and somewhat crude, as Winne would attest. He cautions that "[the dominant] food system is not necessarily the heartless brute lacking in the softer human sensibilities that some think," reminding us that "corporate behemoths are, after all, comprised of nothing more than average people who feel, breathe, and think like other average people," (Winne, 2010, 17). He humanizes the oligarchy of multinationals and their lapdog policy-makers, but

nevertheless acknowledges their legacy of a deeply problematic food system and the need for food governance reform.

Allen (2008) further illuminates food justice, offering that it is an integration of social justice into every aspect of a food system such that it ensures "basic human needs, freedom from exploitation and oppression, and access to opportunity and participation," (157). Joined with Gottlieb and Joshi's notion of balancing benefits and risks, these understandings capture both material equity; the fair distribution of resources such as food, land, and income, and process equity; inclusion and democratic participation in decision-making, as chief priorities for food justice (Allen, 2010). In other words, food justice is not just about ensuring that everyone gets their fair share of resources, but their fair share of decision-making power over how these resources (including material but also more intangible things like happiness and quality of life) get allocated.

Figure 1: Two Components of Food Justice

Wekerle (2004) notes that the inclusion of process equity, and not just material equity, in a food justice framing goes deeper than other concepts by asking who feels the brunt of current injustices in food and agriculture, and why?—keeping people at the forefront of the conversation. In looking at the demographics of those most affected by the food system status quo in the United States, Liu and Apollon (2011) found that women and racial minorities are more often subjected to food injustices. They also acknowledge the oft-ignored injustices experienced by those bookended by producers and consumers in the food chain:

> ...the food chain provides employment for millions of workers in other sectors, some unseen to the eye of the consumer, such as processing and distribution. A movement based on a holistic understanding of food justice needs to encompass the chain of food production that connects seeds to mouths[4]. The food chain includes the workers that help plant the seeds, harvest the crops, package the food, deliver the product, and serve the meal to the consumers. The future of good food

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[4] Liu and Apollon scope the food system as 'seed to mouth', but really, it should be expanded to 'seed to scrap' and also include people working in food waste management in order to complete the system.

must not ignore these workers and their livelihoods. Food justice must involve increasing their wages and improving their working conditions, so that they too can enjoy healthy and sustainable lives (ibid, 3).

Bringing justice into the food system therefore requires looking in between farmers and eaters and seeing the food movement as more than a middle class "nostalgic for a preindustrial mode of food production" (ibid, 2) as such a narrow view of change does nothing for the millions of long haul truckers, food processors, cashiers, line cooks, bus boys and girls, waiters and waitresses, and so on, who are the backbone of the conventional food system *and* experiencing most of its risks. The Food Chain Workers Alliance is one example of an organization pursuing food justice—understood as equitable wages and working conditions—for those labouring throughout the food chain by uniting the people who plant, harvest, process, pack, transport, prepare, serve, and sell food (Food Chain Workers Alliance, 2011).

Figure 2: Examples of People Involved in the Conventional Food Supply Chain
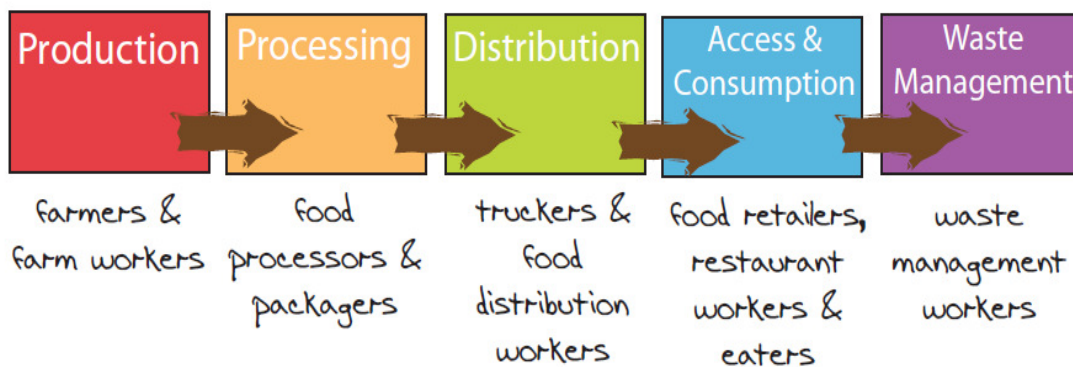
Food justice's insistence on process equity via the open participation and full inclusion of all these stakeholders in the decision-making processes that orchestrate the food system is the crux of *food democracy*. If food justice is the ends, food democracy presents itself as one of the means. Food democracy profoundly challenges the dominant food governance culture which comfortably concentrates power in the hands of only a few. The People's Food Policy Project (2011)—a collaborative national food policy for Canada culminating from the participation of over 3,500 voices—asks that food governance in Canada evolve with "...an inclusive and participatory framework where citizens are actively involved in decisions [about] food," (4) indirectly naming food democracy as imperative.

And so the question becomes, what are the possibilities for a re-imagined democratic food governance that is open to a fuller inclusion of *all* food system stakeholders in decision-making processes?

Re-Imagining Food Governance, Realizing Food Democracy

> Achieving the goal of a participatory, ecological, and just food system that provides enough healthy, acceptable and accessible food for all requires open, democratic, and transparent governance processes. [This recognizes] that the food system is an interactive, interdependent web of relationships (People's Food Policy Project, 2011, 23).

> The dominant food system, embedded as it may be in influencing [food] is not immovable, its outcomes are not inevitable (Gottlieb, 2001, 258).

Gottlieb assures us that dominant food systems, and by extension their modes of governance and consequent injustices, are neither given nor static. They are human creations, "deeply social process[es]" (Mendes, 2008, 962) produced by an interactive and interdependent web of relationships as named above. This is not to underestimate their hegemony—after all, the conventional food system is responsible for something like 98.2% of what we eat (Winne, 2010). But, we cannot lose sight of the fact that, as Winne says; people who feel, breathe, and think like all other people have made the decisions that got us here. They are not givens. Dominant food systems therefore have the potential to be re-imagined with new ways of making decisions about food through new social relations (Marsden, 2000) that are more inclusive, participatory, and democratic, which hopefully produce a better food system out the other end.

Lang (1999) originally coined food democracy as "the demand for greater access and collective benefit from the food system," (218). If we were food democratic, all members of a food system would participate in shaping the system equally and effectively (Hassanein, 2003). It is about food system workers and eaters alike (see Figure 2) "actively participating in shaping the food system, rather than remaining passive spectators on the sidelines," and entering into "spaces of resistance and creativity in which people themselves attempt to govern and shape their relationships with food and agriculture," (ibid, 79) and consequently, each other.

Hassanein (ibid) places her faith in the food movement in all its varied forms as the loci from where pressure to democratize the food system comes from. She implores that reaching food democracy is a prerequisite for finding solutions to the common ecological, economic, and social justice consequences of the dominant food system which will require contributions from every person.

Others have also thought about what an alternative food governance culture could look like and collectively ask that, along with being food democratic, renewed food governance:

1) Assume a 'whole supply chain' or systems approach to food[5] (Barling, Lang & Caraher, 2002);
2) Be collaborative, multi-scalar, multi-sectoral, networked;
3) Supplementary to government (Gerometta, Häussermann & Longo, 2005); and,
4) Be localized by working at smaller scales (Allen, 2010).

MacRae (1999) has also put some thinking behind what principles should drive organizations wishing to engage in addressing food system woes as part of a renewed alternative food governance (see Box 2).

Box 2: Rod MacRae's Notion of Organizations as Ecosystem

Drawing from ecological organizational theory, MacRae (1999) likens organizations to miniature people ecosystems (the same could be said of a neighbourhood, city, and so on) because of their uniqueness, symbiotic relationships, internal consistency and integrity, as well as their complex webs of relationships, processes, systems, and structures—all the features of any other ecosystem. Some pertinent principles for a human ecosystem geared to solve complex food problems he gives are:

• They should consist of open-ended networks of interdependent allies working on collaborative solutions;
• Decision-making should be shifted to the people closest to the environment;
• Communication should be horizontal, not vertical;
• More than one approach should be taken to solve a problem; and,
Teams should be formed, dissolved, and reformed for different tasks to respond to changes and be approached at different angles.

Revisiting the question I raised earlier—*What does a human landscape in support of food system change look like?*—these principles begin to collectively shape a messy picture of what this new human landscape might be and indeed, "there is no blueprint," (Bowles & Gintis, 2002, 429).

The Neighbourhood Food Justice Network Movement as an Experiment in Alternative Food Governance

The four tenets for an alternative food governance culture given above are all being realized on the ground within the NFJN movement to varying extents. Table 3 substantiates the ways in which NFJNs are a form of alternative food governance, both as independent networks and as a movement.

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[5] A systems approach in food considers every step of the food system from production to waste management rather than treat any of them in isolation from one another.

Table 3: Neighbourhood Food Justice Networks as Alternative Food Governance

Alternative Food Governance Principle	How the NFJNs Embody this Principle
1) Assume a whole supply chain or systems approach to food	All of the NFJNs are either currently or were formerly running or connected with initiatives in at least three parts of the food system (production, processing, distribution, access and consumption, and waste management) as well as food education, celebration, and other systems-wide undertakings.
2) Be collaborative, multi-scalar, multi-sectoral, and networked	Every NFJN very much embodies a collaborative and networked model of organizing that includes people with different affiliations, abilities, and roles. This principle is even embedded in most of the networks' names: Downtown Eastside Right to Food *Network*, Grandview Woodland Food *Connection*, Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Food Security *Network*, and Westside Food Security *Collaborative.* The Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute does not have the same language in its name but also practices networking and collaboration. The networks are also multi-sectoral as they involve people from different sectors and positions in society. As a few examples, the networks bring together those who are community residents, health professionals, social service providers, agriculturalists, faith-based organizations, non-profit organizations, food processors and chefs, environmental organizations, community developers, nutritionists, students, academics, and businesses. The networks are somewhat multi-scalar although there is a strong focus on working at the neighbourhood scale or a multi-neighbourhood scale in the case of the Westside Food Security Collaborative (see Figure 3). There are smaller scales at which change is also happening within neighbourhoods (for example, at the level of an individual, household, community centre, etc.) and also a 'scaling up' of influence as NFJNs connect with each other as well as city-wide actors such as the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Food Policy Council[6], and Vancouver Coastal Health[7].
3) Be supplementary to government	NFJNs are civil society entities which complement other work towards food systems change occurring within government and government agencies such as the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health.
4) Be localized by working at smaller scales	Whereas the conventional system has a very large, global reach and governance constellation, the NFJNs are undoubtedly working at much smaller scales. They are however grappling with the implications of the much larger dominant food governance paradigm as they manifest at the level of a neighbourhood. For example, the fact that a neighbourhood does not have an adequate grocery store is the product of governance systems that reside outside of the neighbourhood scale.

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[6] The Vancouver Food Policy Council is a citizen advisory group that examines how our local food system operates and provides ideas and policy recommendations to City Council (City of Vancouver, 2011).

[7] Vancouver Coastal Health is the Vancouver division of the Provincial Health Services Authority.

Calling Scale into Question

There has been some trepidation about the question of scale and the push towards food (and people) system localization, as the last alternative food governance principle posits, in the literature. Allen (2010) is far from alone in offering localization of food systems and their governance as an antidote to the dominant paradigm. The contemporary food movement itself in part grew out of anti-globalization activism and a thrust for the re-localization of many systems including and beyond food. The NFJNs are indeed practicing localization by concentrating on a neighbourhood or multi-neighbourhood scale in their efforts given that dominant food governance is quite global. The question of scale will continue to re-emerge as I delve more into the NFJNs but it is worth capturing some of the literature's offerings here to start calling scale and localization into question.

The politics of local is one of the most divisive debates within the food movement today in both theory and practice. Within the theory, the notion of a 'local trap' is discussed in two treatments (Born & Purcell, 2006) and (Purcell, 2006) where it is respectively applied to food systems as well as urban democracy and governance. The crux of the local trap is that there is nothing inherently good about any scale; "outcomes produced by a food [or people] system are contextual: they depend on the actors and agendas that are empowered by the particular set of social relations…" (Born & Purcell, 2006, 196).

Otherwise put, just because a governance or food system is more 'local' this does not de facto imply that it is more just, sustainable, or democratic. For example, a food system that supplies locally grown food—defining what is considered locally grown food is also slippery terrain—can still depend on the labour of exploited farm workers which is unshakably problematic due to the injustices these labourers often face.

Others have agreed with Born and Purcell, noting that any scale must be treated as a strategy rather than a goal in and of itself (Allen, 2008; Anderson, 2008; McWilliams, 2010). When means and ends become confused in this way, localism can also reproduce a two-tiered unjust food system dividing those who can afford to buy local (organic, sustainable, ecological, etc.) food from those who cannot (Agyeman & Simons, forthcoming). Given that the intent of many within the food movement is to move us away from the two-tiered conventional/charity food system, the reproduction of a two-tiered local/not-local food system is still problematic, yet incredibly prevalent in practice.

Another critique of dogmatic food localism is that it does not always account for culturally-appropriate foods that cannot be produced 'locally', access to which is fundamental within a food justice approach that is cognizant of diversity (ibid). Given the rich diversity of socioeconomics, ethnicities, cultures, and food traditions

represented in Vancouver[8], the drawbacks of extreme food localism for culturally-appropriate foods must be kept at the forefront of the conversation if food justice, access, and equity are to remain priorities.

A further question the local trap raises is whether localized food system efforts such as a NFJN have a responsibility to others outside their community at various scales; from residents of other neighbourhoods to farm workers abroad. Allen (1999) calls this 'defensive localism' where actors only consider those in their locale, potentially at the expense of others also affected by that system.

Some of the other implications of the local trap for governance or 'people systems' include overthrowing the assumption that a reduction of decision-making miles (Fodor, 2009) will necessarily privilege the common good and be broadly inclusive of the socially excluded at this local scale. Purcell (2006) is sure to note that localization can lead to either a more or less democratic city, neighbourhood, community, organization, and so on. A neighbourhood can therefore be a microcosm of larger social structures imbued with many of the same inequities and barriers to power found at larger scales; equity for socially excluded populations is not a given (Allen, 2010). Civil society[9] likewise has the ability to reproduce inequalities (Gerometta, Häussermann & Longo, 2005). This all implies that the neighbourhood scale and civil society status of the NFJNs cannot be taken for granted as inherently inclusive, democratic, or participatory but must be critically considered.

Recognizing the pitfalls of the local trap, there is still something incredibly enticing about organizing locally, especially around food systems change. Vancouver's neighbourhood food networking movement and its seemingly unrelenting momentum exemplifies this draw. As Table 1 showed, the problems in food we are facing are multi-scalar and most of them are attributable to governance systems that are global in scale and abundantly powerful:

> We are not so naïve as to believe that, in a world where global corporations, whose annual incomes are greater than the gross national products of some nations, control much of our food and, hence, the lives of millions of humans beings, one individual's commitment to a community garden…can shake the foundations of the global food supply and distribution system. And yet, as we struggle to maintain our sense of humanity in a situation which easily

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[8] The most recent 2006 Census found that Vancouver is home to over 200 ethnic groups and visible minority populations accounting for 41.7% of the total city population (Statistics Canada, 2006).
[9] Civil society is defined by the World Bank (2010) as "non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations."

lends itself to cynicism and apathy, what else can we do? (Lerza &
Jacobson, 1975, 407).

Lerza and Jacobson concede to the scalar disparities between global food
governance and an individual commitment to a community garden (or
neighbourhood food system) but are astute in asking that, short of becoming cynical
and apathetic, where better to start than with a community garden or our
neighbourhoods as the breeding grounds for change?

Vancouver has been ripe with a penchant for neighbourhood-level and city-wide
food system action for decades, setting the stage for what would eventually become
known as neighbourhood food networking.

Chapter 3: Meet the Neighbourhood Food Justice Networks

A City at the Forefront

Vancouver has longtime been a Canadian city at the forefront of shaping progressive urban food systems. It is recognized as one of the leaders in food's re-emergence within the consciousness of North American cities—their municipalities and civil society counterparts alike. Food was on the fringes of municipal governments and planning departments a decade ago (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000) and has made a remarkable comeback since, largely due to a civil society push. Today, an incredible number of municipal and regional governments are embracing a host of food systems policy and planning endeavours from food charters to food policy councils, food policy and planning staff, and food strategies; all of which either already exist or are in the process of being established for Vancouver[10].

The City of Vancouver's (COV) official mandate to create a "just and sustainable food system" adopted by City Council in 2003 was in large part a result of over a decade of food activism and lobbying at city, neighbourhood, and provincial levels (Mendes, 2008)—a testament to the energy and commitment around food both within and outside of the municipality. This was soon followed by a Food Action Plan, the establishment of the Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC), and food policy staff positions within the municipality (ibid). In 2007, City Council adopted the Vancouver Food Charter, an expansion of the original 2003 mandate, which is currently being further built upon with the Vancouver Food Strategy.

Although the focus of this research is not the COV as a municipal institution— treatments of the City's history with food systems work exist elsewhere (Mendes, 2006; 2007; 2008)—this genealogy of the uptake of food by the organization is tangible testimony to a lively and committed city-wide history of institutional, civil society, and grassroots action towards a better food future, the legacy of which is being furthered by the NFJNs.

The offerings of this civil society and grassroots mobilization to Vancouver's food movement are too bountiful to do full due diligence to here, but, in my estimation, some of what we have to celebrate includes:

• An ever-growing and diverse urban agriculture scene involving everything from community gardens to rooftop and balcony growing as well as intensive urban farming;
• Community compost programs in several neighbourhoods throughout the city;
• An emerging culture of school gardens, farms, and 'good food' in cafeterias;
• The popularity of small-scale and personal food processing and preserving;

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[10] The Vancouver Food Charter is a piece of municipal policy that elaborates on the original mandate to create a just and sustainable food system. The Food Strategy currently underway will further build on existing policy and be the City of Vancouver's first comprehensive official food plan.

- A rising number of community produce markets;
- A variety of food accessibility and redistribution initiatives;
- Incredibly activated anti-poverty and anti-hunger movements; and,
- Originally renegade farmers' markets finding permanence and popularity throughout the city.

Stitched together, these pieces represent a broadening of food governance and participation in the food system to include those considered non-traditional food decision-makers under the dominant food paradigm. In sum, it is a multi-scalar and multi-sectoral movement benefitting from the participation of multiple levels of government and government agencies, the private sector, non-profit organizations, religious institutions, businesses, community groups, and individuals—often all working together within the same neighbourhood. This diversity contributes a mixed bag of day jobs, community affiliations, assets, ideologies, priorities, and passions to the work which confront against one another and must be negotiated everyday.

It is no surprise that the food movement is alive and well in Vancouver as the city is reputed as a breeding ground for progressive politics and action: birthplace of Greenpeace; home of the first safe injection sites in North America; activated queer, women's, youth, homeless, anti-poverty, active transportation, environmental, and Aboriginal movements; among other exemplary efforts of people in Vancouver working to create better conditions for life on this planet. The movement to foster human systems charged to create better food realities through neighbourhood food networking is no exception.

The Neighbourhood Food Justice Network Movement

The *food justice* oriented networks considered in my scope sit within an even broader Vancouver context of Neighbourhood Food Networks (NFNs). Each network looks and behaves differently but, to offer an all-encompassing definition from the City of Vancouver, NFNs are:

> Coalitions of community members, community organizations, agencies, and businesses who work collaboratively to achieve food system goals, and in doing so, seek to increase overall community capacity at the neighbourhood scale (2010, 4-5).

While the City of Vancouver has put a definition to the NFNs' work, the networks are not creatures of the municipality, but rather, grassroots expressions of civil society that share disquietude with their respective neighbourhood food systems and devote energy to revitalizing them. The City of Vancouver and other city-wide institutions such as Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) have however played various support roles including funding some of the existing networks.

Overall, NFNs allow the diverse cast of Vancouver's food movement, its grassroots and institutional participants alike, to rub shoulders, collaborate, educate, and partner to invigorate a renewed food future starting with neighbourhood building blocks; connecting potluckers to politicians and everyone in between. Overall, the NFNs are invaluable for "[promoting] direct connections among residents and an intimate understanding of local issues," (Hodgson, Campbell & Bailkey, 2011, 95). This happens in many ways such as through network meetings and other types of gatherings, a variety of community food projects and programs, workshops and education opportunities, advocacy, policy development, e-mail lists, newsletters, and other forms of online and face-to-face communication and collaboration. The purpose of neighbourhood food networking, as the City's definition posits, is to meet a wide variety of food system goals and to build the capacity of neighbourhoods to generate and work towards their *own* visions of better food systems.

Every network operates for the most part within a defined geographic boundary. The catchment areas of most NFNs follow the community planning boundaries established by the City of Vancouver which divides the city into twenty-two Local Areas or neighbourhoods (City of Vancouver, 2009). Every NFN also approaches food system change through its own distinct lens with a sometimes different, although complementary, set of goals. For example, NFNs under the Village Vancouver name stem from a resiliency, peak oil, and climate change perspective[11] whereas the Neighbourhood Food *Justice* Networks focus on hunger and mitigating the effects of poverty. They have, to borrow from Allen (2008), "food justice at [their] center of gravity," (160) with a focus on the food vulnerable.

Box 3: Food Vulnerability
At a meeting of the NFJN coordinators, there was discussion about 'food vulnerability' as a way of talking about where they focus their efforts. People who are food vulnerable face varying types of barriers in accessing food in a dignified way that is healthy, environmentally-friendly, affordable, etc. These barriers range from being on a fixed or low-income, physical mobility challenges, health concerns including mental health issues, and a lack of adequate neighbourhood food options. The existence of any one or several of these barriers, along with others, can create the conditions for food vulnerability.

These differences mimic a distinction made by Power (1999) between an anti-poverty and sustainable food systems approach in community food work[12]. Any clear cut distinction is however not totally accurate, nor productive, as there are

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[11] Village Vancouver is part of the global Transition Town Initiative working to build sustainable and resilient communities. There are several Neighbourhood Transition Villages and working groups under the Village Vancouver umbrella focused on different issues such as food, energy, transportation, and zero waste. The Neighbourhood Transition Villages also act like Neighbourhood Food Networks as many of their activities deal with food system resiliency. A resilient food system is one that can adapt to changes.

[12] Power's anti-poverty approach draws from the premise that there is an adequate food supply but a lack of access for those living in poverty. The sustainable food systems approach is founded in a political-economic and environmental critique of the conventional food system.

many shared interests and behaviours among NFNs with seemingly different approaches to food.

Recognizing the broader NFN movement to which they belong, this work focuses on the five more well-established NFJNs shown in Figure 3. These five networks make up the project scope because of their shared focus on mitigating immediate food vulnerabilities with a community development and capacity building approach and they were all established prior to Fall 2009 when my involvement and research began. While the first of these five NFJNs to appear, the Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute, was created in 2002, it is claimed that neighbourhoods began organizing around food systems change in Vancouver as early as the mid 1980s (Farm Folk City Folk, 2011).

Figure 3: Catchments of the Five Neighbourhood Food Justice Networks Established pre-Fall 2009

East Meets West: Social Indicators and Food Vulnerability in Vancouver

The NFJNs' shared focus on mitigating food vulnerabilities begs the question of who are Vancouver's food vulnerable? Barbolet and others (2005) make sure to note that no one is exempt from food vulnerabilities. Drawing on the plethora of food system concerns in Table 1, everyone is susceptible to the impacts of things like the loss of farmland, climate change, and rising food costs; the effects of which might not be felt tomorrow the way someone feels hunger, but are and will continue to have expansive repercussions. Nevertheless, in dealing with more immediate food

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vulnerabilities such as hunger, malnutrition, and accessibility barriers which are the chief priorities of NFJNs, there are some clear social indicators that highlight extreme urgency in different parts of the city and for certain sub-populations that confront the realities of being food vulnerable every day.

Those at the highest risk of food vulnerability in Vancouver are people who are homeless, street-involved youth, intravenous drug users, have mental or physical disabilities, unemployed, on social assistance, lack formal education, have poor health, recent newcomers, seniors, women, live in single parent households, and Urban Aboriginals (Barbolet et al., 2005). It is well worth considering where people belonging to these more at risk populations live and how this human geography relates to where NFJNs operate.

Four of the five implicated NFJNs operate in East Vancouver—with Ontario Street acting as the dividing line between east and west as indicated in Figure 3—whereas the fifth network, the Westside Food Security Collaborative (WFSC), defines its catchment as the entire west side of the city. Though not an official political designation, East Vancouver is the area of the city where many immigrant communities have historically and currently continue to settle, contributing to the region's cultural richness. It is also the less affluent half of Vancouver, offering a more affordable average cost of living than the city's west side. The region is also popularly understood to be where need exists in Vancouver in relation to affordable housing, income security, and support services, among other indicators connected to food vulnerability. The first two maps below give evidence of economic insecurity which preempts food vulnerabilities on the east side of Vancouver.

Figure 4: Median After-Tax Household Income 2006 by Census Tract

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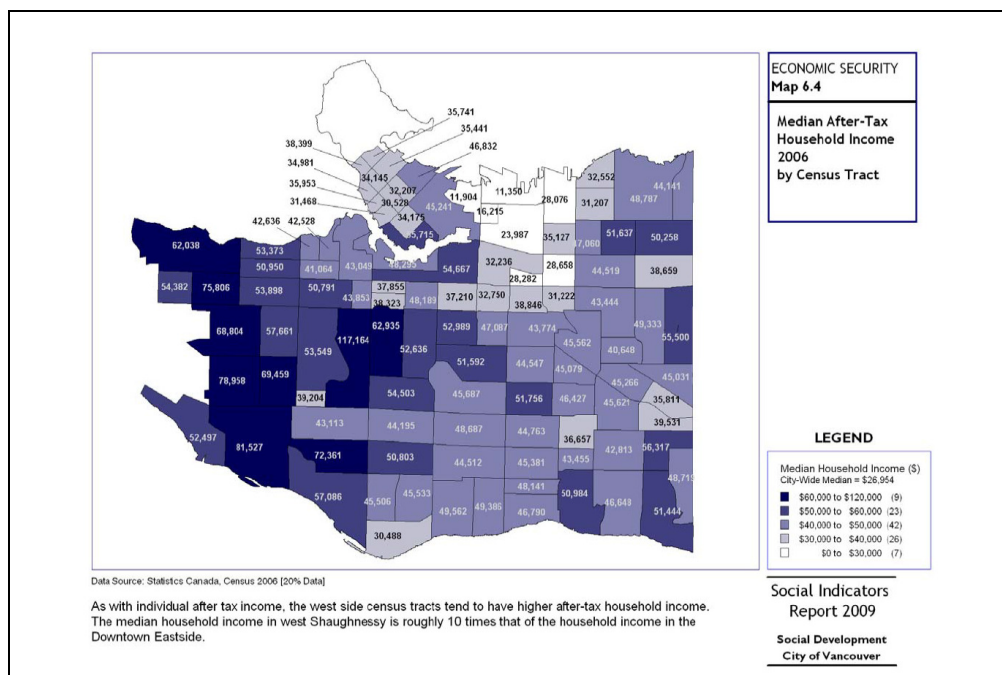
Figure 5: Government Transfer Payments as a Percentage of Income for All Economic Families 2005 by Census Tract

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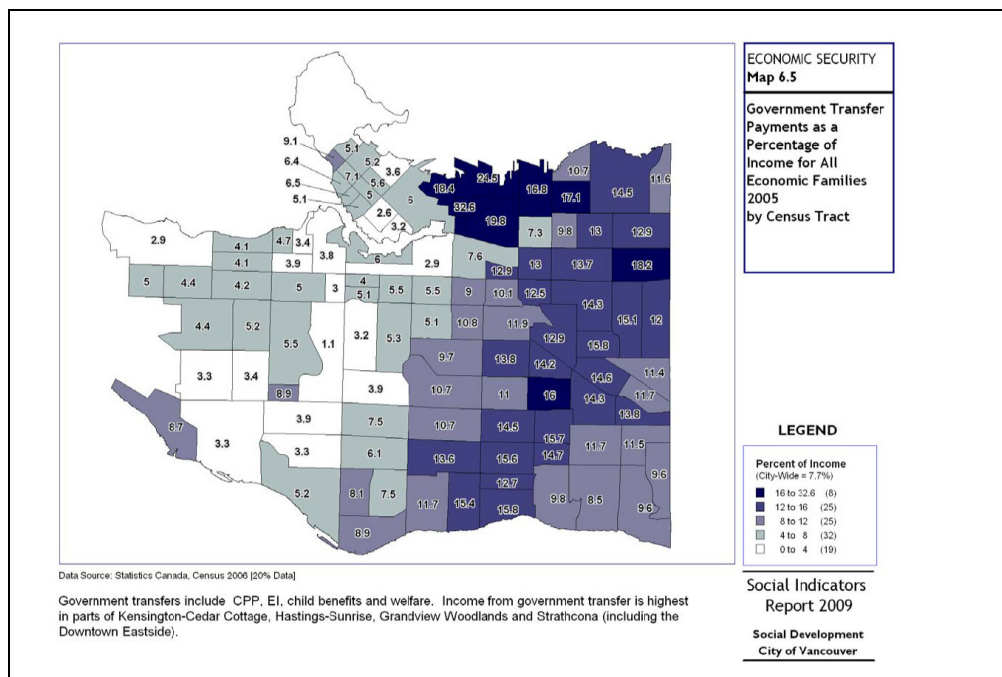
Social Indicator: ECONOMIC SECURITY

What do these maps (Figures 4 and 5) tell us?
• there are more people living on government income assistance on the east side
• the median income of west side households is higher than the east side

Why is this important to food vulnerability?
Living on a low income, being unemployed, or on social assistance can most strongly predict food vulnerability (Barbolet et al., 2005). Economic insecurity and living with fewer financial means drastically affects peoples' ability to access food at grocery stores, farmers' and pocket markets, restaurants, and so on, even if these food destinations exist in their neighbourhood. People on the east side are living with fewer financial means in general than west side residents. Renfrew Collingwood, Kensington Cedar-Cottage, Hastings-Sunrise, Grandview Woodlands, Strathcona, and the Downtown Eastside all have the highest rates of economic insecurity. These are also un-coincidentally all neighbourhoods with food networks and programs.

Although the west side is on average more affluent than East Vancouver, its neighbourhoods are still home to several struggling populations including seniors, young and single-parent families, people with disabilities, university students, as well as the homeless and marginally housed. The needs of these populations are cited as 'hidden' due to the perception of universal affluence across the area (Pottery & Jinkerson, 2007). As a result, much of the WFSC's initial and ongoing work involves countering the assumption that the west side is free of food and other vulnerabilities through media pieces (Gillard, 2008; Thomas, 2008; Thomas, 2009) and other forms of public and more targeted education. The maps below show that

there are indeed conditions for food vulnerability also present on the west side of Vancouver, even though these are not widely acknowledged by the city's popular consciousness.

Figure 6: Number of Lone Parents with Low Income After-Tax 2006 by Census Tract
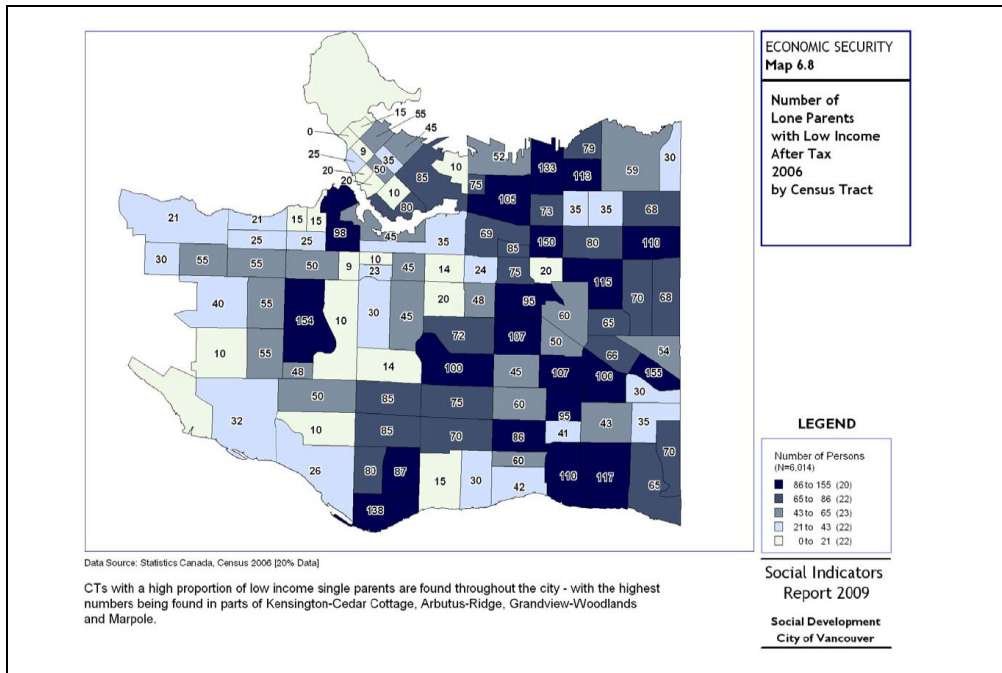
Figure 7: Unemployment Rate 2006 by Census Tract
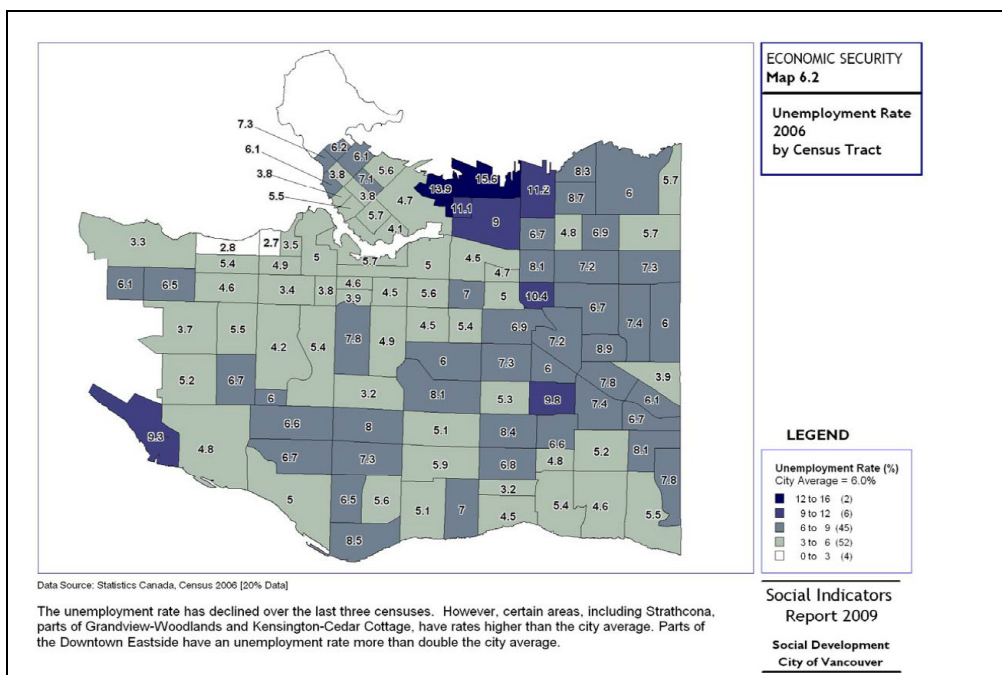
Social Indicator: ECONOMIC SECURITY, continued

What do these maps (Figures 6 and 7) tell us?
• lone parents on a low income are generally concentrated on the east side
• there are west side neighbourhoods (Arbutus Ridge, Kitsilano, and Fairview) which also have high representation of low income lone parents
• unemployment is highest on the east side but Musqueam territory on the west side also has very high unemployment

Why is this important to food vulnerability?
These maps reaffirm the economic divide between the west and east sides but also highlight west side neighbourhoods with concerning indicators for economic security. The Westside Food Security Collaborative is aware of most of these realities, though not all of them, and is one response to these largely hidden food vulnerabilities throughout the west side.

Lone parent status can also foster food vulnerabilities due to socioeconomics as well as the logistics of accessing food, for example, needing to walk or take transit with young children to go to the grocery store or find childcare; a third of lone parent households headed by women face food vulnerabilities for these reasons. Children in lone parent low income households headed by women are eight times more likely to be hungry than the average child (Barbolet et al., 2005). The Downtown Eastside, Strathcona, and Grandview Woodlands are all well above the city average for singe parent households (ibid).

Figure 8: All Immigrants as a Percentage of Total Population 2006 by Census Tract
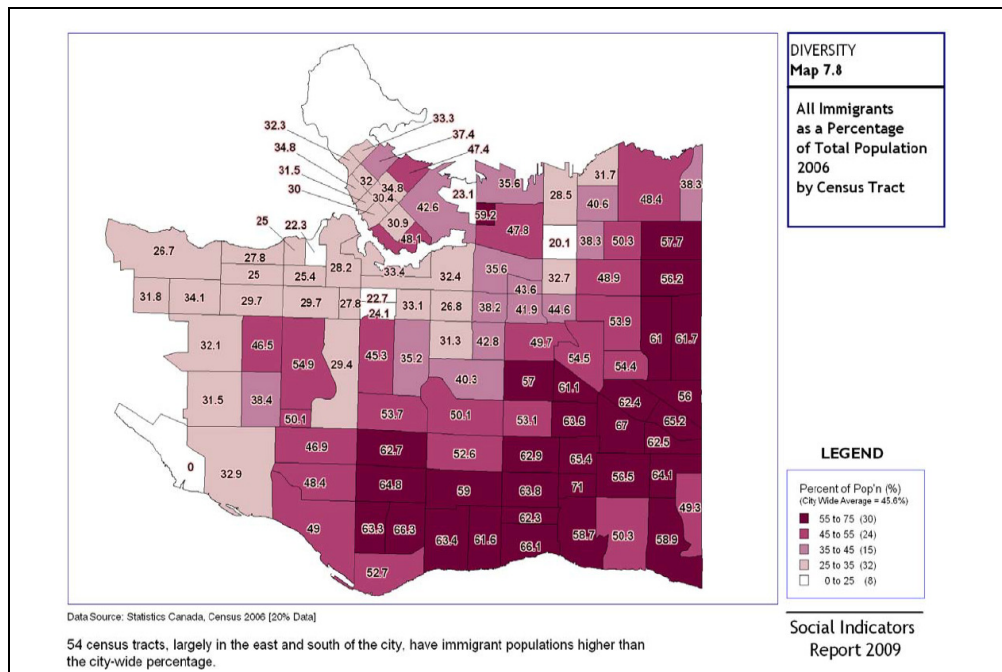
Figure 9: Recent Immigrants (arrival within 5 years) as a Percentage of Total Population 2006 by Census Tract
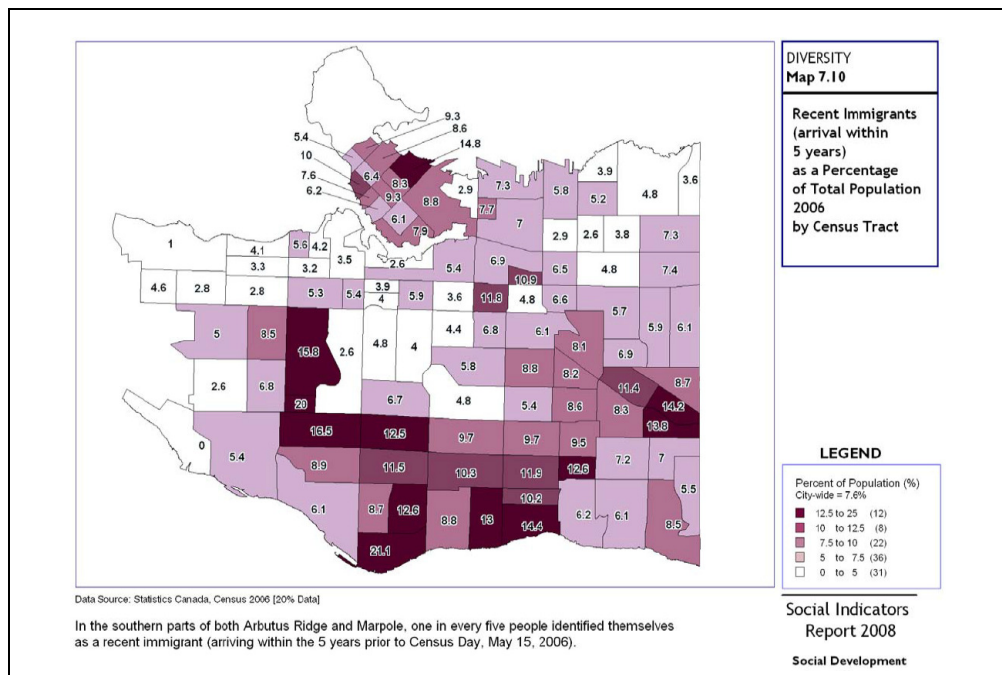
Figure 10: Persons Reporting Aboriginal Identity 2006 by Census Tract
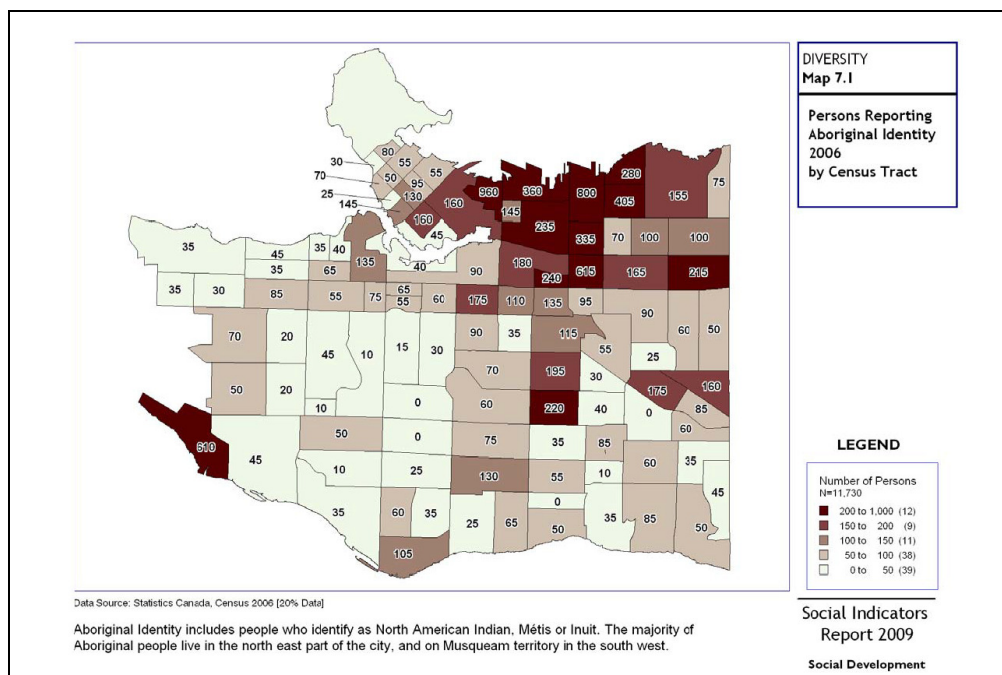
Social Indicator: DIVERSITY

What do these maps (Figures 8-10) tell us?
• newcomers to Canada largely live in the east and south of Vancouver
• there are significant numbers of newcomers in some west side neighbourhoods
• recently arrived newcomers are heavily represented in certain west side neighbourhoods including Arbutus Ridge, Kerrisdale, and Oakridge
• persons reporting Aboriginal identity are largely residing in the north east side although there is also a significant Aboriginal population on the west side in Musqueam territory

Why is this important to food vulnerability?
Being a newcomer to Canada can create certain circumstances ripe for food vulnerability due to reasons of socioeconomics, unfamiliarity with "Canadian food" or the food system, along with the unavailability and expense of familiar foods (Barbolet et al., 2005).

Aboriginal populations are also at risk of food vulnerabilities with 27% of Aboriginal people living off-reserve reporting so and 24% reporting compromised diets (ibid). Most Urban Aboriginals in Vancouver live on the east side with the highest representation in Grandview Woodland (ibid) where there is a very active NFJN.

Figure 11: Seniors Living Alone 2006 by Local Area
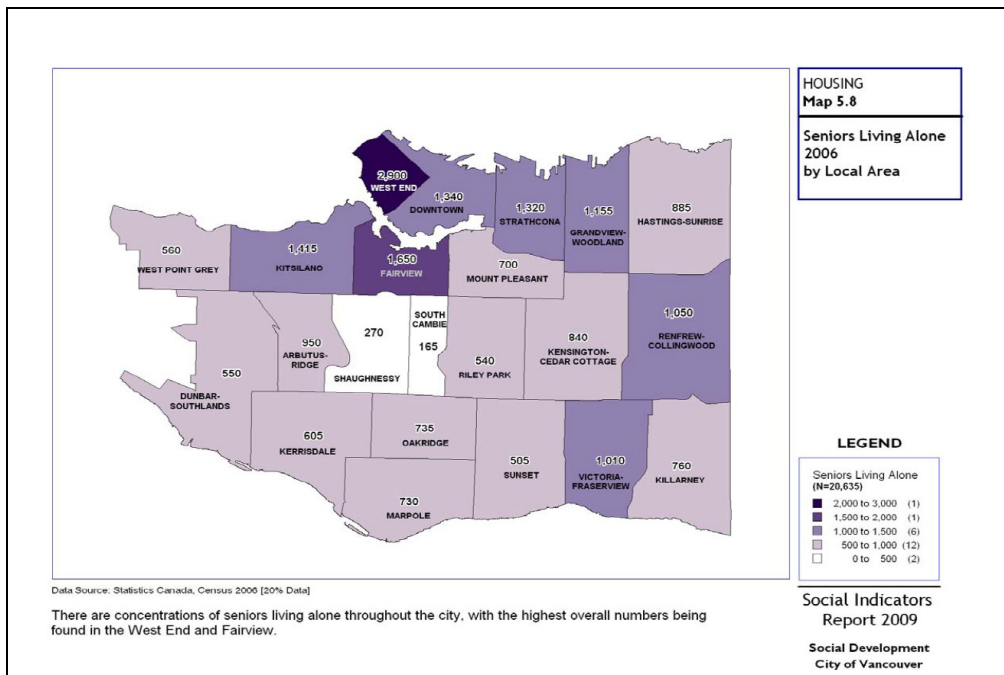
Social Indicator: HOUSEHOLD TYPE

What does this map (Figure 11) tell us?
• there are pockets of seniors living alone on both the east and west sides
• the highest numbers are in Fairview and Arbutus Ridge on the west side
• the West End also has a high number of seniors living alone
• the highest numbers are in Strathcona, the Downtown Eastside, and Grandview Woodlands on the east side

Why is this important to food vulnerability?
Seniors, especially those living alone, face several barriers to accessing food due to financial limitations for seniors living on fixed and/or low incomes as well as mobility issues and other health concerns. Seniors living along also face high housing costs which significantly contribute to food vulnerability (Barbolet et al., 2005).

There are other at-risk populations the City has identified through its social indicator analysis who are also subject to food vulnerabilities but not represented in the maps. To not lose sight of these people, consider that:

• Between 49-59% of youth who are homeless reported that they are going hungry at least once a month;
• The approximately 12,000 injection drug users in Greater Vancouver are at risk of food vulnerabilities due to missed meals and replacing fat and protein with carbohydrate-loaded sweets; and,
• People with physical or mental disabilities face extra barriers in grocery shopping, meal preparation, and standing in food lines. A quarter of people with disabilities face these barriers versus 10% of the rest of the population (Barbolet et al., 2005).

These social indicator maps quite clearly tell the story of a significant east/west divide in Vancouver but also acknowledge the lesser known stories of lone parents, Urban Aboriginals, recent newcomers, and seniors living alone through the west side. Neighbourhoods with particularly worrisome indicators for food vulnerability are the ones with active NFJNs: the Downtown Eastside, Grandview Woodlands, Renfrew Collingwood, and Trout Lake Cedar Cottage. The Westside Food Security Collaborative's catchment extends across the west side as a response to the food vulnerabilities throughout that part of the city.

Clearly, no area of Vancouver is immune to more immediate food vulnerabilities. Perhaps un-spuriously, neighbourhood food networking has been rapidly spreading to other neighbourhoods.

A Growing Movement
Since this project and my involvement began in Fall 2009, at least five new neighbourhood-based food efforts have emerged. Some of them self-identify as networks whereas others consider themselves a project, program, or committee. It

is beyond the scope of this research to include them all but their catchments are shown in Figure 12 to at least acknowledge the rapid growth in Vancouver's neighbourhood-level food movement.

Figure 12: Catchments of some new Neighbourhood Food Networks and Neighbourhood-Based Food Programs to Emerge since Fall 2009
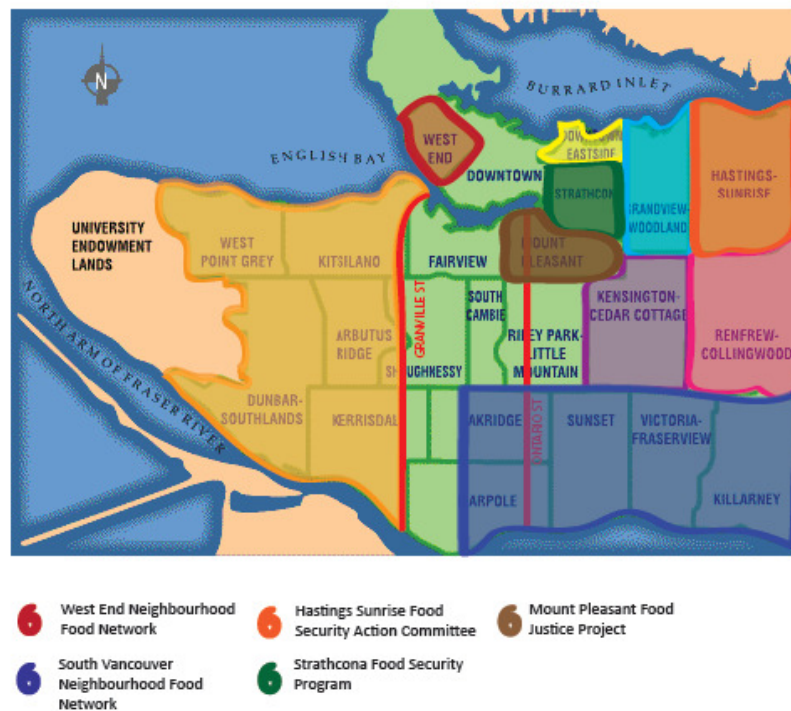
There is evidently something widely appealing about convening networks of people involved and interested in food system change at the neighbourhood level. My impressions of why this proliferation is happening are two-fold. Firstly, I attribute it to a bubbling up at the grassroots. Individual initiatives intending to revise the food system status quo exist throughout the city, even in neighbourhoods that have not formalized a network. It seems natural that people within proximity to one another engaged in this work would begin to network and build connections amongst themselves and their various projects.

Relationships between neighbourhood food projects and the people implicated in them are central to building a different food reality and working towards a connected system rather than isolated initiatives. This symbiosis is the foundation of neighbourhood food networking which begins to seem inevitable in areas with many initiatives and people working towards similar ends.

A second factor to which I attribute some of the growth is the role city-wide actors and organizations are playing in actively supporting the movement. For example, the VFPC has a neighbourhood-level food security working group that organizes

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gatherings throughout the city in neighbourhoods that already have some commitment to food systems work but no formal network. These gatherings bring together the people doing the work in the neighbourhood, many of whom have maybe never met, and intend to seed and catalyze new networks. VCH has also played a pivotal role in supporting community food work through the networks by providing multiple sources of funding for NFJNs and other forms of non-monetary support as has the COV.

A Snapshot of the Five Neighbourhood Food Justice Networks

Recognizing this expanse of neighbourhood food networking in Vancouver, I primarily focus this work on five NFJNs, the catchments of which were depicted in Figure 3. These are:

1) The Downtown Eastside Right to Food Network;
2) The Grandview Woodland Food Connection;
3) The Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute;
4) The Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Food Security Network; and,
5) The Westside Food Security Collaborative.

To begin to more concretely describe these five NFJNs is a nebulous task since this substance shifts significantly from one network to the next. They are profiled in Table 4 to give a snapshot of vitals and draw some initial comparisons.

Table 4: The Neighbourhood Food Justice Networks at a Glance

NFJN (year started)	Catchment Population [13]	Staff Time [14]	"Home Base"	Synopsis of the Network's Mission	Examples of Projects and Programming [15]
Downtown Eastside Right to Food Network (2009)	53,518	one full time coordinator @ 35 hours/week	Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House [16]	Ensuring the Right to Food for residents that is healthy, whole, and nutritious and accessed with dignity.	Recipes Against Racism, Food Street Theatre, Food Charter, Children's Community Kitchen, Roving Community Kitchen, Banana Beat
Grandview Woodland Food Connection	28,205	one part time coordinator @ 30	Britannia Community Centre	Promote the health and wellbeing of vulnerable	Stone Soup Festival, Britannia Urban Garden

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[13] These populations are from the 2006 Census. They represent the population of the entire neighbourhood or catchment area, not the number of people actively engaged in the NFJN.

[14] This has fluctuated for some networks over the years and is current as of October 2011. The amount of staff time throughout the networks is at a peak right now and was previously much lower.

[15] Appendix A has a description of all of these programs.

[16] A neighbourhood house is "a welcoming place where everyone, all ages, nationalities and abilities can attend, participate, belong, lead and learn through programs, services and community building" (Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC, 2010). There are currently six neighbourhood houses in Vancouver and eight in British Columbia.

		hrs/week		community members as well as an accessible, just and sustainable food culture for our community, and, build neighbourhood capacity to address food security and justice.	Project, Buen Provecho Multicultural Multigenerational Cooking Program, Buying Clubs
Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute (2002)	48,885	one full time coordinator @ 35 hrs/week	Renfrew Collingwood Neighbourhood House	Increase capacity to overcome food insecurity through food sharing, organic growing, food sovereignty, and nutrition.	Rooftop garden, meal programs, internship program, community gardens and orchards
Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Food Security Network (2008)	44,665	one part time coordinator @ 22 hrs/week	Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Community Centre[17]	Enhance health and wellbeing in our neighbourhoods, support and coordinate local food security initiatives, and improve access to community health, social services and community-based programs.	Mobile Pocket Market, community kitchen, community food workshops
Westside Food Security Collaborative (2006)	105,825	one part time coordinator @ 16 hrs/week	Kitsilano Neighbourhood House[18]	Secure access to adequate amounts of safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate food, produced in an environmentally sustainable manner that promotes human dignity.	West Side Pocket Markets, monthly networking and education roundtable meetings

Some initial variations between the five NFJNs:
• The amount of staff time and security of staff positions;
• Neighbourhood/catchment area size and population;
• Types of programming, projects, and other activities undertaken as well as whether the NFJN does projects and/or programming or fulfills more of a networking function;

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[17] The Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Food Security Network existed without an organizational home since its origins. The partnership with the Trout Lake Community Centre has just been made and the network will move in to the centre sometime in 2012 for a trial.
[18] The coordinator is contracted by Kitsilano Neighbourhood House but is not a staff person there. The neighbourhood house does provide in-kind services e.g. photocopying and use of meeting space.

• Year the network began and how it was started; and,
• Degree of relationship with an institution/organization and/or piece of community infrastructure e.g. community centre or neighbourood house.

Some initial commonalities between the five NFJNs:
• Each has a geographically defined neighbourhood or catchment area;
• Each has a focus on food justice, food security, food access, and food vulnerability;
• Each currently has some resources including staff time; and,
• All five participate in the Neighbourhood Food Coordinators Working Group.

This reaffirms that there is no blueprint or formula for NFJNs, even within the same city context; neighbourhoods therein are too complex and differentiated to address food system change in the same way, as the social indicator maps began to motion at. Each NFJN is therefore responsive to the unique identity of its catchment area and has been shaped by a different history of funding, personalities, interests, and needs. This heterogeneity is an incredible strength of the NFJN movement. Levkoe's metaphor of a rhizome in Box 4 is useful and appropriate for understanding some of the nebulousness and dynamism of the NFJNs.

Box 4: Levkoe's Food Networks as Rhizomes
Levkoe talks about the food movement and its networks—what Wekerle (2004) captures as a "networked movement"—as a rhizome, explaining that:

Rhizomes are horizontal, underground plant stems with the ability to create complex root systems. They can expand relentlessly underground, often lying dormant for years, and reemerge as healthy plants in different locations when the internal and external conditions are right. Each new plant created is connected to the parent, but exists as its own independent, flourishing entity (2011, 2).

The NFJNs have behaved in different ways over the years marked by an evolution in their actions, people involved, and relationship to their neighbourhoods. There is no one 'parent' for the NFJNs as they have different sources of origin, funding, and support, yet they are certainly their own independent and flourishing entities, connected to one another in the spirit of a networked movement through the Neighbourhood Food Coordinators Working Group, as one example. The steady emergence of new networks is also exemplary of the rhizome metaphor.

Just a Few Stars in the Constellation

Fully aware of the need to dramatically overhaul most of our social, economic, cultural, and political structures well beyond the neighbourhood to significantly transform the food system, NFJNs are in no way a silver bullet. Instead, they are one part of a much larger constellation of human activity pursuing a better food future. They still present a worthwhile case study of how people are addressing justice problems in food and agriculture and attempting to mitigate them on the ground, day-by-day, in neighbourhoods.

What is perhaps even more striking about neighbourhood food networking than any major impact on the food system itself, are the social outcomes of this form of organizing and the ways in which people are building relationships and capacity on the premise of food. The sense of community that develops out of neighbourhood food networking is hugely impactful at this scale (see Chapter 8). The movement also very much embodies Wekerle's (2004) notion of a networked movement with linkages to other scales of people systems and decision-making. Neighbourhoods are building blocks upon which a city, regional, provincial, federal, and even worldwide movement can be supported (see Chapter 9).

I have found it a fascinating, ever fluctuating, and meaningful movement to both research and be a part of. The ways in which I did so are the topics of the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Embedded Action Research

> Research can be visualized as nothing more than a natural extension
> of the activities in which we engage every day of our lives (Stringer
> 2007, 2).

This understanding of research reflects my approach to this work as a piece of
community engaged or embedded action research and experiment in personal
practice. The work and actions I pursued, and continue to engage in, as the major
means of researching the NFJN movement are things I would have likely done
anyways out of my interest in and passion for food systems change and community
development. I did not have a clear sense of a rigorous methodology at the outset,
but rather, got involved in Vancouver's food movement in ways I felt comfortable,
ethical, and effective. The work eventually took on an embedded action research
methodology working with the NFJNs. Action research is defined in one way as:

> ...a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing
> practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes...It
> seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in
> participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues
> of pressing concern to people and more generally the flourishing of
> individual persons and their communities (Bradbury & Reason, 2001,
> 1).

Vilches (2004) coined the notion of 'embedded' action research. Appended to action
research, the dimension of embeddedness recognizes that my experience of action
research involved direct participation in a movement that was unfolding in real time,
my duality as a researcher and contributor, as well as the political dimensions of the
movement.

Sonnino (2009) has noted the need for social scientists to do more collaborative
action-based research exploring the role of cities, or in this case people and
networks therein, in promoting food system change. Embedded action research is
an appropriate methodology through which to take up her suggestion since "there is
a dual commitment in action research to study a system and concurrently to
collaborate with members of the system in changing it in what is together regarded
as a desirable direction," (Gilmore et al., 1986, 161).

Consequently, a major objective of this work was to directly contribute to the people
systems that are supporting neighbourhood-level food system change in Vancouver
through my actions. Figure 13 gives a brief chronology of some of these.

Figure 13: My Timeline of Involvement with the NFJN Movement in Vancouver
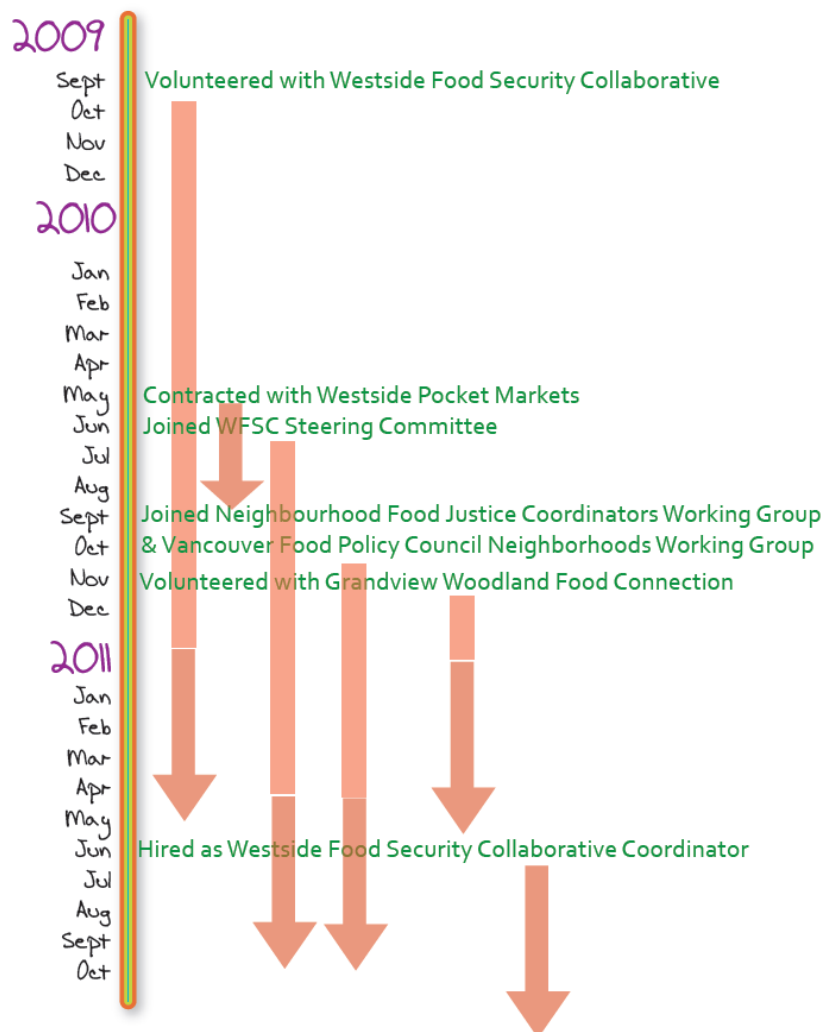
Case Selection

I chose the five NFJNs represented in this work as my case studies because they largely made up the landscape of neighbourhood food *justice* networking in Vancouver as I was beginning my research. They are also the founding members of the Neighbourhood Food Coordinators Working Group which I was presented with the opportunity to participate in. Opportunistically then, it made sense to include these five networks in my scope.

My level of direct experience is however unbalanced between the five NFJNs, concentrated more heavily on the WFSC, as Figure 13 shows. I therefore also did semi-structured qualitative interviews with sixteen key stakeholders in the NFJN movement and one other key informant who is removed from the movement. Participants with a variety of roles and tenures within Vancouver's neighbourhood

food networking scene were purposefully chosen for interviews to convene as many perspectives and experiences as possible while maintaining a manageable interviewee base. An example interview guide is in Appendix B.

One major limitation of the interviews worth highlighting is that they were only conducted with those in a gatekeeper[19] position (Gerometta, Häussermann & Longo, 2005). This was due to time constraints and the relative inaccessibility of non-gatekeepers. There is thus room for further research to include people with different roles and perspectives within the NFJN movement for a fuller understanding of it.

Research Questions
The questions about the NFJN movement I sought answers to through my direct experiences and the interviews are:

1) Where do NFJNs exist in the City of Vancouver? How are they mandated?
2) How are NFJNs governed and structured? Who participates in them and how?
3) How do NFJNs affect the food system?
4) Do NFJNs also assume an identity as community developers, and if so, how?
5) What are some of the larger networks involved in food system change in Vancouver that NFJNs are engaged in?

The following chapters present what I learned. Given my more intimate knowledge of and experience with the WFSC, the next chapter introduces my beginnings with the NFJN movement through that particular network and offers some initial lessons I gained in those early stages as preliminary and partial responses to the slew of research questions.

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[19] The idea of a gatekeeper recognizes that within civil society and the public sphere there is uneven participation. This recognizes that some individuals have greater access to power (to connect, influence, represent, set priorities, determine values, etc.) than others. This is true of the NFJN movement and affected who I was able to access for interviews in a limited time frame and scope.

SECTION B - DIGGING IN

Chapter 5: How I Got Hit in the Face by Hungry Seniors

The South Granville commercial strip extending from the southernmost end of the Granville Street Bridge to 16th Avenue is adorned with art galleries, coffee shops, boutique upon boutique, and a steady flow of posh looking people frequenting them all. Just off the commercial strip, mid-density buildings are home to a diverse population including the seniors who gather at the South Granville Seniors Centre (SGSC), the area's only community hub and service provider. Many of the seniors who use the centre live alone and/or on fixed incomes. Several also face mobility issues which render walking and taking public transit extra challenging.

What is missing from the South Granville commercial strip is healthy and affordable food retail where residents can shop for basic necessities, namely fresh fruits and vegetables. There is one gourmet, and thereby very expensive, food retailer called Meinhardt along South Granville that is not a financially sustainable shopping choice. Compounded with the aforementioned income and transportation barriers, seniors are going hungry and malnourished in the neighbourhood. When the SGSC called the WFSC for support for their seniors, the group was "spurred into action" (Thomas, 2009).

In response to the call, the WFSC mobilized its resources which, as an unfunded and informal community group, entailed volunteer power to organize two pilot community produce stands or 'pocket markets' which sold fresh affordable fruits and vegetables at the centre in 2009. These were followed by a full season of markets at the SGSC and Kitsilano Neighbourhood House in 2010.

My first involvement with NFJNs was with the WFSC in 2009 when the West Side Pocket Markets[20] were unrolling. I was so shocked to learn about the hungry seniors in the seemingly affluent South Granville district that it felt like getting hit in the face.

The perception of universal affluence throughout the west side of Vancouver is something the WFSC has been trying to demystify since its beginnings. The west side is undoubtedly the more privileged side of town as the social indicator maps in Chapter 3 clearly show. What this has however done is enable a culture of shame among those who live on the west side, but who face some struggles, in admitting that they are in need. A recent study confirmed that there are food deserts and access barriers in South Granville and other west side neighbourhoods not to be ignored (Shore, 2011).

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[20] "Pocket markets are alternative retail marketing arrangements whereby community organizers serve as intermediaries who purchase locally grown and processed foods from area farmers and small-scale food producers and sell them to the public, with the goal of benefiting both producers and urban consumers," (Evans & Miewald, 2010, 2).

While working with the WFSC on developing the pocket markets, I sat down with six seniors from the SGSC and asked them about their daily food routines, where they shop, what they purchase, what they prioritize in their food purchases, and how the food geography of their neighbourhood has changed. What I received in return were tales of struggle and resourcefulness. The women I spoke with—all the interviewees happened to be female—have been residents of the neighbourhood for upwards of two decades with many living there for well over half their lives.

But in the last five to seven years, the availability of food retail along the South Granville commercial strip drastically changed marked by the closing of a butcher, baker, green grocer, and family restaurant. As a result, seniors are walking and taking the bus, sometimes incredibly long distances, to find affordable and healthy groceries. One woman I interviewed was traveling all the way to Burnaby, a neighbouring municipality east of Vancouver, to purchase her groceries. Or else, the seniors are shopping at the Shoppers Drug Mart, the aforementioned expensive Meinhardt store, or simply going without. The SGSC also has some meal and food programming[21] on which some seniors are wholly dependent and, in their absence, would not eat. One woman's doctor even prescribed her to go to the centre every day out of fear that she would otherwise go hungry or malnourished.

I share the story of the South Granville seniors who metaphorically hit me in the face and the West Side Pocket Market response as a way of beginning to collate some of the celebrations and dilemmas the WFSC and indeed every NFJN face in addressing the immediate food vulnerabilities of their neighbourhoods.

Lessons Learned
1. Finding People Power
The pocket markets were spearheaded by a remarkable food champion on the west side who was involved in the project from the beginning by securing the grant funding to implementing and coordinating the pocket markets. As the project coordinator, they worked alongside two other part-time staff people and a cast of volunteers to bring the markets to life. The project created work and volunteer opportunities for members of the WFSC, a form of capacity building, however, staff also went beyond their remunerated time to support the markets. This deep commitment and involvement of community members in the day-to-day of NFJNs is characteristic of the movement and in part defines it.

2. An Ear to the Ground
The SGSC knew they could access the WFSC as a community resource. The WFSC's members have their ears to the ground and personal connections to the centre that enabled the pilot pocket markets to mobilize so efficiently. It is a group that can

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[21] The South Granville Seniors Centre has regular affordable lunches, has previously done a multicultural community kitchen, and will sometimes do food deliveries to seniors who cannot come to the centre.

make things happen quickly and does not have to negotiate a complicated bureaucracy to do so.

3. Bringing Creative Solutions to Food System Gaps
The South Granville food desert represents a gap wherein the dominant food system is not equally meeting everyone's needs in the neighbourhood. The pocket markets and other efforts to stem from NFJNs are creative ways of reworking the status quo for a better food system which requires creative thinking and functioning within a very real set of constraints as to what is and is not possible to innovate on the margins.

4. Existing on the Margins
The grant for the pocket markets only provided a year of funding and so they ended after one season. Community food projects often exist on the margins and are dependent on scarce and unstable sources of funding to stay afloat. This makes it difficult to provide sustainable programs or efforts. The WFSC itself exists with the least amount of funding which presents a unique set of challenges.

5. Creating and Holding Social Spaces
Frequenting, volunteering at, and staffing the pocket markets were markedly differing food shopping experiences than getting groceries at most mainstream supermarkets. The markets received accolades as remarkable social spaces that enabled people to interact with one another in new ways and build community with others at the pocket markets.

6. Balancing Equity for Farmers and Consumers
There was some negotiation required with the farmers on the prices they would sell their food at to the pocket markets. Finding the 'sweet spot' so that farmers are given a fair price for the fruits (and vegetables) of their labour while being able to offer the food at an affordable price for the consumers, particularly given the project's target population, is a perennial dilemma.

7. A Table of Brains is Better than One
While the project relied heavily on the capacity and work of the individual WFSC member spearheading it, the collaborative was incredibly supportive and acted as a sounding board in the project development phase and later on in its implementation as pocket market staff and volunteers.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Efforts like the West Side Pocket Markets work to create food access opportunities for those who face difficult barriers to meeting their food needs. Others like it exist throughout the NFJNs' repertoire of actions and represent their intention to realize the material equity aspect of food justice for urban eaters which is further considered in Chapter 7. But first, Chapter 6 explores how NFJNs fare on ensuring the process equity and food democracy tenets of food justice.

Chapter 6: Process Equity & Food Democracy

> 1. Where do NFJNs exist in the City of Vancouver? How are they mandated (see Table 4 and Figure 3)?
> **2. How are NFJNs governed and structured? Who participates in them and how?**
> 3. How do NFJNs affect the food system?
> 4. Do NFJNs also assume an identity as community developers, and if so, how?
> 5. What are some of the larger networks involved in food system change in Vancouver that NFJNs are engaged in?

Who is a Neighbourhood Food Justice Network?

Given that NFJNs represent an alternative mode of food governance, I became interested in exploring the people systems that make up each network. With no clear blueprint or preset organizational structure for how to do neighbourhood food networking, it is a complex and constantly negotiated human landscape with people constantly coming and going, taking on different roles and tasks, assembling and disassembling. Questions of participation and inclusion in the networks are central, remembering the process equity and food democracy imperative called for by a food justice stance which asks for equal participation and a leveling out of power among all food system stakeholders so that members are shaping the system equally and effectively (Hassanein, 2003).

This chapter consequently takes a critical look at the governance and structure of NFJNs as well as participation and inclusion in the networks. If people systems are key, namely ones that are 'food democratic', who is a Neighbourhood Food Justice Network? Who participates in them and how?

Three Tiers of Participation

What I found is that all five NFJNs operate with some variation of a three-tiered structure comprised of those who (1) govern the networks and implement their projects and programs, (2) are served by them, and (3) are informed by them. The reality is much more nuanced with people participating in capacities that are a combination of the above, but these distinctions are nevertheless helpful in understanding NFJN governance and structure. Figure 14 depicts these different types of participation.

Coordinators and Supporting Bodies

Table 4 showed that each network currently has a paid coordinator and all except for one, the WFSC, always has. Coordinators[22] are responsible for maintaining the network, often writing grants, doing administrative work, communicating with

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[22] I use 'coordinator' here but it is worth noting that the five paid NFJN staff do not all go by the title of coordinator. Some prefer others such as 'community organizer' or 'food activist'.

network members and partners, coordinating and hosting meetings and events, maintaining a web presence, as well as organizing projects, programs, and volunteers. The nature of work varies from one coordinator to the next but these are some of the main tasks. Some select examples of more precise coordinator roles from each NFJN are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Examples of Neighbourhood Food Justice Network Coordinator Tasks

Neighbourhood Food Justice Network	Example Coordinator Tasks
Downtown Eastside Right to Food Network	Develop and coordinate food art and storytelling projects, healthy food distribution throughout neighbourhood, children's community kitchen and food workshops, volunteer coordination
Grandview Woodland Food Connection	Write and distribute a newsletter, do ordering for a bulk food program, coordinate a community kitchen, write grant applications, volunteer coordination, coordinate school garden project
Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute	Coordinate volunteers and community interns, support community urban agriculture projects, coordinate food workshops, document food stories from neighbourhood
Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Food Security Network	Coordinate pocket markets, write and distribute a newsletter, advocate for office space and other amenities at community centre
Westside Food Security Collaborative	Organize monthly network meetings, meet with network members and partners to support their food work, liaise with students doing community projects with the network

The NFJNs also have a 'supporting body' in the form of either a volunteer steering committee, advisory, or board of directors. The supporting bodies are heavy on professionals working in health, nutrition, social, and community services. They contribute to the network through strategic planning, hiring new coordinators, pursuing funding, and helping with program and project development, again with variations from one network to the next. A few networks report to the boards of directors of the larger organizations the NFJN is affiliated with, such as a community centre or neighbourhood house, but will then usually also have an advisory body that is specific to the network.

Volunteers also play a huge role in the day-to-day of the networks through supporting projects, programs, and events whether they are selling produce at a pocket market, making orders for a bulk buying club, supporting research projects, consulting community members about a neighbourhood food charter, or maintaining urban agriculture projects, as some examples.

One network, the Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute, has also been able to hire high school and university-aged community interns on a somewhat regular basis to help with their projects and programming. Other than three part-time staff contracts which supported the west side pocket markets in 2010, this is the only other instance of remunerated staff time within the NFJNs beyond the coordinators.

Food Vulnerable Participants

Those who are 'served' or 'targeted' in NFJN projects and programming—the second tier of participation—are largely food vulnerable populations although many NFJN initiatives also include people in the neighbourhood who would not qualify as urgently food vulnerable. They for the most part engage with NFJNs by participating in the networks' food system initiatives such as community kitchens and cooking programs, buying clubs and food box programs, urban agriculture efforts, pocket markets, events, and celebrations. Examples of some of these activities from each NFJN were summarized in Table 4.

Figure 14: Different Types of Participation in the Neighbourhood Food Justice Networks
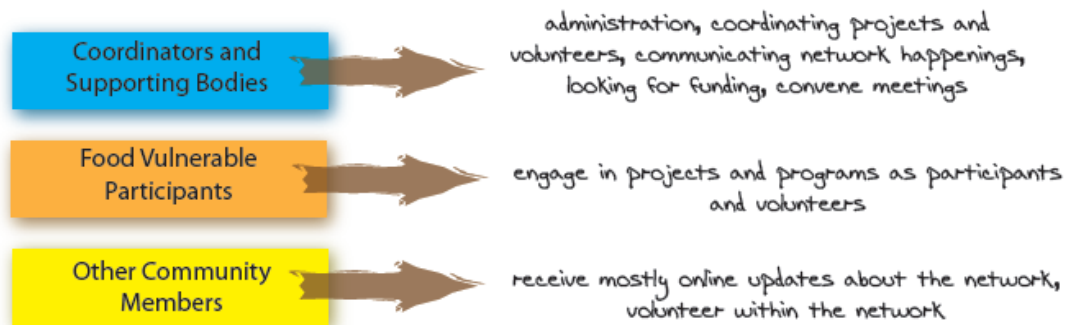
It is however worth questioning whether NFJN projects do in fact reach the most vulnerable in the neighbourhoods they serve. Two of the coordinators directly spoke to this, noting that their projects and programs target struggling populations but do not reach who they believe are the most food vulnerable in their catchments.

Other Community Members

In the majority of cases, interviewees identified a 'third tier' of people who are informed by the networks. This is a group of anywhere between 75 to over 620 people who receive e-mails though mailing lists, but largely do not otherwise engage in the network activities. Conversely, those who participate in the programs and projects, particularly people who are food vulnerable, do not always receive the electronic newsletters as internet and computer access is not always readily available to those less privileged. As one coordinator elaborated:

> We have always hovered around 275 [to] 300 members on our mailing list and you would be lucky if you got 5 or 6 coming out [to workshops or programs]…the membership that is part of the e-mail list has basically self-selected themselves [to become members] because they are interested in what is going on in the neighbourhood…It always feels like we are directing our message to two different groups. There is the e-mail group but they do not necessarily benefit from the programming. And then there are the people who benefit from our programming but they need to be

contacted on an individual basis through telephone or postering which is very laborious.

But is it a Network?

Another interviewee echoed this coordinator's observation about low turnout to network happenings and additionally questioned whether NFJNs operating with a staff person can really be considered a network:

> I feel like the network term is not always the most accurate. [In neighbourhoods where] there is a paid food coordinator, where is the network? I would go to meetings and they had 4 or 6 people. I feel like that is somehow lacking.

The WFSC case is somewhat unique from the other four networks because it existed for five years without a coordinator. As one member reflected:

> I think [one of] our greatest assets is that we actually are a network. It is not just one person. We are social service agencies, community members, environmental groups, you name it, and we have got it at that table so it is a network in the true sense of the word.

These observations question the legitimacy of calling something a network if there are stratified roles which include a paid coordinator and a supporting body heavy on professionals. Evidently, there is some debate around what defines a NFJN topped with concern about the different tiers of participation. What are some of the possible implications of this structure for food democracy?

On The Table Rather Than At It: Barriers to Process Equity and Food Democracy

Those with an equity lens would be concerned that food vulnerable populations are the focus of the NFJNs' work but not necessarily its leaders (Slocum, 2006, 330) given that several of the gatekeepers I interviewed identified as "privileged," "middle class," "white," and "educated". As a coordinator myself, I too identify with all of these labels and furthermore do not live in the neighbourhood catchment of the WFSC. This raises important questions about the politics of representation in community food work. Is it problematic if someone outside of the NFJN's catchment is coordinating or governing it? What about someone who is privileged?

Agyeman and Simons (forthcoming) would agree with Slocum that it is deeply problematic when advocates do not come from the food vulnerable populations they intend to serve:

> The directors and managers of [food security organizations] often come from well-educated backgrounds with advanced degrees, and thus from positions of privilege...those who are advocating for

community food security are often able to do so only because of their positions of privilege, which allowed them to access the education and status that has set them apart from those they are trying to serve (17).

While food democracy and process equity have great appeal in theory, NFJNs are evidence that putting them into practice becomes complicated when there is a deeply rooted set of obstacles propositioning the inclusion of the socially excluded in alternative forms of local governance:

> Social innovation in governance at a local level, taking into account civil society, will only hold good when new links are established between excluded and integrated segments of the local society and when the public sphere is enriched by the participation of the formerly excluded social groups (Gerometta, Häussermann & Longo 2005, 2019).

All of the interviewees directly involved with NFJNs were cognizant of these gaps between excluded and integrated factions within their neighbourhoods and longed for deeper diversity, inclusion, and participation within their networks' governance and participation without a clear sense of how to get there. Reflecting on the evolution of their advisory committee one coordinator said:

> I made a strong effort at first to build a [diverse] advisory. I brought on someone from the First Nations community, a Latin American youth worker, and a youth…but they just never showed up. It was really hard and it was probably because everyone's busy and advisory meetings are a bit dry. So I think that's an area that maybe I need to work harder at is building that diverse advisory, but I also need an advisory that's quite knowledgeable and has a lot of expertise, not to say that we don't all have expertise and knowledge.

Allen (2010) recognizes the obstacles facing community food work as a whole and elaborates that, in spite of the best intentions of organizers:

> Projects [often] have limited budgets and limited time. In addition, people who have been historically excluded may not have the time, energy, transportation and money to participate in local food planning meetings or may have different agendas than local food organizers (304).

Time and resource scarcity were noted as significant realities for both NFJN coordinators and people who are food vulnerable by almost every interviewee. One interviewee questioned what democracy actually means for their work:

> Someone said to me democracy doesn't necessarily mean every single person is involved in the process. It is about efficiency with your time

and being focused and productive in your work and including those who need to be there.

Without having interviewed people who might be considered food vulnerable, it is hard to know exactly what the barriers are from their perspective to fuller participation in NFJNs. Two interviewees did share their impressions:

I'm not saying that the people can't do it for themselves in some ways but their time is spent going to food banks so they can get food because they only have twenty-four dollars a month for food. Their time is going to take care of children with challenges, their own health issues.

Moms have limited time. If they're living in a basement suite with two or three kids, it's not like they're going to have time to go to a meeting. I don't think [that's] really going to change. I think you're going to have a small core group that comes to the work meetings and you're going to have larger groups that come out to different events. That's just the way it works no matter what you're doing.

These remarks address what some barriers might be to engaging in a NFJN whether this be by attending a community kitchen, network meetings, volunteering at a pocket market, or sitting on an advisory committee.

This begins to help unpack some of the privileges necessary in maintaining our associational life which is understood as structures where people assemble by choice and "the myriad ways citizens come together to do good work and serve the public interest," (Block, 2008, 56). Having an associational life requires some privilege of capacity and time. So, on the one hand while there is a legitimate critical perspective on the implications of having paid coordinators for the networks and who these coordinators are, the majority of interviewees and my own experiences attest to the need for this paid staff time to get the work done when it cannot be a part of a community's volunteer associational life:

It has actually made me angry in many ways too to realize there are people who have very hard lives and it's not that they're lazy, it's not that they don't want to work. They've just been handed a bit of a difficult life and they're incredibly isolated. Isolated because they can't go to the movies, TV is cheap entertainment so most of the world comes to them through TV. They don't go out and participate in the community because it takes money to do that so they end up being almost like shut-ins in a lot of ways...

The coordinators themselves are also pressed by time, capacity, and resource constraints as noted by Allen above. Coordinators are remunerated for anywhere

from 16 to 35 hours a week of work[23] with some putting in additional volunteer time:

> ...right now I am contracted to do 10 hours a week, I do more than 10 generally but I have also gone through periods when my other job required more hours [but] there is still some volunteer time in there [that I put in].
>
> It takes more capacity than we have to do this work. I work 35 hours a week [and] it is not enough time to do everything that I want to do...half of that time is spent in the programming space which is great because I am doing the actual work and being hands on but the more time I am there, the less time that I have to plan programs.
>
> I'm putting in close to 25 to 30 hours a week. I don't have a clear sense of exactly how many hours and what I'm paid for. Ideally two people should be doing the job that I'm doing...I knew I needed to put in extra hours to build the profile, the network, the funding, all that extra stuff. [It's like] building a business. I work alone, I do all the admin, I organize everything, manage projects, do all the publicity, make posters, do the fundraising, reports, everything.

The part-time coordinators sometimes work a second job in order to make their own ends meet, which is both ironic and problematic given that the nature of their work is in large part about mitigating the effects of economic insecurity. Justice and equity for the coordinators thus becomes another concern. Anderson (2008) hones in on the compromised rights of the people systems that support the conventional food supply chain such as farmers and wageworkers whose ability to provide their basic needs are likewise forsaken. Anderson's concerns are entirely transferable to NFJN coordinators.

Speaking of farmers, wageworkers, and others employed within the food system, what is their relationship to NFJNs? Another barrier to more fully realizing food democracy is the question of scale and the networks' strong focus on the people within their neighbourhoods' respective catchments who are for the most part urban eaters. This has the side effect of excluding other people implicated in the food system and its supply chain (as shown in Figure 2) such as farm workers, processors, transporters, distributors, as well as food retail and culinary staff, some of which fall outside an urban or neighbourhood setting and are mostly absent from NFJN tables. This is not to suggest that it is the task of a NFJN to rectify every injustice throughout the food system and include every stakeholder, but to further

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[23] These numbers are current as of October 2011. Staff time for the NFJNs fluctuates greatly. This is the most staff time the networks have ever collectively had with the addition of myself as the part-time Westside Food Security Collaborative coordinator in June 2011.

highlight the limits of their current capacity and reach and some of the other implicated 'people systems' being left out by a focus on the neighbourhood scale.

A Step Forward Nevertheless: What We Have to Celebrate

It is obvious that the way NFJNs are currently funded and structured, compounded with the tug of war of everyday life and the limitations of their scope present major barriers to the networks more fully realizing food democracy. They are nevertheless an incredible step forward in challenging the dominant food governance culture—though not replacing it—which concentrates power over a food system in the hands of large agri-businesses, food regulatory bodies, as well as food distributors, retailers, and traders.

As an alternative, the networks weave together people from different parts of the social fabric who are disempowered under the status quo. The fact that each NFJN is connected with people from different sectors (public, private, not-for-profit) and community affiliations (people who work, volunteer, study, live, grow, eat, etc. in the neighbourhoods) is one of the significant qualities of all of the networks, even though their participation within the NFJN is not always equal.

This function of networking people around food, whether in monthly meetings, projects and programming, or through a coordinator playing the role of intermediary, is one of the greatest opportunities they present. They are breaking down metaphorical silos, whether these are between neighbours who would not otherwise meet outside of a monthly community kitchen, or between organizations that would never otherwise partner on a project.

NFJNs have this unique ability to bring together different institutional and organizational players within the neighbourhood which holds power for developing partnerships and leveraging multiple sources of support such as physical programming space, volunteers, transportation, storage, information, and even funding. Gillard (2011) echoes this, celebrating that people who represent resources and power are present at WFSC meetings, "the decision makers were in the circle so we could make things happen quickly and undertake projects that would have a direct effect on the food security in our own community," (12).

It however cannot be assumed that just because NFJNs work at a neighbourhood scale, they are inherently democratic, inclusive, or participatory, as the local trap cautions. It is instead necessary to take a critical look at the networks—and any people systems which support food systems—to understand who is participating and how, who is not, and why not. There is evidently more work to be done within neighbourhood-level food work in Vancouver and elsewhere to close the gap between the socially included and excluded to further democratize this form of alternative food governance.

If we are aiming for a robust people system that is complex, mimicking the problems it is attempting to solve, NFJNs are undoubtedly helping build this human infrastructure. Compared to the dominant culture of food governance, NFJN members are significantly more diverse, although they admittedly do not have anywhere near the same amount of power over the food system. The ways in which NFJNs are able to affect the food system in their pursuit of material equity is covered in the following chapter.

Chapter 7: Material Equity

> 1. Where do NFJNs exist in the City of Vancouver? How are they mandated (see Table 4 and Figure 3)?
> 2. How are NFJNs governed and structured? Who participates in them and how?
> **3. How do NFJNs affect the food system?**
> 4. Do NFJNs also assume an identity as community developers, and if so, how?
> 5. What are some of the larger networks involved in food system change in Vancouver that NFJNs are engaged in?

Recapping the material equity aspect of food justice, it is the fair distribution of resources such as income, land, and food. This chapter considers how the NFJNs are pursuing material equity, particularly around the fair distribution of food, within their catchments through their projects, programming, and other actions and asks; how do NFJNs affect the food system?

Overall, what I found is that:

1) They affect several food systems including the conventional, charity, and alternative ones;
2) They affect the food system at very particular points in the supply chain;
3) Their quantitative impacts on the food system are minimal; and,
4) They are in part responsible for the flourishing of neighbourhood food assets.

What are the Material Inequities NFJNs are Responding to?

Before elaborating on these findings, it is worth recalling some of the material inequities NFJNs are responding to. NFJNs arose in various neighbourhoods across Vancouver because of the food vulnerabilities many were noticing. These vulnerabilities affect peoples' ability to achieve material equity through status quo conventional food system. Indicators for these food vulnerabilities were illustrated in Chapter 3 and include economic insecurity, household type, and newcomer status. Further examples of food system concerns and vulnerabilities that are manifesting within Vancouver's neighbourhoods given by interviewees were:

• *food deserts:* a geographic area with barriers to the accessibility of affordable, adequate, nutritious, or appropriate food retail options within a reasonable distance[24]

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[24] The Vancouver Food System Assessment furthermore found that, "retail food outlets are more highly concentrated in low-income areas, where overall food prices tend to be lower than in higher-income areas. However, fresh produce may not be as readily available and food costs consume a much higher percentage of family income in low-income neighbourhoods, even though prices may be lower," (Barbolet et al., 2005, 6).

- *food dumping:* players within the conventional food system such as grocery stores and food manufacturers 'dump' food on organizations and agencies who then distribute it through a charity model, this food is often not appropriate or nutritious
- *food lineups:* people having to line up in stressful, unsafe, and undignified conditions to receive food through a charity model
- *physical and social isolation:* different forms of disconnect that can impede the ability to access food and/or engage with it in community

Enabling Alternative Food Initiatives and Intervening in Dominant Food Systems

What the interviewees were expressing is the inability of existing food systems to provide adequate food access for their communities, especially people who are food vulnerable. One of their shared food system goals is to ensure material equity for their neighbourhoods and do this by intervening in existing conventional and charity food systems as well as initiating alternative food systems. Box 5 gives working understandings of different food system typologies.

Box 5: Understanding Different Food Systems

Conventional/Industrial Food System
[It] is the system from which most of us eat, whether we like it or not, or whether we know it or not. It is highly organized, rational, efficient, and possesses a singular focus on the financial bottom line as both organization and management values, (Winne, 2010, 18).

Charity Food System
The part of the food system concerned with providing short-term relief...In the past, this sector has been referred to as the 'emergency' food sector. However, the provision of food to the hungry in Vancouver is now rarely a response to an 'emergency', either natural or human-made; rather, it has become an institutionalized part of an increasingly privatized welfare system [largely] the domain of non-profit societies and religious organizations. [The charity food system] does not address the underlying causes of food insecurity, nor [does it] tend to improve the nutrition and health of the people who depend on them. [It is] an unsustainable system, (Barbolet et al., 2005, 11).

Emergency Food System
[An emergency preparedness food system that] should include plans for feeding the population in case of tragedy. [It is important because of] an upsurge in natural disasters and the vulnerability of Vancouver to floods and earthquakes, (Barbolet et al., 2005, 11).

Alternative/Community Food System
While no easier to stereotype than the industrial food system, it is 'alternative' because it has indeed evolved as a distinctively different model of food production, processing, and distribution, and in comparison to the industrial food system, is a minority player...In general the alternative food system produces food that does not harm the environment or human beings...Other territory claimed by alternative food includes the realms of...food justice, food democracy, and food sovereignty, (Winne, 2010, 18-20).

[A food system which] emphasizes strengthening and making visible the relationships between producers, processors, distributors, and consumers of food...is place-based...espouses the idea of social justice, placing at its center the concerns of marginalized groups, [and] facilitates residents' access to healthful, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods at all times, (Raja, Born & Kozlowski Russell, 2008, 3-4).

Intervening in Conventional and Charity Food Systems

Many food systems thinkers uphold the development of alternative food systems and a simultaneous de-linking from conventional food systems and their supply chains as the way towards realizing a better food future (Starr, 2000; Wekerle, 2004; Jarosz, 2008). However, the reality of food access work sometimes necessitates staying tied to the conventional and charity food systems and working within them to achieve material equity for urban eaters (Allen, 2010).

What this means more tangibly is that alternative food initiatives such as farmers' markets and community supported agriculture[25] (CSA) programs that circumvent conventional supply chains and establish direct producer-consumer relationships are not always available to those wishing to create food access opportunities for food vulnerable populations since farmers' markets, CSAs, and other direct-marketing initiatives usually boast more expensive food. This is certainly the situation NFJNs are facing as economic insecurity is a forefront concern. Resultantly, NFJN projects more often than not innovate within what we already have by intervening in conventional and charity food systems.

To give a few examples, both the Westside Food Security Collaborative and the Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Food Security Network have implemented pocket markets in areas considered food deserts. While pocket markets are intended as alternative food initiatives which operate outside of the conventional food system by connecting farmers directly with local consumers (Evans & Miewald, 2010), sourcing affordable produce for the pocket markets through alternative supply chains was challenging in both cases.

While ideally pocket market organizers wanted to source local and organic produce, the markets would have been too expensive for food vulnerable populations to shop at. Instead, the 2010 West Side Pocket Market series sourced from mostly conventional farmers in nearby municipalities, though still managing to get some Vancouver-grown and organic fares, whereas the Trout Lake Pocket Market buys produce from a conventional wholesaler. The Grandview Woodland Food Connection is in a similar predicament with its buying club program[26], and also purchases from a conventional wholesaler.

This is not to devalue these initiatives, but rather, to honour the difficulty in fully disengaging from the ways in which food is currently grown, processed, distributed, retailed, consumed, and disposed of that is responsible for the vast majority of our sustenance. This is particularly salient when working with limited resources—as the five NFJNs considered here are—compounded by a food justice, access, and

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[25] Through a CSA arrangement, households and individuals are essentially buying a 'share' of the farm's yield upfront and in return are provided with a basket of produce every week from the farm for the entirety of the growing season.

[26] There are different models of buying clubs but they generally involve pooling together to make bulk food purchases and dividing these up into boxes or shares as this is more economical.

equity framework that targets struggling populations. These conditions do not allow for an entire overhaul of the food system, but rather, sometimes require working more incrementally within existing food systems to meet more immediate food needs such as hunger and malnourishment.

Figure 15 uses some examples to show where NFJNs intervene in the conventional food system supply chain to make it more accessible to their food vulnerable populations.

Figure 15: Neighbourhood Food Justice Network Interventions in the Conventional Supply Chain
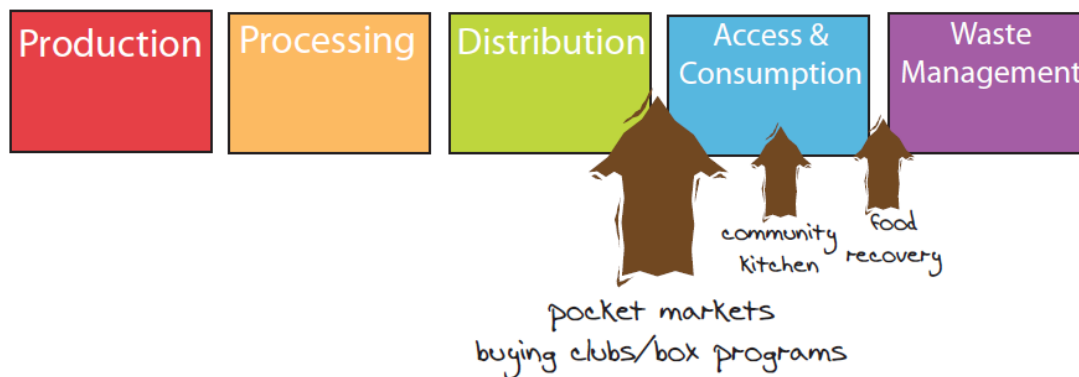
Project	Neighbourhood	Where is the Intervention	Explanation
Pocket Markets	West Side	Distribution & Access	• food was purchased directly from growers which did not affect how or where it was grown but did affect where it was distributed to (the pocket markets rather than a wholesaler, retailer, etc.) • pocket markets were set up in two locations (the South Granville Seniors Centre and the Kitsilano Neighbourhood House) and intervened in the food access landscape to create two new food purchasing opportunities
Mobile Pocket Markets	Trout Lake Cedar Cottage	Distribution & Access	• food is purchased wholesale from a conventional distributor so that the food goes to the pocket markets rather than a conventional retail outlet • pocket markets are set up at social housing sites that are in food deserts creating new access opportunities • these pocket markets are mobile (food is packed into a van and taken to different locations) furthering their reach and accessibility
Buying Club	Grandview Woodland	Distribution & Access	• food is purchased by the buying club from a conventional wholesaler re-routing it from where it would otherwise be distributed to • subscribers to the program divide the

			produce and pack the boxes to take home creating a new access opportunity
Fruit and Veggie Deal	West Side	Distribution & Access	• food is purchased from a conventional wholesaler • volunteers pack the boxes and a volunteer driver takes them to different locations, usually housing sites, creating new access opportunities
Community Kitchen	Grandview Woodland	Access & Consumption	• food is purchased from a conventional retailer or wholesaler • people are consuming food in new ways by eating together in a community kitchen setting
Food Recovery[27]	West Side	Waste Management & Access	• a food recovery research and action project to connect food waste from the conventional food system (mostly grocery stores and specialty retail like bakeries) to meal programs at various organizations and agencies • recovering and redistributing surplus that would otherwise become waste in the supply chain

Although just a sample of programs, the analysis aptly captures that NFJNs are for the most part intervening in the conventional supply chain at the distribution and access stages, with some interventions in consumption and waste management. NFJNs intervene in the supply chain's normal course (which would eventually see its foods end up on grocery store shelves, restaurant kitchens, institutional cafeterias, etc.) to reroute its offerings to something like a pocket market or buying club. NFJNs make very little, if any, profit from food sales and are therefore able to sell the food they have sourced from a wholesaler or distributor at low prices, undercutting what the food would otherwise retail at and thereby innovating access opportunities.

One NFJN in particular, the Downtown Eastside Right to Food Network, mostly intervenes in the charity food system as it does not charge for any of its programs or food. The DTES is notably the neighbourhood with some of the most severe social indicators (City of Vancouver, 2009). It is however a markedly different model of food charity from what is prevalent elsewhere in the DTES as the food is always nutritious and available without any barriers such as a lineup. A large proportion of the neighbourhood house's budget goes towards purchasing food, mostly from a community green grocer, food bank, and Quest Food Exchange[28], also examples of interventions in distribution and access along the conventional supply chain. The

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[27] Food recovery efforts involve finding alternative uses and channels for what would otherwise become food waste (e.g. partnering with grocery stores to redistribute their excess to a meal program).

[28] A green grocer is a small market specializing in the food of a particular population (Phan, 2011). Quest food exchange operates an affordable grocery storefront with recovered food from the conventional food system.

network is notably an expression of a larger project that is taking a whole food systems change approach within the neighbourhood (see Chapter 9).

What is it that contributes to such a strong emphasis on interventions in distribution and access, and to a lesser extent consumption and waste management, among the NFJNs? The obvious answer already addressed is the urgency of creating effective food access opportunities in response to hunger and malnutrition. The matter of scale underlies this. It is no coincidence that NFJN interventions in dominant food systems happen in between distribution and waste management as these are the stages of the food system that usually come alive at the neighbourhood level: food gets transported into neighbourhoods from other places (distribution), grocery stores and other food retail outlets are located in neighbourhoods (access), we eat in our neighbourhoods (consumption), and dispose of food scraps and related waste like packaging in our neighbourhoods (waste management). This being so, there are limitations to what is possible at the neighbourhood scale.

What then are the implications for a systems or whole supply chain approach to food system change? This is where alternative food initiatives, explored next, begin to fit in.

Enabling Alternative Food System Initiatives
In spite of some of the barriers to innovating alternative food initiatives mentioned earlier, NFJNs still achieve projects that are part of an alternative food system or 'alternative food initiatives'. This mostly happens through urban agriculture projects which, because they begin with the production of food, have the potential to trigger an alternative supply chain.

Examples of these alternative food system initiatives and where they belong in the supply chain are in Figure 16 supplemented by examples from different NFJNs.

Figure 16: Neighbourhood Food Justice Network Initiations of Alternative Supply Chains
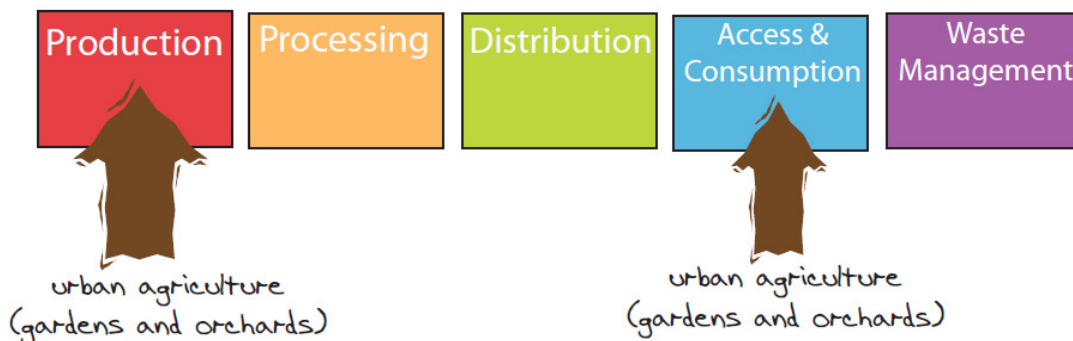
Project	Neighbourhood	Where is the Initiative	Explanation
Britannia Urban Garden	Grandview Woodland	Production	• gardens are being built that will provide food on high school grounds
Rooftop Garden	Renfrew Collingwood	Production & Access	• food is produced on top of the roof of a neighbourhood house • the food is used in the NFJN's programs and by the community
Community Orchards and Public Fruit Trees	Renfrew Collingwood	Production & Access	• fruit-bearing trees in various locations throughout the neighbourhood • the food is used in the NFJN's programs and by the community
Collaborative Garden	West Side	Production & Access	• a shared edible garden open to the community to participate in on site at a neighbourhood house • gardeners share equally in the harvest

By participating in urban agriculture projects, NFJNs work outside of the conventional food supply chain to create alternative production and access opportunities. The Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute is notably able to use a lot of the produce from its urban agriculture initiatives in its other projects and programs such as canning workshops and community kitchens. This takes the food further along the supply chain and increases opportunities to access what is undoubtedly healthy food with a very low environmental impact.

While urban agriculture projects stemming from NFJNs are not tokenistic, they only create food access opportunities for a very small slice of the neighbourhood's population and only during the growing season unless the food is preserved. While interventions in the conventional supply chain can have a wider reach in terms of crude access, the magnitude of their impact is still small. A closer look at how NFJNs affect the food system through their various interventions and initiatives also illustrates that the conventional and alternative food systems are not always so clearly distinguishable from one another.

Blurring the Line between Dominant and Alternative Food Systems
While I have made distinctions between NFJN projects that are either interventions in existing conventional and charity food systems and others that are alternative food initiatives, on the ground, these different food systems are much more confounded with one another and 'hybridized' (Ilbery & Maye, 2005). For example, a pocket market located in a community space such as a seniors centre or neighbourhood house is an alternative way of accessing food compared to the conventional grocery store, but the food being sold might come from a conventional farm. Food that is being given out in a charitable way could conversely be coming from an alternative source of agriculture.

In sum, the complexity of food systems means that the line between what is an alternative food initiative and what is an intervention in existing systems is often blurred, but a hard and fast boundary is neither necessary nor useful. More important is an appreciation that, contrary to some of the literature and my own initial assumptions, NFJN involvement in the food system is not restricted to alternative food system initiatives. The networks also seek out creative ways to improve existing food systems by increasing affordability, accessibility, healthiness, ecological sensitivity, cultural soundness, community building capacity, or whatever the goal(s) may be.

The Community Food Sector and Food Assets

Whether intervening in an existing conventional or charity food system or activating an alternative food initiative, NFJNs are championing the flourishing of the community food sector and seeding community food resources or what are otherwise called neighbourhood food assets. Examples of community food resources or assets[29] include, but are not limited to, community kitchens, community gardens, farmers' and pocket markets, food box and buying programs, composting facilities, and urban farms (Barbolet et al., 2005; City of Vancouver, 2010). These assets and resources "are not intended as emergency responses to hunger, but as long-term approaches to addressing food security issues," (Barbolet et al., 2005, 24).

The 2005 *Vancouver Food System Assessment* found that community food resources were quite evenly distributed throughout Vancouver, but with noticeably higher numbers in lower income communities such as the Downtown Eastside, Mount Pleasant, Strathcona, and Grandview-Woodlands (ibid). This number is rising and the geographic distribution of neighbourhood food assets is spreading as neighbourhood food networking and Vancouver's involvement in food system change continue to grow.

Neighbourhood food assets have received policy attention from the City of Vancouver, namely within the Greenest City Action Plan[30] which upholds food as one of its ten key priority areas. Whereas the plan's original long-term target was to work towards a 33% reduction per capita in the city's food-induced carbon footprint, the revised target became to increase both city and neighbourhood food assets by 50% (City of Vancouver, 2010) out of recognition for the importance of the community food sector and its assets in promoting a just and sustainable food system.

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[29] "Food assets are defined as resources, facilities, services or spaces that are available to residents of the city (either at the city-wide or neighbourhood scale) and which are used to support the City's food system," (City of Vancouver, 2010, 4).

[30] The Greenest City Action Plan is an initiative of the City of Vancouver's current mayor and council to make Vancouver the greenest city in the world by 2020 and includes action plans for transportation, energy, among other areas, including food.

Vancouver plays host to many other city-wide and neighbourhood food assets that are independent from the NFJNs such as its farmers' markets[31] and most community gardens. Yet, the networks' role in establishing new assets and connecting assets (and of course, the people involved in them) within the same neighbourhood is undeniable and a linchpin in furthering the community food sector.

Figure 17 presents a continuum of community responses to a disintegrating food system. The most effective community food systems are ones that can provide a continuum of food assets and resources including short-term relief all the way to an overhaul of the food system itself (Barbolet et al., 2005). NFJN efforts can be placed all along this continuum but have the highest concentration of food system interventions and initiatives under the 'community development' heading including food production and preserving, community kitchens, capacity-building endeavours, buying clubs, and healthy food vending.

Figure 17: Community Responses to a Disintegrating Food System

From the *Vancouver Food System Assessment*, Forum of Research Connections, 2005

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[31] Most farmers' markets in Vancouver are operated by "Your Local Farmers Marker", a society independent from neighbourhood food networks.

More than Food in Bellies

All of the NFJNs also organize a rich collection of food celebrations such as festivals, community potlucks, storytelling, as well as food-themed visual and performance arts that do not necessarily intervene in or initiate a food system, but have incredible value as spaces to celebrate, become educated about, talk about and engage with food in new ways while building community. Rather than solely focusing on the quantitative impact of NFJNs, for example, how much fresh food is coming in to a neighbourhood, how many people are involved in community gardens, or how many people are frequenting pocket markets—all of which are important pieces—NFJNs boast incredible social and community benefits that are less easily measured and about so much more than 'food in bellies'. In the words of an interviewee:

> To miss the social and community aspects of the food would be to miss the point...Food is not just a compilation of nutrients. It defines so much of us in the world...Especially looking at health outcomes, [we] know that the social connections have a huge impact of people's health and wellbeing. Food security is a huge gathering force...As a convening mechanism and central pivot point for community development, it's brilliant and positive.

While this chapter focused on the ways in which NFJNs enable material equity, largely through food access work, this does not capture the full extent of their impact as community developers. The testaments to NFJNs as community building entities are abundant and the topic of Chapter 8.

Chapter 8: Community Capacity, Social Spaces, and Social Capital

1. Where do NFJNs exist in the City of Vancouver? How are they mandated (see Table 4 and Figure 3)?
2. How are NFJNs governed and structured? Who participates in them and how?
3. How do NFJNs affect the food system?
4. Do NFJNs also assume an identity as community developers, and if so, how?
5. What are some of the larger networks involved in food system change in Vancouver that NFJNs are engaged in?

In their working understanding of the concept, Gottlieb and Joshi (2010) liken food justice to environmental justice as a powerful notion which "resonates with many groups and can be invoked to expand the support base for bringing about community change *and* a different kind of food system," (5). Having already discussed the different kinds of food systems NFJNs spur, this chapter asks in what ways do NFJNs as agents of food justice bring about community change and assume an identity as community developers?

The inextricability of the NFJNs from community development was upheld by every interviewee and supported by my experiences within the movement. I found that the networks develop community by building neighbourhood capacity as well as convening social spaces and fostering social capital.

Neighbourhood Capacity: Human Potential and Physical Infrastructure

A capacity building approach is directly named in the City's definition of neighbourhood food networking as the networks are purported "to increase overall community capacity at the neighbourhood scale," (City of Vancouver, 2010, 4-5). While there is no universal acceptance of what it means to develop community capacity for food, it has been qualified in one interpretation as education, skills, jobs, and income security (Downtown Eastside Kitchen Tables Project, 2010).

In discussing neighbourhood or community capacity, there is a distinction to be made between the two different, but interrelated components of human potential and physical infrastructure. NFJN projects and programs such as community gardens, community kitchens, and so on, contribute to the human potential aspect of neighbourhood capacity "by empowering individuals to enhance their own food security and by contributing to the community's capacity to feed itself," (Barbolet et al., 2005, 11). As elaborated on in Chapter 6, these activities usually require time, commitment, volunteers, and grants and therefore might not be universally accessible (ibid).

When they do exist, capacity building responses, often contrasted with charity responses, to food vulnerabilities mean that people are likely walking away from their experiences with more than food. Across the networks, program participants are gaining new skills and knowledge, confidence, social connections, and sense of independence and interdependence—their human potential—which is essential for continuing to grow the community food sector if it is going to be more broadly inclusive and democratic.

A recent evaluation of community food efforts by Vancouver Coastal Health which included the Downtown Eastside Right to Food Network, the Grandview Woodland Food Connection, and the Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Food Security Network[32] found that 92% of people surveyed knew more about food security and sustainable food systems having participated in the initiatives (Social Planning and Research Council of BC & Beck, 2011).

Within the Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute, people will often join the network as program and project participants and then work their way up to volunteer and other leadership roles, sometimes even employment as community interns. This model follows the DTES capacity building succession model which takes people from education and skills to jobs.

Nurturing this potential requires physical infrastructure as much as human capacity. The food assets explored earlier are exemplary of some of the physical infrastructures needed to support neighbourhood food system work such as gardens, kitchens, markets, and composting facilities. These assets are what allow the human potential to flourish by providing the space for people to come together and access, garden, cook, preserve, talk about, enjoy, and celebrate food. NFJNs both contribute to and benefit from a landscape of neighbourhood food assets. They also play a role in advocating for a deeper embeddedness of food and their networks into a community's physical infrastructure.

Neighbourhood Food Justice Network Embeddedness in Community Infrastructure
There is a very lively ongoing conversation within the NFJN movement about the degree of embeddedness the networks have within a piece of community infrastructure such as a community centre or neighbourhood house, the two current types of institutional homes for the networks. Table 6 gives a sense of the degree of embeddedness the five NFJNs respectively have within either a community centre or neighbourhood house.

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[32] Although the evaluation included three of the NFJNs also considered in the scope of this research, it also included others outside of the City of Vancouver. The statistic should be considered with this in mind.

Table 6: Degree of Neighbourhood Food Justice Network Embeddedness in Community Infrastructure

Neighbourhood Food Justice Network	Piece of Community Infrastructure	Has the network always had this home?	Extent of Relationship
Downtown Eastside Right to Food Network	Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House	Yes	staff position within the neighbourhood house
Grandview Woodland Food Connection	Britannia Community Centre	Yes	staff position at community centre but still largely independent
Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute	Renfrew Collingwood Neighbourhood House	Yes	staff position at neighbourhood house
Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Food Security Network	Trout Lake Community Centre	No	still being negotiated at time of authorship
Westside Food Security Collaborative	Kitsilano Neighbourhood House	Somewhat[33]	contract with the neighbourhood house

Some of the benefits of establishing an institutional home for the networks in a piece of community infrastructure cited by the interviewees include:

• Access to programming space to host markets, gardens, kitchens, meetings, events, etc.;
• Office space for a coordinator and other amenities such as a computer, photocopier, phone line, storage space, and reception services;
• Being able to establish a referral mechanism whereby people coming in to the neighbourhood house or community centre for other reasons can find out about and be referred to the NFJN;
• Building the profile and visibility of the NFJN (e.g. having a newsletter, notice board, and other resources for promotion through the institution);
• Having an executive director or other support for finding and securing funding, helping with strategic planning, and day-to-day support;
• Being able to apply for internal organizational grants from the institution; and,
• A co-worker environment and the benefits of having colleagues.

Some of the drawbacks, both existing and potential, include:

• The host organization leveraging other responsibilities and time commitments out of a NFJN coordinator that take away from their food justice work;
• Adding additional layers of bureaucracy to the work;

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[33] Kitsilano Neighbourhood House has always been strongly affiliated with the WFSC since the network's chair also happens to be the neighbourhood house's executive director. The WFSC coordinator has however only recently gained office space in the neighbourhood house and does not run any programs out of the house. The house does provide meeting space, photocopying, and website hosting, for example.

- Moving towards a more top-down rather than bottom-up governance of the networks depending on the culture of the institution; and,
- A narrowing of focus to the institution and its more immediate community rather than the neighbourhood at large.

On this last point, one interviewee raised that most people in their community, particularly newcomers and people from various ethno-cultural backgrounds, have stronger affiliations with a religious institution such as a church or temple, than they do with a community centre or neighbourhood house. In thinking about diversity and inclusion, what are the pieces of community infrastructure that resonate for people? How can these be entry points for food justice work? Does focusing on community centres and neighbourhood houses as the institutional homes for the networks create barriers in engaging people who have closer ties to other pieces of community infrastructure such as places of worship?

While the sentiment of the movement is to work towards embeddedness, particularly in neighbourhood houses and community centres, there are obviously some drawbacks to consider and negotiate when developing a relationship with an organization and piece of community infrastructure. Where these relationships are successful, as they have proven to be for the Grandview Woodland Food Connection, Downtown Eastside Right to Food Network, and the Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute, they contribute to the network's capacity to do its work and create the space—quite literally—for human capacity to take root. These also become social spaces for people to form and nurture community connections.

Cultivating Social Spaces and Social Capital

Feenstra recognizes the imperative of social space within community food systems:

> Social spaces [are] for celebrating, for enjoying each other's company, for learning how to support one another…they are the glue that allows the new community food system to hang together or not (2002, 102).

She continues that it is in these spaces that social capital[34] is hatched as people coalesce around a shared purpose and vision to talk, listen, plan, problem-solve, question, argue, come to agreement, compromise, get to know, and trust one another.

Developing these social spaces is not always a harmonious process, particularly when convening people with divergent priorities (Feenstra, 2002). These are however some of the most important groups to assemble as they are microcosms of more expansive conversations and debates which must be worked through at various scales and settings in order to induce change. Evidently, NFJNs and the larger networks they belong to can be understood as one such microcosm where

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[34] Social capital here is understood in its broadest sense as the existence of productive social relationships (Claridge, 2004).

people who work, live, play, and eat in proximity to one another interact in social spaces inspired by food and nourished by social capital.

There are abundant cases and stories within the movement that posit NFJNs as generators of social capital and holders of social space. One example to provide some substance here is the WFSC's model of monthly meetings. Unlike its four east side counterparts, the WFSC began without any funding for a coordinator and instead grew out of a monthly meeting of west side service providers. The group has since centered its conversations and actions on food security, which kept arising as a concern in the service providers' meetings, and has subsequently grown to include other west side organizations including those from health, faith, environment, and mental health, as well as community residents and students.

The WFSC has grown into a "social organization [which facilitates] coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit", (Putnam, 1993, 2). Active members come together at the WFSC meetings to share resources, problem solve, support one another's work, and innovate new projects—work which would likely not happen outside this social space and is contingent on productive relationships i.e. social capital, between collaborators.

For many I interviewed, the social benefits of participating in a NFJN are what drew them to the work just as much as their desire to catalyze a just food system. When I asked interviewees what they celebrate and find meaningful about their role in the NFJN movement, it always boiled down to social relationships and connections, many of which happen across cultural lines whether these be age, ancestry, or languages spoken as this one interviewee elaborated upon:

> One of the really cool things I noticed through our food programs [is that] people don't really need a shared language to communicate [or know] how to speak English. If you have two people from Latin America they might be from different countries but are able to speak with one another…they are sharing across cultures, [they might say] *in my country we cook this like it and my mother used to all it this.* People don't need the intermediary of language or the common language to be able to do that. I also don't think people need the intermediary of the institution (that means us) to do that kind of sharing…we're just a starting point.

In other instances, what is celebrated by NFJN gatekeepers are the changes in people's lives supported by new social bonds:

> The things that are the most meaningful that I would celebrate are the smaller changes that happen in people's lives…Through [a newsletter article about a garden we were building] we found a person interested in community gardening. Here is a person who has two university degrees, is into food, knows how to grow food, is really well educated

and thoughtful, but was diagnosed with something where she can't work so she is on permanent disability and is subject to the whim of how her body is feeling. She started volunteering and there was someone she was working with in an abusive relationship and they became friends. She encouraged her to leave her relationship and began to feel like there were all these ways she could give back to other people based on her own experience even though she was in a situation where she felt helpless. The person she was helping got out of the relationship and we helped them find a halfway house.

Food system change aside, NFJNs can be places for people to realize that *they* are neighbourhood assets, as the woman in the story did. This is the foundation of community for another interviewee:

> …what really resonated for me is that each person has access to resources or they have assets that are valuable. If we don't plan to have the City of any other level of government to lean on and we really just have each other, that's a really strong reminder for me that community is the beginning of so much.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Fortunately, the NFJN movement does have committed allies in government and other organizations which have recognized the networks' contributions to the realization of process equity, material equity, and community development. These other actors, as well as the NFJNs themselves, are working to scale-up the movement in order to maximize its impact and multiplier effects.

Chapter 9: Scaling-Up the Movement

1. Where do NFJNs exist in the City of Vancouver? How are they mandated (see Table 4 and Figure 3)?
2. How are NFJNs governed and structured? Who participates in them and how?
3. How do NFJNs affect the food system?
4. Do NFJNs also assume an identity as community developers, and if so, how?
5. What are some of the larger networks involved in food system change in Vancouver that NFJNs are engaged in?

> It really motivates me to think that I'm working with a group of people who are helping to change my very own neighbourhood and then that neighbourhood links up with another neighbourhood, and [a city], and a region, and a province, country…

This interviewee captures the potential of NFJNs as building blocks for the larger food movement, also dubbed a 'networked movement' (Wekerle, 2004), or what Holt-Gimenez (2011) calls a 'loose food network'. While the neighbourhood is the centerpiece of every NFJN's efforts, connections between neighbourhoods and other people systems involved in food system change exist throughout this particular loose networked food movement, allowing it to be scaled up. What are some of these other networks NFJNs participate in and what do these relationships allow for? For the sake of scope, I limit this discussion to the relationships NFJNs have within the City of Vancouver, while recognizing that the larger networks they belong to can be conceived as extending all the way up to the global scale as the interviewee cited above alludes to.

Why Scale Up?
Limitations of working at the neighbourhood level have been peppered throughout the preceding chapters. To summarize:

• Food system concerns, food systems themselves, as well as their governance transcend neighbourhood boundaries;
• The trappings of treating localization as an ends rather than a means (the local trap);
• The risk of defensive localism whereby NFJNs are primarily concerned with those in their locale and competing with one another e.g. for funding; and,
• Other parts, people, and considerations for the food system getting left out (NFJNs are strongly focused on access and urban eaters within their catchments; what about ecological considerations in food or farm workers in other countries, for instance?).

NFJNs are admittedly only treating the symptoms (hunger, malnourishment, social isolation, etc.) of society's larger structural and systemic flaws (poverty, the inequitable distribution of food resources, etc.). There is therefore a need to look beyond the neighbourhood, but leverage what is happening within them, for a systems-wide approach to creating a better food future. This includes everything from public policy change at multiple levels to establishing regional food infrastructure[35]. At a very pragmatic level, scaling-up the movement can also allow for the sharing of resources, assets, and information between neighbourhoods and a united voice in advocating for changes to some of the larger structures and systems they are coming up against.

Figure 18 is an adaptation of the food security continuum. It is a helpful tool for deciphering where NFJNs fit along the spectrum of food systems work. As discussed in Chapter 8, most food system actions undertaken by the networks fall within *Stage 2: Community Capacity Building*, although there are certainly manifestations of efforts from *Stage 1: Short Term Relief* (e.g. provisioning healthy charitable food at the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House) and *Stage 1.5: Food Independence* (e.g. shopping at a pocket market). What is most sustainable and desperately needed in conjunction with these other approaches are efforts within *Stage 3: Food System Change* which take a broader societal focus.

Figure 18: The Food Security Continuum

Adapted from the Community Nutrition Council of BC, originally used in *Eating In: A Preliminary Exploration of Integrating On-Site Food Provision into Single Room Occupancy Hotels in British Columbia*, Fodor, 2010

NFJNs as individual entities can work throughout *Stages 1, 1.5*, and *2* but in order to invoke systems change, must look and work outside of themselves at *Stage 3*, thereby scaling up the movement.

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[35] Examples of a bioregional food infrastructure include viable family farms as well as regional food storage and processing facilities (Barbolet et al., 2005).

Systems Change within a Neighbourhood: The Downtown Eastside Kitchen Tables Project

The Downtown Eastside Right to Food Network is the day-to-day grassroots expression of the much larger Downtown Eastside Kitchen Tables Project. Whereas the network engages in projects and programs that celebrate, educate about, provision, and affirm the right to food[36] out on the streets and in the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House programming space, the Kitchen Tables Project "came from the recognition that although many resources have been invested in the DTES, quality and nutritious food provision remains fractured, disconnected and ineffective," (Downtown Eastside Kitchen Tables Project, 2011). And so, the project intends to revamp this fractured, disconnected, and ineffective food system by implementing its 7 Food Solutions, which will eventually be accompanied by seven business plans already underway to guide their realization. The 7 Food Solutions are given in Box 6.

Box 6: The Downtown Eastside Kitchen Tables Project 7 Food Solutions

1) Create Nutritional & Food Quality Standards
- create widely accepted standards for food donations across the DTES which will include fresh protein, fruits, and vegetables and give organizations the ability to say no to inappropriate food

2) Gather Recipes & Menu Development
- develop menus and recipes for creative, tasty, and nutritional meals that uphold the food quality standards and are appropriate for people living in the DTES who have chronic health concerns

3) Effective Food Procurement
- organizations engaging in collective buying from local BC farmers

4) Food Preparation & Processing
- enhance a local food economy with fair employment in the food system, namely in food preparation and processing

5) Food Distribution
- humanize food distribution by doing away with lineups and having many neighbourhood distribution points

6) Opportunity for Professional Support
- partner with professional and creative chefs to use food system expertise in menu preparation

7) Greening DTES Kitchens
- implementing food scraps composting and recycling while doing away with Styrofoam and other environmentally-damaging food-related waste products in DTES food social enterprises

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[36] The Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House's Right to Food Philosophy affirms the right of DTES residents to access food that is abundant, local, fresh, nutritious, available across the neighbourhood, and delivered in a dignified manner.

The 7 Food Solutions take a seed to compost approach to reinvigorating the DTES food system; look beyond the neighbourhood (e.g. sourcing from BC farms); scale up, though still focusing within neighbourhood boundaries, by urging a collaborative approach involving multiple organizations; and mesh environmental and social considerations (e.g. composting and job creation) in food. The intentions of the project go beyond addressing hunger and malnutrition with band-aid solutions and, once successfully implemented, will rework some of the systems and structures responsible for food vulnerabilities.

The project is complemented by the DTES Right to Food Network and its short-term relief and community capacity building offerings, remembering that actions are needed all along the food security continuum. "In five or ten years the [DTES] Kitchen Tables Project will be regarded as almost revolutionary in the sense that there is a real commitment and the actual ability and capability to implement these solutions," one interviewee reflected. It serves as a model to other NFJNs wishing to scale up their projects and programs and induce systems change within their neighbourhood boundaries.

A Network of Neighbourhood Food Networks

While the DTES Kitchen Tables Project is an example of scaling up, but still primarily working within the neighbourhood, there has also been discussion within the neighbourhood food networking movement about connecting different neighbourhoods. The idea for a 'network of neighbourhood food networks' was first discussed in the summer of 2010 at a gathering of existing NFNs and various other food system stakeholders[37], hosted in partnership by the Vancouver Food Policy Council, Village Vancouver, and some of the networks. At present, the larger 'network of networks' has not formally assembled although its potential members are already more informally, and even quite intimately, connected within Vancouver's broader food movement.

There was an abundance of suggestions for possible functions such a 'network of networks' could take at this preliminary meeting: to connect, inform, and educate; develop funding and resources; advocate for policy and infrastructure; coordinate strategic, city-wide approaches; and build resiliency (Joughin, 2010). Some of these functions have been adopted by the Neighbourhood Food Coordinators Working Group, an outgrowth of the 'networks of networks' conversations, albeit with a scope that only includes their five catchment areas and a food justice focus rather than the city at large and/or other food system approaches.

As already mentioned, the five NFJNs are the founding members of the Neighbourhood Food Coordinators Working Group. The coordinators meet every

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[37] Participating stakeholders included Vancouver Coastal Health, the Vancouver Food Policy Council, funding bodies, the City of Vancouver, neighbourhood houses, community centres, and other food-related non-governmental organizations.

other month with the purpose of sharing what is going on in each neighbourhood as well as best practices and resources, problem solving, collaborating on long term strategic planning and funding for the networks, and establishing a united advocacy voice. This affiliation comes from their shared focus on food justice and vulnerabilities related to poverty, social and political marginalization, and inequality (Neighbourhood Food Coordinators Working Group, 2011).

The meetings are also spaces to invite others from the food community and supporters of the NFJN movement (past guests have been from Vancouver Coastal Health, the Vancouver Food Policy Council, and the City of Vancouver) for conversations to stay connected with others who also play key roles in both strengthening the movement within neighbourhoods and taking it further.

While this all sounds appetizing in theory, some interviewees expressed hesitations about the Neighbourhood Food Coordinators Working Group as well as the yet-to-be-determined larger network. Some of these include:

• Adding on layers of meetings to a group of people that is already stretched for time and resources;
• The urgency felt by some, if not all, networks to secure core funding before pursuing joint funding proposals;
• Concerns that the 'network of networks' is being partially driven by funders rather than the grassroots; and,
• Pressure to expand the scope of the working group beyond neighbourhood food efforts with food justice as the priority and how/whether this will affect the working group's conversations and actions.

In reflecting on the 'network of networks' process one interviewee said:

> My priority is not to build relationships outside of this neighbourhood because there is so much work to be done on the ground…I think that it's a great idea but it is not within my capacity to be involved in the creation of…the urgency is people starving and needing to be fed and that is the reality of being here on the frontlines.

Another interviewee conversely shared their appreciation of what participating in the process afforded them:

> I am thrilled because it allows me to work at a higher level and bite in to some policy work and look at how to build support at the City level and within the health authority [which was] always vague to me…It has been a really important lesson learned in collaborative planning and decision-making and how to do it in a way that is open, fair, and consensus-based. That's the key because it is all about building trust.

Clearly, the existing working group and more ethereal 'network of networks' present both challenges and opportunities to the scaling-up of NFJN work to a multi-neighbourhood and city-wide level. There has been one case of a more focused project-based collaboration being quite successful as evidenced by the Trout Lake-South Vancouver Mobile Pocket Markets.

The Trout Lake-South Vancouver Mobile Pocket Markets: Multi-Neighbourhood Project Collaboration

The Trout Lake-South Vancouver mobile pocket markets are the only existing instance of neighbourhoods directly collaborating on a project as another way in which the movement could be scaled-up. The Trout Lake Cedar Cottage Food Security Network (TLCCFSN) had the knowledge to host the markets and the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House had transportation as well as a need for the markets in its neighbourhoods, and thus, the mobile pocket markets were born. The markets make two stops in South Vancouver and two stops in Trout Lake Cedar Cottage, reaching a larger number of people than if either neighbourhood went at the markets alone. This is a tangible example of the resource sharing and collaboration that the coordinators' working group and 'network of networks' could further incubate.

There were, however, questions raised about what it means to work outside the NFJN's catchment for the TLCCFSN as the South Vancouver market stops are outside the network's catchment:

> Whereas [up until now] the networks operated within their own geographical boundaries, this program [crosses] those boundaries. We're still trying to work out what that means because it's not a model that we worked at but it does lend itself to the movement towards networking the networks and having programs that cross over; independent but together...I don't know how that works yet.

My inclination in response is to not get caught up in the somewhat arbitrary boundaries differentiating network 'territory' and to encourage these kinds of projects that, in scaling up and partnering, are able to reach a larger number of people, share resources, and be more efficient. Because the Westside Food Security Collaborative's catchment covers five neighbourhoods, its projects (most pertinently the Fruit and Veggie Deal and the West Side Pocket Markets) and networking opportunities (e.g. participation at monthly meetings and the e-mail list) easily transcend neighbourhood boundaries without question. This allows for connections between people and projects which can leverage assets and resources from different neighbourhoods.

Hubs and Nubs: Scaling-Up Community Food Infrastructure

Rekindling the earlier conversation of network embeddedness in community infrastructure, the Trout Lake-South Vancouver Mobile Pocket Markets also begin to

exemplify what a hub and spoke model of community food infrastructure could enable. Vancouver is currently working towards constructing a city food hub[38] which would somehow also be connected to neighbourhood hubs (e.g. the Neighbourhood Food Networks) or what one interviewee affectionately called 'nubs'. It is not yet clear exactly how this could work but would somehow move Vancouver towards the more regional food infrastructure called for in the 2005 *Vancouver Food System Assessment* to allow for city-wide alternative food distribution, for example.

Interviewees already have visions of how the 'nubs', or what could otherwise be called community food centres, could come to life in their neighbourhoods:

> …have it all very connected so there's one place where people can go to get [plugged in] to anything that they need in terms of food along the whole spectrum to maybe getting a community garden plot to getting some fruit from the Fruit Tree Project [or] drop off my row of zucchinis that I've grown…all of it interconnected so that everyone knows where to go, what to do, and how to plug in to the food system…

Examples like the Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute which is deeply embedded in the Renfrew Collingwood Neighbourhood House and has many food asset infrastructures such as gardens and kitchen space, as well as The Stop and FoodShare[39], two well-established community food centres in Toronto, provide some precedent for how the neighbourhood-based pieces of this infrastructure network might evolve. What will be interested is figuring out how the nubs and the larger hub would then fit together, a question which is still a work in progress.

Closing the Gap between Social and Environmental Justice

The more expansive landscape of neighbourhood food activity outside the NFJNs covers a much larger terrain of food system concerns beyond food justice and access priorities. These other food system goals often have an ecological twist concerned with climate change, peak oil, waste, food miles, and onwards. Vancouverites who participate in these activities (e.g. frequenting the city's farmers' markets, keeping backyard hens, and community gardening) and related human networks generally, though certainly not universally, tend to fit a stereotype of being culturally white, middle to upper class, educated, and otherwise privileged. This has created a

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[38] A food hub, according to one definition, is "a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products," (Barham & Bragg).

[39] A community food centre is a space where a community can come together to participate in the food system in a holistic and capacity building way. The Stop Community Food Centre's approach is that community members must also be involved in decision-making about the centre and their own responses to hunger. The organization is in contrast to the charity model of food and spearheading the community food centre model which closes the divide between the powerful and the powerless (The Stop Community Food Centre, 2011).

perception that there are different types of NFNs which the following interviewee found problematic:

> We truly can't separate the needs of the vulnerable from the needs of the rest of us. All of us need to look at our food system. My personal feeling is that we really need to keep these two threads together. When it becomes those people, the poor, the needy, then we've got a real problem. The reason food security got so big is it's a big tent. Not without inherent conflict and contradictions. If we can keep these threads knitted together, however loosely, so that it doesn't become an 'us' network and 'those' networks and 'we're really too different to work together', we'll lose a lot.

The question of connecting and balancing different neighbourhood food networking lenses which dichotomize, quite falsely, environmental and social considerations in food were very salient for interviewees. As one of them astutely put it, "what's interesting to think about a neighbourhood is that it is pretty much drawn on the map…the wisdom in that is that everyone is [already] here," no matter your particular approach to food system change. The work is then to connect what might seem like divergent neighbourhood food efforts in order to avoid a two-tiered system of networks—or food. That interviewee elaborated as follows:

> …both [environmentally and socially-minded food networks] are needed in the same neighbourhood because they are filling different niches and I see them as different layers in this overall goal of neighbourhood-level food security. If people don't have access to culturally appropriate, just, and healthy food, you can't say that there's food security in that neighbourhood. So that's one layer that has to be present wherever that's needed. Additionally, we do need to be looking at things like climate change and resiliency and how to make more sustainable neighbourhoods…

As has already been cited by Power (1999), preceded by Gottlieb and Fisher (1996), environmentally-based and social justice oriented food movements have evolved in parallel rather than in unison all throughout the food movement. They acknowledge that camps with differing priorities have contributed to a division among food system efforts in both theory and practice. Both social and environmental approaches to food system change are indisputably necessary, yet also falsely separated. As a beginning to counter this, consider that even within an anti-poverty framework, the food justice-minded NFJNs engage in initiatives that also assume environmental identities such as urban agriculture, direct-marketing opportunities, and food recovery. While growing organic food in a community garden has ecological benefits, it can also achieve access and anti-hunger objectives, as one prevalent example of where social and environmental benefits can and do converge in a community food project.

While other NFNs are informally networked with the five NFJNs analyzed here, there are very few instances of direct collaboration between them. One of the greatest challenges for all community food efforts in Vancouver and beyond will be to bring together those working from an ecological agenda with others carrying a social framework for a more holistic, and ultimately creative, approach to food either by more intentionally connecting networks or working from different angles within the same network.

Finding this balance is not self-evident:

> What does it really mean *in practice* to equitably balance concerns for environmental soundness, economic viability, and social justice among all sectors of society? How should each dimension be evaluated in relation to the others? [...] Perhaps most importantly, who gets to decide where the 'equitable balance' lies? (Hassanein, 2003, 78).

Agyeman (2003) advocates for coalition-building between social and environmental movements more broadly (i.e. beyond food) in order to achieve his notion of a 'just sustainability'. He offers the Clean Buses for Boston initiative as an example, which entailed collaboration between conservation environmentalists on one hand and those of a social justice persuasion on the other. In coalescing around a tangible objective—to get dirty diesel buses off the streets of Boston's low-income neighbourhoods—groups who diverged ideologically found common ground and forged a working relationship towards a shared goal (ibid).

This case offers a lesson for the food movement in convening those with different ideological motivations on mutually appealing actions; a simple plea but difficult to act upon if groups are unable to find the synergies in their work, or even the time and capacity to do this exploration. Perhaps there is potential for the NFJNs and other typologies of neighbourhood food networking such as Village Vancouver's neighbourhood villages to come together and form a coalition on an issue of mutual interest. By connecting the people involved in these various 'types' of networks, some of the existing gaps in the human landscape might begin to get filled. This has already been the case in the Westside Collaborative Garden, an initiative bringing together members of the Westside Food Security Collaborative and Village Vancouver, in which community members garden together and equally share the labour and harvest.

Where else is there potential for Vancouver's NFNs at large to co-create a better food future which balances ecological and social considerations and brings together people with diverse, yet unavoidably interconnected, priorities? This is a question for the movement to keep pondering and act upon.

Friends in High Places: The Role of the Vancouver Food Policy Council, the City of Vancouver, and Vancouver Coastal Health

The instances of scaling-up thus far have for the most part involved connections all within the realm of civil society. What about relationships to scale-up with other sectors such as government and policymakers?

Winne (2008) asserts that "three things are necessary to change our food system...projects, partners, and policy," (172). The five NFJNs are infused with the projects and partnership components, but have been far less involved in policy. This is not to say that neighbourhood food networking has been absent from public policy. In fact, the networks appear strongly in both the City of Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan as well as Vancouver Coastal Health's Food Security Action Plan. NFJNs themselves have however been relatively inactive in inducing policy changes themselves.

The policy work is crucial to "get our heads above our own projects" (Winne, 2008, 172) and create the necessary structural changes for a systems overhaul. Feenstra (2002) acknowledges that the non-governmental food community's role, to which NFJNs belong, is not only to generate food system initiatives and undertake interventions as described earlier, but also to carve out political space for influencing food policy. She says this would help projects (or in this case, networks who implement projects) institutionalize themselves, thus ensuring longevity.

The City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health have policies centered on ensuring longevity for the networks as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Policies to Ensure Neighbourhood Food Network Longevity

Organization	Policy Language	Policy Document	Year
City of Vancouver	Ensure that Vancouver's food system is resilient at the neighbourhood level, and that each Local Area has equitable access to the resources needed to ensure a just and sustainable food system.	Local Food in the Greenest City: Implementation Plan	2010
Vancouver Coastal Health	Support communities to address food security and community food networks.	Food Security Performance Improvement Plan: Year Three Progress Report	2010

The need to support and stabilize the existing networks, as well as emerging networks, is very much on the radar of policymakers and a testament to the importance of what NFJNs accomplish on the ground.

Beyond influencing policies to ensure the networks stay afloat, NFJNs are in an interesting position to influence other policy developments related to the wider food system issues they are responding to in their everyday work. Wekerle (2004)

sympathizes with the practical difficulty those working on the ground face in balancing policy work with projects. This being so, what NFJNs offer is a social infrastructure of people who work on and experience food injustices for policymakers to access.

This benefit of a networked food movement is felt by municipal authorities tasked with developing urban food policy (Mendes, 2008). By involving community groups such as NFJNs in food system decisions "[local governments] are more likely to develop policies that will meet the needs of citizens, particularly marginalized groups," (ibid, 958). There is no formula for how to negotiate these conversations or relationships, but the opportunity is there to channel the realities NFJNs deal with into policy action. The creation of Vancouver's Food Strategy is a very timely opportunity for the networks to be involved in shaping what will be Vancouver's first and most comprehensive food policy to date. Although the City of Vancouver has established a formal relationship with the NFJNs as a funder, the networks' place as advocates and informants is still being carved out.

Another channel for NFJNs to scale-up their work and translate it into policy is through the Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC). The VFPC is the official forum for conversation and advisory to Vancouver City Council and staff on food policy matters. A distinction has been delineated between on the one hand, the VFPC as the site of formal relationships between city government and community groups, and on the other, the networks which are for "less formal communication and learning," (Hodgson, Campbell & Bailkey, 2011, 95). The relatively recent attention given to neighbourhood food networking in Vancouver has catalyzed neighbourhood-level food work as a current priority of the VFPC.

In response, the VFPC formed a neighbourhoods working group in spring 2010. One of its several intentions is to siphon neighbourhood-level food considerations (including, but also extending beyond the five NFJNs) up to institutional policymakers such as the Parks Board, School Board, and City of Vancouver. The VFPC's neighbourhood-level food security working group is also helping seed new food networks and hosted two gatherings: the first, a summit of the aforementioned institutions to discuss supporting neighbourhood-level food work, and the other, a celebratory event highlighting what is happening in neighbourhoods around food across the city which featured the five NFJNs, Village Vancouver, and the emerging West End Neighbourhood Food Network.

The VFPC is in a unique position to play a role of strategic convener as they are able to get their "heads above projects", as Winne suggests, and take a city-wide, systemic, and policy perspective to address needs and challenges. This could potentially relate back to how community infrastructure is used. For example, if a network is experiencing difficulty gaining use to a community centre's kitchen, the VFPC could play a brokering role as well as investigate whether other neighbourhoods are having similar experiences. If the issue is prevalent in several neighbourhoods, the VFPC can take a systems-wide approach and see what is

possible e.g. negotiating a change to community centre kitchen policy with the Parks Board.

The position of wanting to support neighbourhood food networking, but not drive the movement, is a delicate one as one VFPC member noted:

> [It's a careful dance] between not wanting to drive the process but supporting it and the energy that is already emerging so that we can continue to follow one of our roles which is to convey to City Council what is happening at the grassroots in Vancouver. We have a bridging role between the community and Council.

If the NFJNs represent one understanding of 'the community', then this bridging role holds power for translating the networks' experiences into policy and systemic change necessary for a better food future.

How the Neighbourhood Justice Network Movement is Scaling-Up

Table 8 summarizes some of the ways in which the NFJN movement is scaling up in pursuit of systems wide change.

Table 8: Scaling Up Neighbourhood Food Justice

Example	Scale
The Downtown Eastside Kitchen Tables Project	Neighbourhood
Neighbourhood Food Coordinators Working Group	Multi-Neighbourhood
The Trout Lake-South Vancouver Mobile Pocket Markets	Multi-Neighbourhood
Vancouver Food Policy Council Neighbourhood-Level Food Security Working Group	City-Wide

What remains to be seen in the process of scaling up the NFJN movement is how a local food infrastructure will evolve, whether the 'network of networks' will manifest, how relationships with other neighbourhood-level food groups will emerge, and how public policy changes can be induced. In the following chapter, I give some recommendations which touch on these unknowns.

Section C - TURNING THE EARTH

Chapter 10: Recommendations

Over the course of more than two years I have been fortunate to hear the stories, frustrations, celebrations, concerns, and ideas of many of the people driving and supporting neighbourhood-level food work in Vancouver. With so many moving parts, uncertainty, anxiety, and excitement coming out of this movement, it was hard not to mull over what my advice might be in order to support it in moving forward. As someone intimately involved, I think about the future of the movement in very practical terms on a regular basis. I however cannot take full credit for all the recommendations this chapter presents as many are either directly from, or at least influenced by, other personalities in the movement.

With that preamble, what follows are eight of the major recommendations I offer to the NFJN movement including the established networks, emerging networks, their allies, and anywhere else beyond Vancouver interested in or already pursuing a similar model of activating change. Some of the recommendations are more concrete however most simply raise questions to chew on. I do not expect that all, if any of these, are perfect, achievable, or even desirable to others but will hopefully serve as a tool for deliberation on how people systems can support food systems in this way.

1) Pursue Multiple Sources of Stable Core Funding Allocated with a Transparent Process
The sustainability, allocation, sourcing, and distribution of funding for the NFJNs are chief concerns within the movement. The networks operate with funding from various sources including Vancouver Coastal Health, the City of Vancouver, and other public and private grantors and donors. What the networks need most is core funding which can be used to leverage other smaller project-specific pots. In order to build resiliency into the networks, I suggest that networks different sources which includes grantors, but also non-grant sources such as social enterprises and private donations which move the networks away from being grant-dependent which might lead to greater stability.

For funders, it is recommended that there is coordination of fund allocation as well as a fair and transparent process for distributing and accessing funds that involves the participation of the networks.

2) Put the Network of Neighbourhood Food Networks into Practice through 'Topic Forums'
The network of networks has not materialized in part because of the fear of many NFJNs about committing to something that will take time away from their more immediate neighbourhood work. Rather than dive in with a formal network of networks, I suggest that topic forums be hosted that are open to any of the networks

or other civil society players to attend. For example, a topic forum on pocket markets for sharing best practices, success stories, and so on, could be useful for those who have already started and those wishing to implement similar initiatives. It would also be a venue for policymakers to participate in and get grounded input to channel in to policy work affecting pocket market licensing, land uses, and so on.

These topic forums could also be the beginning of forming coalitions and relationships with other networks outside the group of five in the Neighbourhood Food Coordinators Working Group and create opportunities for partnership and collaboration among neighbourhood-based groups with different strengths in the food movement.

3) Intentionally Pursue Embeddedness in Community and Public Infrastructure

The sentiment of the NFJN movement is to work towards finding institutional homes in community centres and neighbourhood houses if they do not already have this home; to keep working out of these infrastructures where the relationships already exist; and even pursue further embeddedness e.g. becoming a staff person of the organizations rather than being independent and using the space. Overall, I believe embeddedness is worth pursuing in order to give the networks a place in our community infrastructure, but recommend that this be done intentionally and that thought be put in to who the host organization is and what the relationship between them and the network will look like. Is the organization already connected with people that the network would like to reach? Are there going to be additional bureaucracies and expectations of the network that might detract from their food justice work? Are certain people being excluded by embedding the network in that particular home?

4) Think Critically about the Function of the Network

Slocum (2006) observed that many community food organizations can be likened to service providers and end up being accountable to funders rather than being "directly involved in building leadership and shifting power in the communities with which they work," (330). I do not believe this is entirely true of the NFJNs but I have noticed that most of the networks are very focused on providing their programs and projects, does something else get lost at the expense of that focus?

The Westside Food Security Collaborative is very light on its own projects and programming and focuses instead on bringing together *other* agencies, organizations, and individuals who are doing programming and projects under a different umbrella. No one NFN model is superior to another but it might be worth the existing and emerging networks to think about what their function is/will be; is it do their own programming? Support and bring together others doing projects, programming, and other actions? To host events and monthly community gatherings? What is the balance between programming and networking? Can they co-exist without sacrificing the effectiveness of either function?

5) Further Diversify the Governance of Neighbourhood Food Justice Networks
This recommendation is a challenge to NFJNs to think about where there might be gaps in the human landscape of neighbourhood food activity and how they might be filled. One of these gaps is the underrepresentation of food vulnerable populations in the networks' governance overall, recognizing that there are instances where this representation exists. What are the opportunities for the people who are benefitting from the networks' activities to also participate in the decision-making process that are meaningful and accessible? Some ideas include striking community boards or advisories, seeking out and supporting greater diversity on existing boards, and opening up community internships in networks where they do not already exist.

6) Seek Out and Work with Unlikely Allies
Who are the NFJNs' unlikely allies? At the Westside Food Security Collaborative table we have longtime talked about wanting to connect with businesses and food retail in the area and reach beyond the 'usual suspects' in our current membership which is heavy on non-profit organizations, government agencies, and community services. The reality is that if we want to be transforming the food system, we need to be working with agents of the conventional food system such as grocery stores, distributors, restaurants, etc. Even though they are likely accountable to governance systems which lie beyond the neighbourhood scale, they still belong to a neighbourhood. Forming these unlikely alliances will only make the movement stronger in its potential for wider and more significant systems transformation.

7) Explore where the 'Hidden People' in the Neighbourhood Food System Might Be
In the same vein, grocery stores, distributors, and restaurants are the workplaces of some of the most exploited people in our food system facing grave injustices from low wages to inadequate working conditions, abuse, and political disempowerment. They face food vulnerabilities, even though their labour supports the food system, and are often eclipsed in conversations about a just and sustainable food system. While the NFJNs are not currently in a position to take on more work and have an already demanding focus on food access for urban eaters, I challenge the movement to think about these other members of their communities working within the food system in their own neighbourhoods. Are there others already organizing food labourers, with whom NFJNs could explore relationships, such as unions and non-profits?

8) Think Critically about the Size and Scope of the Network
The benefits and limitations of the neighbourhood scale have been explored throughout this work. Whereas the Westside Food Security Collaborative and the emerging South Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Network cover several of Vancouver's local areas in their scope, others are confined to one Local Area each. One size will not fit all but it is worth considering where working within one neighbourhood makes sense, and where connecting several neighbourhoods within the same network catchment might be more desirable. The question becomes how to maintain a manageable network, but not be constrained by a neighbourhood

boundary which is somewhat artificial. This is especially true when considering food as the food system transcends geographical, political, and neighbourhood boundaries.

This begs the larger question of how do we best 'break up' the city to pursue localized levels of activity and change, while staying networked and retaining the ability to scale up? Is there a potential to have two coordinators working together throughout two or more Local Areas to share space, resources, and be daily coworkers for one another? Perhaps one person is stronger in programming whereas the other could focus on the networking and outreach work to help balance the networks' functions?

The City of Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan for food states that:

> ...the intent is to ensure that each neighbourhood is serviced by an adequately resourced NFN. Depending on need, this may or may not mean a NFN in each local area but would also involve an over-arching coordinating body to assist their development. (At present, it is unclear how many NFNs will be needed, so a precise target or operational formula has not been proposed), (City of Vancouver, 2010, 5).

In this statement, the COV is expressing similar uncertainly about the number of networks. It also raises an interesting suggestion of overall coordination; is there a role for a person, group of people, or organization to be playing in further supporting the networks at a city-wide level?

The VFPC, VCH, and COV already provide some support so it is unclear what a new support agent would be doing, although it is an interesting recommendation. Some ideas include developing funding and sustainability strategies for the movement; negotiating relationships with the food hub; coordinating topic forums; planning movement-wide gatherings and tours; while being open and available to respond to other needs identified by the NFNs.

Chapter 11: Conclusions

This work opened with Allen's words which disclose that humans have created the food justice problems we find ourselves with, and are therefore solely capable of solving them. It is a gentle yet gripping call to action for us to think critically about how food—that which sustains us in the biological, social, and spiritual sense—is governed, and, if we are unhappy with what we find, how these governing systems of people can be transformed, or perhaps even dismantled and rebuilt.

I have been incredibly fortunate to be a part of several such people systems which challenge the status quo food governance regime dominated by corporate behemoths and their cronies by intervening in the conventional and charity food systems they impose on us, or other times, by initiating a totally different food system altogether. It seems almost unavoidable that these teething human systems always seem to build community in the process, though not without equally as unavoidable conflict. Vancouver's Neighbourhood Food Justice Network movement is exemplary of all of this and has been an instructive case study through which I began to explore what a renewed human landscape in support of food system change can look like. Alone, the NFJN movement will not be enough to surmount the food system challenges before us, but has been incredibly significant thus far within Vancouver's contemporary human landscape of food system activity.

Cumulatively, the five NFJNs I delved in to have engaged hundreds, if not thousands, of Vancouverites in the beginning of a different food future. The future they are creating has better opportunities for accessing food that is healthy, nutritious, culturally-acceptable, ecologically sound, and obtained with dignity; sees more food produced and processed in the city; embeds food and people working with it in our community and public infrastructure; upholds food as deeply relational; celebrates food; and uses food to weave together a social landscape that connects policymakers, organizations, neighbours, among others, in unprecedented and nourishing ways.

What will continue to challenge the NFJNs, in my estimation, is their ability to achieve fuller material and process equity inherent in food justice; negotiate their place and relationships with others in Vancouver's food movement; work towards systems change and find a place in policy; grapple with their scalar limitations; and ensure their own longevity, relevance, and purpose. The recommendations in the previous chapter offer some ideas to help navigate these challenges, but mostly present many more questions.

An Experiment in Personal Practice: Reflections

The embedded action research nature of my involvement in the NFJN movement has been incredibly formative and meaningful. It also allowed me the opportunity to experiment with and reflect upon my own personal practice of being in community with others and working towards what I believe to be progressive change while

holding various identities as a student, researcher, planner, organizer, engaged citizen, and so on.

What follows are some of my most salient reflections on my own practice after participating in the NFJN movement for just over two years in this way.

1) Give it Time
I learned to be comfortable with the time it takes for a new group (which was the Westside Food Security Collaborative to begin with and the broader NFJN and food movements later on) to get to know and trust me. I felt incredibly welcomed by everyone all along but felt self-conscious of my outsider status and position as a student, even though I knew from the outset that I wanted to be more. Entering into relationship and going from an outsider to insider status took time, commitment, and work.

2) Being in the Middle
Although I have my own opinions and subjectivities within the NFJN movement, I did feel to a certain extent, particularly in informal conversations and the interviews, that I was sometimes treated as neutral. I was fortunate to hear many sides of the same stories and became somewhat of a story keeper. When stories being told by different people were at odds with one another, I struggled several times with whether it was my place to intervene to help create a common understanding or let these differences co-exist.

3) Community Affiliations
I have thought a lot about what creates a sense of community affiliation. I have become deeply embedded in the Westside Food Security Collaborative in particular but have always lived on the east side of town. I feel invested in both communities as my relationships are certainly able to transcend geography, but again feel self-conscious about living on the east side and working towards food system change on the west side, particularly as a paid employee of the WFSC. I am comfortable with holding many community affiliations that are not all based on where I live, but it is something I negotiate everyday in my participation in the food movement. This is especially true when the neighbourhood becomes the unit of reference as I find myself resonating with several of them.

4) Power in Being a Connector
I have however found my multiple community affiliations beneficial in playing a role of connector and this role to be one I thrive in and enjoy. Being a connector is about knowing who and what is out there and bringing together people who can mutually enrich one another. As I became further embedded in the NFJN and broader food movement, I found myself making connections between different NFJNs, between the networks and other food-minded people systems such as the City and emerging Youth Food Policy Council, and even between cities, provinces, and countries as I build relationships with people doing this work across the continent through

electronic, phone, and face-to-face communication, the latter being especially true at several conferences I have attended.

5) Finding Unlikely Allies
Wayne Roberts, former manager of the Toronto Food Policy Council and a food movement guru, invited me to a conference in Toronto in 2009 on building a local food infrastructure. In the room were farmers and small scale processors—people who I would classify as the 'usual suspects' to show up to this sort of event—but in the same room was also Fortinos, a large conventional food retail chain and Sysco, a very large food supplier and caterer. He taught me the importance of reaching outside of the choir and finding unlikely allies in creating food system change which I have tried to carry in to my own practice. It was an easy thing to learn but is proving much harder to act upon. It is a question I will continue to think about and ideally ask of others in the movement. Who are our unlikely allies in this work? How do we connect with them and invite them in to a reinvigorated people system in support of food system change?

Whose Job is Food?

Throughout my involvement in the NFJN movement, I was also a planning student, a field I chose after being enthralled with the potential planning holds for participating in creating a better food future, whatever this might look like. The profession is taking up food in a significant way as one of the many typologies of actors dabbling in the food movement.

In their seminal piece, Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) elaborate on the food system's absence from local government and planning. They advocate for municipalities' heightened role in the food system through food policy councils, planning departments, and establishing city departments of food (1999). Wekerle (2004) reinforces this, noting that the food movement, as a social movement, has been off the planner's radar. As already implied, food has figured largely into the planning field over the last decade since Pothukuchi and Kaufman conducted their survey. Always in my mind then was a questioning of how planning and civil society food efforts such as neighbourhood food networking fit together.

Given the hope for a complex and multifaceted human landscape of food system activity, a prominent question for me becomes—whose job is food? And, who is a food systems planner? What could most devastate the richness of neighbourhood food system efforts such as those of NFNs is an over-professionalization of food systems planning which, intentionally or not, runs the risk of making the work of many the jobs of a few.

On reflecting on the interface between the profession I was getting educated in, and my experiences in the NFJN movement, I have come to hope that governments and the planning profession do not overcompensate for time lost and step on the toes of other food actors who have been carrying the movement up until now. What seems

more appropriate is that more institutionalized actors continue to support civil society efforts like NFNs, and vice versa. Mendes (2008) wonders what the equilibrium points might be between institutionalization and the third sector in food systems work and offers that "[cities can] play the role of facilitator, educator, and promoter of efficiencies," (947).

This negotiation of roles and responsibilities introduces a nuanced understanding to "the hardy perennial of the food planning debate everywhere," that question of who are the food planners (Morgan, 2009, 342). Morgan shares an anecdote about participants at a conference who were dissatisfied with the notion of 'food planners as professionals', preferring instead:

> …a broader, more inclusive definition of food planners as anyone who is working in, or engaged with, the food system with the aim of rendering it more sustainable with respect to its social, economic, and ecological effects…The 'food planning community', in other words, is a profoundly diverse and multi-dimensional community, composed as it is of every profession with food-related interest, as well as NGOs that focus on social justice, public health, food security, and ecological causes, all of whom are striving to make food policymaking a more open and democratic process (ibid).

And to policymaking, I would add food system initiatives and interventions that are project-oriented and heavily undertaken by NFJNs. Within this more inclusive definition, NFJN coordinators and their governing bodies *are* food planners in the larger constellation. It is then the task of those who identify as food system professionals, whether they are employed in the city planning department or elsewhere, to recognize this and ensure, as one interviewee reflected, that "there is room for everyone [in this movement]". There is certainly enough to be done in reshaping food systems and their modes of governance that all those who are willing to take on a piece of the work should be openly welcomed in doing so.

Final Thoughts
The (food) future is uncertain. That much we know. But in the face of uncertainty, the human populace is organizing and mobilizing under the large and loose canopy of the food movement. What is happening in Vancouver's neighbourhoods undoubtedly belongs to this groundswell. Although NFJNs have mostly been preoccupied with mitigating the day-to-day struggles of urban eaters feeling the brunt of the food system status quo through hunger, malnourishment, poverty, and isolation, I believe they are also setting the precedent for a new food decision-making regime which democratizes the present oligarchy and makes food seem like a tangible area over which we can have some, or maybe even a lot of, control in an uncertain future.

As I alluded to in the preface, the story of the NFJNs is just as much, if not more so, about changing the ways in which people relate to one another rather than any noticeable impacts on the food supply chain. How we go about food is in fact perhaps the ultimate expression of how we care for one another and other forms of life on this planet—or not.

Do we let each other starve by saying "too bad" if the conventional food system is not available to someone? Do we allow one another to be de-humanized by denying food as a right and accepting an unacceptable charity food system to sustain those in need? Honestly, most often, yes. We do. Efforts like the NFJNs however do not and are instead building people systems which will move us towards a future underpinned by an ethos of love and care, and further away from one of fear and intolerance. The evidence of this transformation will be our food system and how people relate to one another within it.

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Appendix A: Neighbourhood Food Justice Network Program Descriptions

Program	NFJN	Description
Banana Beat	DTES RTFN	Bananas are distributed throughout the neighbourhood to people on the streets.
Buen Provecho	GWFC	A multigenerational and multicultural cooking project for youth and seniors of various ancestries. Participants prepared food together and elders shared recipes and cultural food stories.
Food Charter	DTES RTFN	A collaboratively authored document which details the principles and rights of DTES residents to food that is healthy, abundant, and provided with dignity.
Food Street Theatre	DTES RTFN	A traveling troupe of community members who perform various skits and performances educating the DTES community and public at large about food.
Mobile Pocket Market	TLCCFSN	A community produce stand which travels to different locations in the Trout Lake an South Vancouver neighbourhoods to provide affordable produce to people who have difficulty accessing it otherwise.
Pocket Market	WFSC	A community produce stand which stays stationary in a community organization.
Recipes Against Racism	DTES RTFN	Elders from different ancestries share recipes with youth from the neighbourhood.
Roving Community Kitchen	DTES RTFN	A traveling community kitchen in which nutritious blender smoothies are prepared and distributed to people on the streets, namely standing in various lineups.
Stone Soup Festival	GWFC	An annual community food festival featuring different organizations, groups, and activities which celebrate and work with food and related social and environmental issues. Soup is prepared and distributed to festival-goers.

Appendix B: Sample Interview Questionnaire

<u>Origins and Impetus</u>
How and when did the network begin? Why? By whom?

<u>You</u>
How and why did you first become involved in the network? How would you describe your role now (if it has changed) and how you have been involved?

<u>Membership, Roles & Participation</u>
Who is your network? How many people belong to the network? Has this changed over the years?
What are the different roles within the network?
How do/can people participate in the network? How do people find out about the network and become engaged?

<u>Jurisdiction & Community</u>
Are there geographical boundaries to the neighbourhood the network covers? If so, what are they?

<u>Activities, Initiatives & Interventions</u>
What are the activities/the work of the network? (Food system initiatives and interventions)
What are the gaps/needs that the network's work is responding to in the neighbourhood?

<u>Governance & Structure</u>
How is the network governed/structured? How do decisions get made? What are the kinds of decisions that get made (directions, pursuing grants, activities…)?

<u>Successes & Challenges (Assets & Needs)</u>
What are the network's successes/assets to date?
What are challenges for the network? Its needs?
(Human and physical/infrastructure)

<u>Funding & Sustainability</u>
How is the network funded? How sustainable is this current model?
How many staff/funded hours are there?

<u>Community Development</u>
In your experience, how does the network build capacity in the neighbourhood (including whose capacity and to do what)?
In your experience, how does the network develop social capital in the neighbourhood (productive relationships amongst those who participate)?
What is your/the network's relationship like with the community you work in?

Representation & Inclusion
Are there groups/individuals not currently represented/participating in the network? What is your sense of why they are not? What do you think it would take to achieve broader representation/inclusion?

Beyond the Network: Partnerships and Collaboration
What are the connections between your network and others doing this work (other networks or other players—Food Policy Council, City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, etc.)? (Horizontal and vertical)
Who does your network network with?
Who are community partners inside and outside the neighbourhood?
How have you/your network been involved in efforts to create a city-wide network of food work?

The Neighbourhood Scale
What are the advantages of doing your work at the neighbourhood scale?
Do you see any disadvantages?

The Future
What does the future of the network look like to you?

The Forgotten
Anything else?